



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Audubon Society

March - April 2005

Time For Spring Birdathon Challenge!

Support SCVAS education programs and — win fabulous prizes!

Spring has sprung! There isn't a more exciting time of year to go birding, so why not add a little spice and camaraderie to your springtime birding by joining in on the SCVAS Spring Birdathon craze?

Our Spring Birdathon has become a very popular event in the valley. Last year we had several new teams join our veteran returning teams. We also had first-timers and returning individuals join our Guided Teams. The big draw, besides great prizes, fun, and friendly competition, is the rewarding feeling everyone gets from raising money for SCVAS' successful education programs.

The Birdathon is a hugely important fundraiser for our chapter. Early Birdathons raised about \$5,000 per year, but in the last few years we've raised \$16,000 (2003) and then \$24,000 in 2004. Thanks to you, this growth has enabled SCVAS to increase the number of youngsters we can reach with our dynamic environmental education programs. Please help us continue this successful fundraising trend and expand our outreach to even more underserved youths by breaking our record again in 2005!

We have lots of impressive prizes this year. The individuals who collect the most money, regardless of team or category,

will select their own prize from a group of top prizes. A special prize will be given to a youth under 18 who raises the most

money, and additional prizes for the teams who raise the most money, identify the most species (one prize to a team in each category), do the most unique birdathon, and find the best birds.

Starting this year, there will be two plaques listing the team name and members who raise the most money and identify the most species. We will add the winners of future Birdathons to the plaque each year. The plaques will be displayed in our office and at other events for the birding community to admire.

Some of the great prizes last year included spotting scopes, binoculars, whale-watching trips, plane tickets, entertainment tickets, vacation home getaways, wine, and much more — over \$10,000 worth! The Birdathon section of our website www.scvas.org lists all the prizes and sponsors, so visit it often, since we're continuously updating the list. Please patronize our great prize sponsors who help us make the Birdathon so successful and let them know that you appreciate their support.

Our Spring Birdathon is very flexible and will fit your busy schedule. You can either form your own Self-Guided Team, or

join one of our Guided Birdathons led by some of our area's premiere birders. See the article "Go Guided" on page 12

continued on Page 13

General Membership Meeting "Grayson—Complementary, Contemporary, or Competitor to Audubon"

with Phil Gordon

Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Wednesday, March 16

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Phil Gordon will present the life and art of Andrew Jackson Grayson, comparing it to J.J. Audubon, in the light of bird art yesterday and today. Phil developed his program for an exhibit of Grayson's 154 paintings, Birds of the Pacific Slope, lost for 117 years, that was held at the Hayward Area Historical Society center in 2003. As a longtime aficionado of bird art, Phil eagerly created his "Chronologies of Andrew Jackson Grayson and John James Audubon" with a slide show illustrating many of the elements of the story.

Most of the paintings by Grayson, now in the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, were done when he lived in Mexico. Grayson lived in San Jose from about 1853 to 1857 at Bird's

continued on Page 4

*Complete results
for 4 local
2004 CBC's
— Pages 8-11*

♦ Spring adult education classes — Page 5

♦ Harris's Sparrow rules! — Field Notes, Page 6

♦ More Birdathon news — Page 12

♦ Raptors vs. wind farms at Altamont Pass — Page 14

Mar. - Apr. 2005 Field Trips

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

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

NF = No facilities available

Wednesday Mar. 2, 12 noon

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Lee French. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. All are welcome, but birding will be geared toward the beginning birder. Bring binoculars, loaners will also be available. **RC**

Saturday Mar. 5, 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 the Model Airplane Park where power towers cross Hwy. Follow road for 1/2 mile and park where it bends to the right. **RC**

Sunday Mar. 6, 9:00 AM

Stanford Campus

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

Wednesday Mar. 9, 8:30 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Al Dieckmann (408) 379-5641. See directions under Mar. 5 listing above. **RC, NF**

Saturday Mar. 12, 8:30 AM

Windy Hill OSP

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. Meet in parking lot at Sausal Pond edge of Preserve. From I-280 in Portola Valley take Alpine Rd. south (toward hills) about 2.9 miles to first stop sign, turn right on Portola Rd. and go 0.8 miles to parking lot on left just past The Sequoias. **RC**

Sunday Mar. 13, 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 to 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. Easy but fairly long walk. **LO, RC**

Saturday & Sunday Mar. 19 & 20

Honey Lake, Eagle Lake & vicinity

Leader: Bob Hirt (408) 821-2732. [Trip full, with waiting list.]

Wednesday Mar. 23, 8:30 AM

Picchetti Ranch OSP

Leader: Susan Peterson (650) 595-1438. From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Blvd south (it becomes Stevens Canyon Rd). Turn right on Monte Bello Rd and go about a mile, turn left past winery entrance to Preserve parking lot. Moderate walking past old orchard, seasonal pond, oak woodlands. **LO, RC**

Saturday Mar. 26, 8:30 AM

Picchetti Ranch OSP

Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. (See directions immediately above) **LO, RC**

Sunday Mar. 27, 8:00 AM

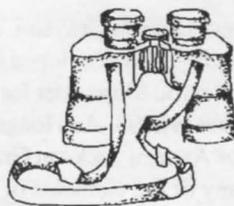
Stevens Creek County Park

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. One of the best spots for riparian birding in the South Bay for migrants and early returning breeding birds. \$4 entrance fee, **LO, RC**

Saturday Apr. 2, 8:30 AM

Gilroy Hot Springs Rd

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Trip limited to 16 participants, call Bob to reserve space. 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.), continue about 4 miles to Canada Rd. Migrating and breeding birds of south county. **RC**



Sunday Apr. 3, 8:30 AM

Alum Rock Park

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

Wednesday Apr. 6, 8:00 AM

Rancho San Antonio

Leader: Jim Liskovec (650) 969-5542. Emphasis on bird song. Expect 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 Drive, continue on to large parking area. Meet by restrooms. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Apr. 6, 12 noon

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Lee French. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. All are welcome, but birding will be geared toward the beginning birder. Bring binoculars, loaners will also be available. Learn about the birds of this closed landfill. **RC**

Saturday Apr. 9, 8:00 AM

Hidden Villa

Leader: Jim Liskovec. Register by phone (650) 949-8653 or by mail (print form at www.hiddenvilla.org). Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills is opening its gates to us! Explore the bird life of the oak woodlands at a time of year when bird song is at its peak. We will do a lot of listening. Beginners welcome. For ages 12 and up. Wear your hiking shoes and bring binoculars. Park in upper lot, meet at green tent. Parking fee of \$5/car charged at gate. **RC**

Sunday Apr. 10, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: TBD (Questions, call Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527). Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mtn. View. All are encouraged to attend but birding will be geared toward beginners. **RC**

Events Calendar

Wednesday Apr. 13, 8:30 AM

Almaden Quicksilver Co. Park

Half day. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. In San Jose take Almaden Expwy south to Almaden Rd. through town of New Almaden, turn right at park entrance before the bridge. Spring woodland species, including possible Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher. Moderate 3 mile walk. Bring water. **RC, LO**

Saturday Apr. 16, 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, the first lot on left after passing main entrance on right. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2-mile walk, **LO, RC**

Sunday Apr. 17, 8:30 AM

Ed Levin County 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 the far, northeast side of Sandy Wool Lake. Migrants, local breeding birds in Milpitas' prime birding hotspot. Trail is steep in places. Entrance fee, **LO, RC**

Saturday Apr. 23, 9:00 AM

Arastradero OSP, Birding by Ear

Half day. Leader: Garth Harwood (650) 879-0724. Bring your binoculars and scopes if you also want to see the birds. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd west; turn right on Arastradero Rd and meet in parking lot about 1/2 mile on right. Moderately strenuous walking. **RC**

Sunday Apr. 24, 8:00 AM

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University

Half day. Leaders: Marion Smith and Phil Leighton. Trip limited to 16; call Marion at (650) 493-7210 to reserve space. \$5 fee per person. Be at Preserve gate between 7:45 and 8:00 AM only. (DO NOT ARRIVE EARLIER AS PARKING OUTSIDE THE GATE POSES 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.

Wednesday Apr. 27, 8:30 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Leader: Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. From Hwy 280 in Cupertino take Foothill Rd. south about 2 miles, turn left into Chestnut parking area. A great place for local breeding birds and their nests. **LO, RC**

Saturday Apr. 30, 8:30 AM

Almaden Lake Park, Alamos Creek

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. Meet in west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south, continue just past Coleman Rd. (and the Park), then return northbound on Almaden Expwy to Park entrance on right. About 3 miles of easy walking. We will bird the lake and trail upstream for waterfowl, raptors, and a variety of riparian birds. **LO, RC**

Sunday May 1, 8:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Grant Webb (408) 578-0409. 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. \$4 entrance fee. **LO**

Saturday May 7, 8:30 AM

Mines Rd. and vicinity

Full day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. We'll start this trip in Del Puerto Canyon, working our way west to San Antonio Valley. From I-580 go east over Altamont Pass to I-5, south on I-5 to the Patterson exit, then west on Del Puerto Canyon Rd. Meet at the first pullout. Possible Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinch. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch and liquids.

Film Screening: "Oil on Ice — Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in the Balance"

Wednesday Mar. 9

Doors open at 6:30 PM; program 7:00

*Quinlan Community Center
10185 N. Stelling Rd. (one block north of
Stevens Creek Blvd), Cupertino
Co-sponsored by SCVAS and the Loma
Prieta Chapter of Sierra Club*

"Oil on Ice" is a one-hour documentary on Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The film tells the story of the native Gwich'in people, the wildlife, and the controversy over drilling for oil. The Refuge is an American treasure, a wilderness home of countless birds, musk oxen, polar bears, grizzly bears, and the summer calving ground of 130,000 caribou.

The decision to drill for oil in the coastal plain of the Refuge will significantly affect the subsistence living of the Gwich'in, the wildlife and the wilderness quality of this special place.

Ultimately, "Oil on Ice" reveals how the fate of the refuge is inextricably linked to

Wed. 3/2, 7:30 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents Rob Paveys's digital slide show on western birds. Lucie Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Tues. 3/8, 9:30 AM

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

Wed. 3/9, 7 PM (doors open 6:30)

"Oil on Ice" film screening (see below)

Wed. 3/16, 8:00 PM (doors open 7:30)

General Mtg. Palo Alto Art Center

Wed. 3/23, 7:30 PM

EAC Mtg., McClellan Ranch Park

Tues. 4/12, 9:30 AM

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

Wed. 4/20, 7:30 PM (doors open 7:30)

General Mtg. Palo Alto Art Center

Wed. 4/27, 7:30 PM

EAC @ McClellan Ranch Park

decisions our nation makes about energy policy, transportation choices, and other seemingly unrelated matters, while the culture and sustenance of the native people and the survival of migratory wildlife are caught in the balance. Because the film examines both the consequences of oil drilling and alternative solutions to our energy needs, it tells the viewer, "Don't be misinformed."

Join the Sierra Club and Audubon for the South Bay showing of this powerful documentary. The film is narrated by renowned actor Peter Coyote. Film producers will host an audience question and answer period after the film. You will also learn what you can do to convince Congress and the administration that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge must never, ever be touched.

For more information please contact Jim Liskovec (650) 969-5542 or SCVAS (408) 252-3747.

Volunteer Ventures

by Kim Yuan-Farrell
Programs Coordinator

Happy National Volunteer Week! Well, not just yet... But coming up at the end of April, SCVAS will be celebrating **National Volunteer Week** in honor of you! If you're not already one of our amazing, dedicated volunteers, I can tell that you're on your way to becoming one. You're reading this column, aren't you? ☺

In honor of our current volunteers and those interested in finding out more about volunteerism at SCVAS, we will be hosting a **Breakfast and Bird Walk with Brenda** on Wednesday, April 27 at 9 AM. This is a great opportunity to meet other volunteers in the SCVAS community and to share our enthusiasm for birding with our new Executive Director, Brenda Torres-Barreto. She looks forward to meeting you, the heart of our chapter's programs. Our space is limited, so please RSVP to Kim by April 13 at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org.

Until then, please check out the listings below, sign up to participate in the Birdathon (page 13), or stop by the office to discuss other volunteer opportunities that might be a good fit for you. No need to wait. I'm ready to match make!

Youth Advocacy Writer – Are you interested in conservation issues and in empowering younger generations to become active in the preservation of wildlife and habitat? Through the *Stewards of the Earth* portion of our website, SCVAS offers young people the opportunity to learn about, research, and take action on a variety of environmental issues. We need one or more volunteers to compose brief introductory information on these quarterly topics. While a background in advocacy is helpful, no experience is necessary. Strong writing skills are a plus. This work can be done at home or at the Audubon office, and hours are very flexible.

Special Events Audubon Representative – March and April bring with them a flurry of activity, including special events galore. Garden, outdoors, and community events abound during the spring. In the upcoming months, SCVAS will sponsor the South County Earth Day Celebration on April 23 and International Migratory Bird Day on May 14, as well as attend a number of other fairs and festivals. Volunteers are needed to represent SCVAS and distribute information about our chapter and programs at these events. This is a fun way to enjoy the community and help your organization.

Contact Kim at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org for more information about these listings or to discuss how you can become a volunteer.

SCVAS and the City of Gilroy present...



Saturday
April 23
10am-2pm

South County Earth Day Festival!

Free Food! • Free Games and Activities!
Compost Giveaway! • Live Animals!
Nature Organizations! • Build a Birdhouse!
Fun for All Ages!

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

*Welcome Brenda Torres-Barreto,
our new Executive Director, at our
“Breakfast and Bird Walk with Brenda”
on April 27 at 9 AM!
Look for her feature article in the
May-June issue of The Avocet!*

March General Membership Meeting with Phil Gordon *cont'd from Page 1*

Nest Cottage. In 1986 Arion Press of San Francisco published their Lithographs of the Paintings and Lois Stone's large Grayson biography.

In 1956 Phil Gordon joined the Alum Rock Junior Museum (now the Youth Science Institute) with Larry Moitoyo as his Assistant Director and Curator. Four years later Phil began a 40 year career as a Biology Teacher in the Hayward Schools until his retirement. Originally a member of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, he participated in the founding of the Ohlone Audubon Society of Southern Alameda Co. in 1965, naming the group and its newsletter, "The Kite Call" (his favorite hawk). Phil and his wife Pat are co-compilers of the Hayward-Fremont CBC.

Since then, Phil has been leading natural history trips, especially for birding, both as an avocation and a vocation, including trips for The Lindsay Wildlife Museum. For the past 26 years Phil has taught "The Natural History of California Birds" for the Acalanes Adult School.

Spring Adult Education 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.

Raptors of the Western States with Lisa Myers

Back by popular demand, this three week class focuses on the meat-eating, flesh-tearing group of birds that impress so many people: the "raptors" also known as hawks and owls. Wednesday evening class sessions will review hunting styles and food preferences of both diurnal and nocturnal raptors of the Western States. You will learn where to find each species and their key identifying field marks, and also the different calls of each owl species so you can recognize the owls in your neighborhood. Students will venture out on an afternoon field trip to search for as many raptors as possible. In January, this class filled to the maximum in one week, so call to reserve your seat today!

Dates: Class: Wednesdays 4/6, 4/13, 4/20 7-9 PM; Field trip: Saturday 4/9 1-4 PM

Location: Conference Room at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino
Fee: \$40 members, \$45 non-members. Minimum 8 students; maximum 25.

April General Membership Meeting "Birds with Wildlife Rescue & Butterflies with Moe Magoski" Featuring live raptors and butterflies

Palo Alto Arts Center,
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Wednesday, Apr. 20

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Terry Keibele, president of Wildlife Rescue in Palo Alto, will describe her organization's programs, volunteer opportunities and bring two species of raptors.

After Terry's presentation we'll hear a 30 minute Butterfly Seminar with Moe Magoski. Moe will discuss butterflies of this area, when and where to find them, and bring 5 or 6 species that he raises. He has been intrigued by butterflies since he was 5 years old and has studied the butterflies of Santa Clara County in depth. He will show you our local species and where they can be found, including recognizing the host plants and learning the different times of year when they emerge to fly in our open spaces. Moe raises caterpillars and he will bring several species in various stages from caterpillar to butterfly, so you can see their development. Contact Moe at butterflyman@sbcglobal.net.

Painting Birds with Edward Rooks

This class is open to anyone who wants to paint birds. No previous experience or skills are required. Participants in Edward's previous bird drawing classes will find most of the instruction to be new material. Participants will have a choice of painting with either watercolor or acrylic. The first class will be an introduction to drawing and painting bird parts: an eye, a beak, a feather, a group of feathers and a foot. The second class will be spent painting a hawk; the third class painting a duck; the fourth painting a perching bird. Basic painting materials are all that will be required. Acquiring materials before the first class will be the responsibility of the participant. Materials list will be provided.

Dates: Mondays 3/14, 3/21, 3/28, and 4/4 7-10 PM

Location: Conference Room at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino
Fee: \$125. Minimum 6 students; maximum 12.

Beginning Birding by Ear with Les Chibana

Improve your approach to birding by ear and hone your skills. Class discussions 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 Saturday 3/26 is available for \$25 through BirdNUTZ, Les' bird guiding and field trip business.

Dates: Tuesdays 3/15, 3/22, 3/29 7-9 PM

Location: Conference Room at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino
Fee: \$35 members, \$40 non-members. Maximum 16 students.

Intermediate Birding by Ear with Les Chibana

This class picks up from where Les' *Beginning Birding by Ear* class leaves off. The focus will be helping you to deal with those more challenging bird sounds. An optional field trip on Saturday 4/16 is available for \$25 through BirdNUTZ, Les' bird guiding and field trip business.

Dates: Thursdays 4/7, 4/14, 4/21 7-9 PM

Location: Conference Room at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino
Fee: \$40 members, \$45 non-members. Maximum 16 students.



We are now accepting donations for our Annual

"Beak and Feather Boutique"

to be held in June. Items should be clean and in good condition. Watch for more information in the May-June Avocet!

Birding related items only!

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl

It seemed to be a goose-crazy winter with many of our less common geese settling in, whereas others just passed on through. In the case of **Greater White-fronted Geese**, the two centers were the Palo Alto Municipal GC/Byxbee Park and the Arzino Ranch. Five birds were first seen at the Muni on 7 Dec (DKo) and remained through the period with a high count of 11 on 20 Jan (AME). These birds, often with the local Canada Geese, regularly flew over to Byxbee Park. A second group was centered at the Arzino Ranch in Alviso, where birds first showed up on 16 Jan (RK, PK, ViT) and eight to thirteen birds were seen through the end of the month. Observers also saw birds in flight, including flocks of 58 and 75 over Palo Alto on 11 Dec (MMR, DMa) and 58 over Morgan Hill on 14 Jan (SCR). Small numbers of birds were found widely during these months with the most surprising being two in San Antonio Valley on 15 Jan (ALE, GB).

Snow Geese were just as unusual, although in fewer numbers. One was with White-fronts over the Newby Island dump on 19 Dec (WGB, PP). The next day, one was seen at Shoreline Lake (*vide* MMR) and this bird was found through the end of January either at Shoreline, Byxbee Park, or the Palo Alto Muni GC. A single bird was also at the Silver Creek GC on 26 Dec (C&JC et al.). About 60 birds over Alviso on 15 Jan in a large flock of white geese was a real surprise (MDd et al.). Also two to four Snow Geese showed up in the vicinity of Lake Cunningham 19-22 Jan (KB, PD, MJM). Surprisingly, a larger bird photographed there on 22 Jan (PD) appears to have been a **Greater Snow Goose**, which is rarely encountered in the West (BD *vide* MMR). **Ross's Geese** showed up in the fewest numbers with a single bird at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant ponds 3-4 Dec (FV et al.), three at the Arzino Ranch 15-17 Jan (AME, v. ob.), and an amazing 60 birds over the Alviso Marina on 15 Jan (MDd et al.). We didn't pay that much attention to **Cackling Geese** when they were just a subspecies of the Canada

Goose, but now we need to figure out just how regular they are. Lake Cunningham, where a few birds showed up in the fall, remained the best place with two to five birds there through the end of January. However, an amazing 21 were there on 16 Jan (SCR), but did not remain. Elsewhere, a single bird was on the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 19 Dec (WGB, PP) and 1-8 birds were in the vicinity of Calero Reservoir from 22 Dec to 4 Jan (AV, v. ob.). **Eurasian Wigeon** continued to be found on the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds through December and January with a high count of six males on 4 Dec (FV, RP, PK, et

A Harris's Sparrow was the top find of the season, followed by Pelagic Cormorant and Tufted Duck

al.). Local salt ponds were good for this species with a single bird on Salt Pond A1 on 9 Dec (MJM), one to seven birds on Salt Pond A2W 20 Dec-27 Jan (WGB, JMy, v. ob.), and two on Salt Pond B1 on 20 Dec (MJM). A single male was in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 2 and 9 Jan (DW, AV). **Blue-winged Teal** were found widely during the period, continuing in such places as the Palo Alto FCB, the Palo Alto estuary, and the Sunnyvale WPCP where they had been found during the fall. Less expected were seven birds found at a stormwater pond at Moffett Field on 3 Jan (MMR) and an inland bird in a flooded field in the Coyote Valley on 3 Jan (JLo). The "**Eurasian**" **Green-winged Teal** continued in the Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh or nearby Stevens Creek in December and on 11 Dec it was noted that there was also an intergrade male teal there (MMR, MJM). The surprise on the Palo Alto CBC on 20 Dec was that there were two male Eurasians here, the intergrade, and a third Eurasian in the Palo Alto Estuary (MMR, WGB). Some of these birds have continued into January. The Alviso salt ponds were the metropoli-

of **Redhead** in the fall, but only two females were found there on 19 Dec (MMR). Slightly better numbers of 10-20 birds were on Salt Pond A2W on 20 Dec-27 Jan (WGB, v. ob.), five on Salt Pond B1 on 20 Dec (MJM), and four on Salt Pond A1 on 22 Dec (RWR, FV). Inland, one to three birds were on the Ogier Avenue ponds 26 Dec-4 Jan (MJM, v. ob.). A male **Tufted Duck** was found in outer Salt Pond A1 on 20 Dec and was seen again on 22 Dec (WGB, RWR, FV). A hybrid male **Common X Barrow's Goldeneye** was found on Shoreline Lake on 4 Dec (MMR, MJM) and seen irregularly through 9 Jan. A male **Barrow's Goldeneye** was at Shoreline through the period and one to three females were there at least through 9 Jan.

Loons through Gulls

Calero Reservoir, for a short time, held our only loons this winter. An immature **Red-throated Loon** was found on 1 Dec (FV) and remained through 3 Dec. A **Common Loon** was also there on 1 Dec (AV), but did not remain. Four **Brown Pelicans** flying into Salt Pond A2W on 20 Dec (MJM) were the only ones seen this season. A **Pelagic Cormorant** was found on Shoreline Lake on 20 Dec (WGB) and has been seen there irregularly through January. This species is so rare in the South Bay that one wonders if this wasn't the same bird at this same location for a short period in late September. This is the first Pelagic to remain in the South Bay for more than a few days. It appears to have been a good winter for **American Bitterns**. Bayside birds included singles in Mayfield Slough on 22 Dec (PMB, GR) and near Alviso Slough on 17 Jan (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A bird was seen in the Santa Clara Valley Water District ponds on 26 Dec and 5 Jan (LB, JP). Along Coyote Creek single bitterns were found below Silicon Valley Boulevard on 10 Jan (SB, PS, BM), near the Coyote Creek GC on 26 Dec (LO, RWR et al.), and at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 26 Dec (MJM) and 4 Jan (DMa, RWR). The only **Cattle Egret** was a bird in a pasture in Morgan Hill on 4 Dec (LA). An adult **Bald Eagle** over the Almaden Valley on 5 Dec (LY *vide* AV) is likely a returning wintering bird, seen there 9 Dec to the end of January (AV, m.

Field Notes *cont'd*

ob.). Another adult was seen over Marsh and Felter roads on 16 Dec (RWR, FV) and the adult seen on Calaveras Reservoir on 19 Dec (*fide* KH) is likely the same bird. A third adult was found on Anderson Reservoir on 26 Dec (JMy, GHt, ECu, JW). A "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk was found along Guadalupe River above Trimble on 19 Dec (ADeM, GHt, DK *fide* KH) for apparently its ninth year. An adult Ferruginous Hawk was found along Richmond Avenue in the Coyote Valley on 4 Dec (MJM) and seen through the end of January. Two birds were there on 4 Jan (DMA) and an adult and immature were seen nearby on Bailey Road on 1 Jan (MMR, MJM). Two birds were seen near Felter and Marsh roads on 16 Dec (RWR, FV) and one was nearby at Calaveras Reservoir on 19 Dec (KS, R&RCo, TO *fide* KH). Single birds in the Morgan Hill area on 23 Dec (SB, PDo), 26 Dec (SCR *fide* AV), and 26 Dec (JMy, GHt, ECu, JW *fide* AV) are presumably different individuals. Two adults and an immature in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM) were clearly different. Three Snowy Plovers were on the Knapp Tract on 19 Dec (DMcI, DS *fide* KH) and eight more were across the Alameda County line in Drawbridge (BW, MW, SW *fide* KH). The next day, five were found on the San Francisquito Creek delta where unusual (MMR). A Lesser Yellowlegs was found in the Faber Creek north of San Francisquito Creek on 11 Dec (JR, GD), possibly the same bird was across the creek at the edge of the Palo Alto Muni GC on 1 Jan (RWR et al.), and two birds were in a flooded area west of Santa Teresa Boulevard south of Tulare Hill on 5 Jan (MJM). Two Ruddy Turnstones on the San Francisquito Creek delta on 20 Dec (MMR) were just outside the county line. Eighteen Sanderling were also there on 20 Dec (MMR). Single birds were in Alviso at Salt Pond A8 on 1 Jan (MMR, MJM) and Salt Pond A16 on 12-16 Jan (JR, AME, RK, PK). Thirty-one birds on closed salt ponds in Alviso on 17 Jan (MMR, MJM, RGJ) were a good tally for the Alviso area. A Red Phalarope was a surprise at Shoreline Lake on 1 Jan (RK, PK, RWR et al.) but it did not stay through the day. First-winter Glaucous Gulls included one at Drawbridge on 19 Dec (BW, MW, SW *fide* KH),

one at Almaden Lake on 26-29 Dec (BBa, SCR), one on Salt Pond A16 on 31 Dec (JY) and 28 Jan (MJM), and one in the Palo Alto estuary on 8 Jan (KA).

Roadrunners through Warblers

The curious Greater Roadrunner at the Alviso Marina has continued into December and January. Additional birds were found on Mt. Hamilton Road on 19 Dec (SVS et al. *fide* KH) and on Leavesley Road in Gilroy 4-10 Jan (LA). A Long-eared Owl was found in Ed Levin CP on 8 Dec (RL, JL) and one to two birds were found irregularly there into January. A Short-eared Owl was seen at the Palo Alto Baylands on 11-12 Dec (FV, MJM et al.). Surprisingly, two birds were seen above the Coyote Valley on 1 Jan (MMR, MJM). There were good reports of Lewis's Woodpeckers in Isabel Valley with 20 seen on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM) and 11 birds the same day in the San Antonio Valley (WGB, RP). Nine birds were in San Antonio Valley on 15 Jan (ALE, GB). As in most recent winters, Tree Swallows were found irregularly in small numbers with a count of 25 at the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 1 Jan (MMR, MJM) being unusually high. Violet-green Swallows were fewer than usual with one at Coyote Reservoir on 3 Dec (LA), 12 over Russian Ridge on 20 Dec (*fide* AME), and two at the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 1 Jan (MMR, MJM). Barn Swallows are more regular in recent winters, but all that were seen this season were three over the Palo Alto Baylands on 10 Jan (JMD *fide* MMR) and one over Salt Pond A1 on 27 Jan (RK, PK). The winter incursion of Red-breasted Nuthatches has been most noticeable at Henry Coe SP and a few spots in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Large numbers have continued at Henry Coe with a high count of 45 birds on 4 Jan (KPa). In the Santa Cruz Mountains, coverage of Wunderlich Park on 20 Dec resulted in a count of 43 birds (GHa, DKo). Birds in ones, twos, and fours have been found in Los Gatos, at Ed Levin CP, and Lake Cunningham (v. ob.). Most observers at Henry Coe SP have not encountered Pygmy Nuthatches, but five were found there again on 28 Jan (MMR). Win-



David Sibley notes that at 7.5" this is our largest sparrow. Immature Harris's Sparrow sketch by Bonnie Bedford-White

tering House Wrens have included one at the Mountain View Forebay on 9 Dec (GHa), one at the Overfelt Gardens on 19 Dec (AV), and one along San Tomas Aquino Creek below Agnew Road on 22 Dec and 25 Jan (MJM). Single American Dippers were found along Herbert Creek on 23 Dec and 27 Jan (AV) and Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Canyon Road on 5 Jan (JAC). This does not appear to be an invasion year for Golden-crowned Kinglets. One to four birds were reported in scattered locations along the Santa Cruz Mountain crest, which are all near known breeding areas. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher found on three different occasions between 12 Dec and 29 Jan in Santa Teresa CP is clearly overwintering (JPa et al.). A Townsend's Solitaire was found on the Mt. Hamilton CBC on 2 Jan (*fide* BH). Four Phainopepla were found in the San Antonio Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM) and three were tallied in the San Antonio Valley on 15 Jan (ALE, GB). Unusual in winter, a Yellow Warbler was found off Geng Road in Palo Alto on 17 and 20 Dec (MMR). Slightly more common, a male Black-throated Gray Warbler was found in the Mission City Cemetery on 18 Dec (RGJ). A surprising two Hermit Warblers were found, with an adult male in Los Trancos OSP on 20 Dec (DLSu) and a female found along Coyote Creek near the Coyote Creek GC on 26 Dec (WS, RWR et al.). The Palm Warbler found along San Tomas Aquino Creek below Agnew Road in October was seen more or less regularly

continued on Page 11

2004 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Species	SJ 12/19/04	PA 12/20/04	MtH 1/02/05	Cal-MH 12/26/04
Greater White-fronted Goose	50	7	-	-
Snow Goose	1	1	-	1
<i>Chen</i> , sp	2	-	-	-
Cackling Goose	3	-	-	CW
Canada Goose	1021	780	10	450
Wood Duck	39	6	52	192
Gadwall	236	548	-	55
Eurasian Wigeon	-	8	-	-
American Wigeon	323	5311	90	20
Mallard	964	1532	113	1064
Blue-winged Teal	-	9	-	-
Cinnamon Teal	81	166	-	4
Northern Shoveler	2907	3652	-	3
Northern Pintail	198	864	-	-
Green-winged Teal (American)	247	666	-	3
(Eurasian)	-	3	-	-
(American x Eurasian)	-	1	-	-
Canvasback	40	1345	-	25
Redhead	1	25	-	1
Ring-necked Duck	98	234	13	64
Tufted Duck	-	1	-	-
Greater Scaup	36	160	-	61
Lesser Scaup	171	510	-	53
<i>aythya</i> , sp	550	3824	-	-
Surf Scoter	1	116	-	-
Bufflehead	282	210	73	98
Common Goldeneye	26	105	-	140
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	2	-	-
Hooded Merganser	12	23	-	17
Common Merganser	37	35	-	193
Red-breasted Merganser	64	25	-	-
Ruddy Duck	5204	10322	23	69
duck, sp	100	7750	-	-
Ring-necked Pheasant	8	14	-	-
Wild Turkey	64	44	3	362
California Quail	142	171	192	266
Pied-billed Grebe	152	150	17	71
Horned Grebe	2	7	-	1
Eared Grebe	5686	368	-	34
Western Grebe	99	16	-	1
Clark's Grebe	8	8	-	-
<i>aechmophorus</i> , sp	7	22	-	-
American White Pelican	117	26	-	18
Brown Pelican	-	5	-	-
Double-crested Cormorant	230	121	-	697
Pelagic Cormorant	-	1	-	-
American Bittern	1	CW	-	3
Great Blue Heron	45	29	6	26
Great Egret	68	44	2	21
Snowy Egret	66	91	-	27
Green Heron	6	-	1	6
Black-crowned Night-Heron	228	49	-	16
Turkey Vulture	186	20	-	144
Osprey	1	1	-	8
White-tailed Kite	29	29	-	37
Bald Eagle	1	-	-	2
Northern Harrier	29	31	-	9
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	7	1	7
Cooper's Hawk	14	11	-	9
<i>accipiter</i> , sp	4	2	-	4

Species	SJ 12/19/04	PA 12/20/04	MtH 1/02/05	Cal-MH 12/26/04
Red-shouldered Hawk	32	38	3	61
Red-tailed Hawk	154	88	21	107
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	1	-	-	-
Ferruginous Hawk	1	-	3	3
<i>buteo</i> , sp	-	4	-	-
Golden Eagle	8	3	4	9
American Kestrel	82	28	6	87
Merlin	13	8	2	7
Peregrine Falcon	4	13	-	6
Prairie Falcon	2	-	1	-
<i>falco</i> , sp	1	1	-	-
Clapper Rail	-	5	-	-
Virginia Rail	42	19	-	6
Sora	39	14	-	3
Common Moorhen	4	3	-	7
American Coot	1919	4904	283	579
Black-bellied Plover	115	729	-	-
Snowy Plover	11	5	-	-
Semipalmated Plover	2	838	-	-
Killdeer	439	87	14	51
Black-necked Stilt	694	276	-	10
American Avocet	1230	1799	-	4
Greater Yellowlegs	60	32	9	6
Willet	66	2506	-	-
Spotted Sandpiper	3	1	-	5
Whimbrel	-	5	-	-
Long-billed Curlew	96	66	-	-
Marbled Godwit	150	2051	-	-
Ruddy Turnstone	-	2	-	-
Sanderling	1	18	-	-
Western Sandpiper	815	11172	-	-
Least Sandpiper	512	466	-	49
<i>calidrid</i> , sp	70	12340	-	-
Dunlin	282	3038	-	-
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	21	-	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	220	328	-	156
dowitcher, sp	381	614	-	-
Wilson's Snipe	9	1	-	25
Bonaparte's Gull	353	281	-	2
Mew Gull	677	45	-	-
Ring-billed Gull	2021	384	-	149
California Gull	3301	326	-	1938
Herring Gull	6427	730	-	615
Thayer's Gull	16	12	-	35
Western Gull	20	342	-	-
Glaucous-winged Gull	117	236	-	2
Western x Glaucous-W Gull	-	2	-	-
Glaucous Gull	1	-	-	1
gull, sp	3344	1049	-	732
Forster's Tern	56	29	-	-
Black Skimmer	-	23	-	-
Rock Pigeon	1730	700	-	1941
Band-tailed Pigeon	57	250	12	CW
Mourning Dove	772	462	4	1042
Greater Roadrunner	1	-	6	-
Barn Owl	1	3	-	2
Western Screech-Owl	13	23	-	11
Great Horned Owl	6	12	3	6
Northern Pygmy-Owl	2	1	1	2
Burrowing Owl	21	5	-	-

Species	SJ 12/19/04	PA 12/20/04	MtH 1/02/05	Cal-MH 12/26/04
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	13	-	-
White-throated Swift	45	8	-	-
Anna's Hummingbird	411	414	-	229
Belted Kingfisher	23	13	4	21
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	41	-
Acorn Woodpecker	62	198	130	181
Red-breasted Sapsucker	15	3	10	6
Nuttall's Woodpecker	87	104	22	122
Downy Woodpecker	13	17	3	23
Hairy Woodpecker	1	22	10	3
Northern (Red-Shafted) Flicker	145	107	91	190
(Yellow-Shafted) Flicker (intergrade)	-	1	-	-
Pileated Woodpecker	-	4	-	-
Black Phoebe	300	195	32	211
Say's Phoebe	55	14	9	28
Loggerhead Shrike	30	6	1	14
Hutton's Vireo	3	53	-	13
Steller's Jay	162	282	30	170
Western Scrub-Jay	417	495	298	463
Yellow-billed Magpie	204	-	128	103
American Crow	450	278	57	1136
Common Raven	58	163	33	36
Horned Lark	54	-	-	359
Tree Swallow	-	CW	-	-
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	232	650	-	219
Oak Titmouse	98	210	202	218
Bushtit	821	824	58	689
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	58	62	-
White-breasted Nuthatch	20	49	-	82
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	60	-	-
Brown Creeper	2	44	5	9
Rock Wren	8	-	2	6
Canyon Wren	2	-	1	-
Bewick's Wren	48	137	25	63
House Wren	4	-	-	1
Winter Wren	-	7	-	3
Marsh Wren	43	45	2	3
American Dipper	2	-	-	CW
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	3	4	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	372	427	35	314
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	-	-	-	1
Western Bluebird	55	120	211	107
Townsend's Solitaire	-	-	1	-
Hermit Thrush	86	127	13	100
American Robin	348	398	9	655
Varied Thrush	1	80	3	9
Wrentit	19	158	34	52
Northern Mockingbird	98	23	-	47
California Thrasher	3	36	14	15
European Starling	2228	915	1044	1872
American Pipit	155	77	3	67
Cedar Waxwing	342	712	-	677
Phainopepla	-	-	4	-
Orange-crowned Warbler	6	6	-	2
Yellow Warbler	-	1	-	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler (form ?)	799	404	-	456
(Audubon's)	242	421	-	121
(Myrtle)	13	17	-	6
Black-throated Gray Warbler	CW	-	-	-

Species	SJ 12/19/04	PA 12/20/04	MtH 1/02/05	Cal-MH 12/26/04
Townsend's Warbler	11	89	-	26
Hermit Warbler	-	1	-	1
Palm Warbler	1	-	-	-
Northern Waterthrush	-	1	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	91	59	-	14
Western Tanager	CW	-	-	CW
Spotted Towhee	16	130	63	117
California Towhee	181	244	80	154
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	6	-	-	20
Lark Sparrow	8	-	29	51
Sage Sparrow	-	-	3	-
Savannah Sparrow	122	76	31	30
Fox Sparrow	34	64	-	29
(Sooty)	-	-	107	-
(Thick-billed or Slate-colored)	-	-	15	-
Form?	-	-	3	-
Song Sparrow	283	118	3	67
Lincoln's Sparrow	114	21	-	12
Swamp Sparrow	-	2	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	2	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	1573	654	136	1398
Golden-crowned Sparrow	1204	1200	391	1261
sparrow, sp	282	-	-	6
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	487	659	1375	574
Red-winged Blackbird	1073	472	1008	2078
Tricolored Blackbird	12	-	302	22
Western Meadowlark	359	518	336	687
Brewer's Blackbird	741	293	1011	1275
Great-tailed Grackle	-	-	-	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	28	8	1	23
blackbird, sp	222	350	120	525
Hooded Oriole	1	-	-	-
Bullock's Oriole	1	-	-	-
Purple Finch	12	67	27	32
House Finch	701	787	14	751
Red Crossbill	-	130	-	-
Pine Siskin	124	845	28	317
Lesser Goldfinch	200	377	185	320
Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	28	48	-
American Goldfinch	305	97	3	330
goldfinch, sp.	-	40	-	-
House Sparrow	193	31	77	32
Nutmeg Mannikin	-	-	-	CW
Total Species	169	169	88	141
Total	63,262	101,708	8,995	31,198

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

Thanks to Bill Bousman and Kendric Smith for posting the latest taxonomic order of birds on the South Bay Birds website.

2004 CBC reports

San Jose, Dec. 19

The San Jose CBC was blessed with mild weather this year, calm and clear. Our species total came to 167, with two additional count week species: a Black-throated Gray Warbler hanging out at a cemetery and a Western Tanager enjoying the environs of Great America Park. Unlike these two species, many of our rarities were seen in areas that require special permission or permits to enter.

Greater White-fronted Geese were seen by a number of parties, from Penitencia Creek Park to Don Edwards Bay NWR. Snowy Plovers were found around the abandoned town of Drawbridge in the NWR. The Water Pollution Control Plant played host to both a Bullock's and a Hooded Oriole. The rare warbler representative was a Palm Warbler at Great America. Going from the exceptional to the familiar, several species clocked in with over 5,000 representatives: Ruddy Duck, Eared Grebes, and Herring Gulls (the most numerous species, with almost 6,500 counted).

Others were notable for their absence. The Alum Rock park group covering Mt. Hamilton Road came up with a Greater Roadrunner but the Alviso bird that has everyone in such a tizzy was not seen. Also absent for count day was the Ed Levin Long-Eared Owl. Clapper Rail was missed for the 7th year in a row.

As always, none of this would be possible without the help of many wonderful volunteers, especially those who help to organize the volunteers for a region.

—Kirsten R. Holmquist

Palo Alto, Dec. 20

The Palo Alto CBC on December 20, 2004 was a highly successful enterprise, in spite of widespread fog at lower elevations. (The mountain parties reported quite pleasant conditions.) A total of 95 observers found 169 species on the Count, plus two more during count-week, and 101,708 individual birds.

Most notable were the numbers of irruptive finches. We already knew that there were many Pine Siskins about, and the total of 845 (including 107 in bayside or valley regions) was second only to the 1058 found in 1987. In addition, the higher elevations were home to 130 Red Crossbills and 28

The Avocet 10

Lawrence's Goldfinches (a species seen only 5 out of the previous 44 years of this CBC, and never in as high a number). Also in record numbers were Red-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatches, with 45 of 58 Red-breasted from Wunderlich Park, and 50 of 60 Pygmy from the Lost Trail in upper Windy Hill. On the other hand, American Robin, another highly variable species, had the lowest numbers in 35 years, with only 398 tallied!

We didn't get any first-ers for the Count this year, but we did get two second-time-ers: the Pelagic Cormorant found on Shoreline Lake on count day by Bill Bousman, and the (presumably same) Osprey seen at Searsville Lake in the morning and Felt Lake in the afternoon. Also outstanding was the returning Northern Waterthrush at the Charleston Road Marsh, a bird very reluctant to reveal itself; we knew enough to send Richard Jeffers there to find it, as he had the previous year. A Hermit Warbler (found by David Suddjian in Los Trancos OSP, fourth time ever on this CBC) and a Snow Goose (seen by a Shoreline Park employee, and confirmed the next day) rounded out the most unusual species. Also of note were seven Greater White-fronted Geese, three different Eurasian Green-winged Teal, a male Tufted Duck on salt pond A1, a continuing Yellow Warbler at Geng Road in Palo Alto, two Swamp Sparrows (at Palo Alto Baylands and Stevens Creek tidal marsh), and, for count week, 14 Tree Swallows over Moffett Field.

Last year I noted that Wild Turkey and Pileated Woodpecker were becoming regular on this count. This year we had 44 Turkeys, found by five different parties. And we surpassed our "usual" (recently) single Pileated Woodpecker with a whopping four this time. Going the other way, Tricolored Blackbird, which has been dropping precipitously in the past few years, was not found at all this time. The only other misses among expected species were Green Heron and Red Knot. We hung in with a single Wilson's Snipe (we've had 0 or 1 each of the last six counts) and just 3 Common Moorhens.

Thanks to all the participants, region coordinators, and especially to Jack Cole, who organized the whole thing. Let's do it again next December!

—Al Eisner

Calero-Morgan Hill, Dec 26

Count day marked the onset of a major Pacific storm front which gripped the state throughout the rest of December and into January. The ominous clouds, drizzle, and occasional brisk winds were tolerable for most counters, but those at Loma Prieta had to contend with strong winds, heavy rain and poor visibility as the front pushed through over the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Our species total was 141, a little lower than average for this CBC, but we had good solid numbers of most of our resident and wintering birds. Wild Turkeys continue to increase in the foothill oak woodlands in this part of the county with over 350 tallied. Double-crested Cormorants were also seen in very high numbers including a large roost at the SCVWD ponds. 300 Pine Siskins reflected the irruption season for this species. On the other hand, we had low numbers of American Robin and most gull species. We missed Band-tailed Pigeon for the first time on this count, but rumor has it that they were hanging out in Los Gatos on count day.

We added two new species for the Count: a 1st-winter Glaucous Gull at Almaden Lake and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in the sage-scrub slopes of the Santa Teresa Hills. Other highlights included Snow Goose, Redhead, American Avocet, Hermit Warbler, Great-tailed Grackle, plus Count Week Cackling Goose and Western Tanager.

Many thanks to all who took time during the busy holiday season to participate in this count. Special thanks to the area coordinators: Mike Rogers, Mike Mammoser, Rick Herder, Jean Myers, Bill Bousman, Bonnie Bedford-White, Grant Webb, Bruce Barrett, Judy Donaldson, and Lori Raymaker (Santa Clara OSA). Also thanks to our owlers: Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn, Janna Pauser, Kim Blythe, Jean Myers, and Kathy Parker.

The next Calero-Morgan Hill CBC will be held on Friday, Dec 30, 2005. Hope to see you then.

—Ann Verdi

Field Notes *continued from Page 7*

through 19 Dec (MJM, v. ob.). The Charleston Road marsh **Northern Waterthrush** was seen twice again, once on 20 Dec (RGJ) and again on 24 Dec (SCR, DL). A 1st-winter female **Wilson's Warbler** was found along the Guadalupe River below Almaden Lake on 14 Jan (AV) for one of our few January records.

Tanagers through Goldfinches

A few **Western Tanagers** were found during winter, mostly foraging in eucalyptus. A female was found near Great America 10-17 Dec (MJM), two were in Morgan Hill 12 Dec 04-9 Jan 05 (SCR), one was on Escalon in Sunnyvale from about 25 Nov 04-15 Dec 05 (ChW), and a female was at Edenvale Garden Park 17 Dec 04-12 Jan 05 (AV, JPa, MJM). Single **Grasshopper Sparrows** were seen at Monte Bello OSP on 3 Dec and in Santa Teresa CP on 3 Jan (both GHa). This sparrow is very rare here as an overwintering species. A **Swamp Sparrow** was found at the Palo Alto Baylands 11 Dec 04-11 Jan 05 (MJM, MMR, RK), mostly on high tides. Another bird was banded along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 11 Dec (SFBBO) and a third was found in the Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh on 20 Dec (MMR). Four **White-throated Sparrows** were found during the period—surprisingly, none were at feeders. One

was seen at the Bubb Road percolation pond on 7 Dec (PD), one continued at Hidden Villa on 8 Dec (GHa), another along San Francisquito Creek below El Camino was seen again on 9 and 20 Dec (MDd, *fide* AME), and the fourth was at Joseph Grant CP on 3 Jan (BP). The sparrow excitement of the season was an immature **Harris's Sparrow** found at the Mountain View Forebay on 3 Dec (PLaT) and seen again by many the next morning, but not thereafter. The only **Great-tailed Grackle** of the season was a female at the Coyote Creek GC on 26 Dec (MJM). The best oriole trick of the season was a brace of orioles at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 19 Dec (SEM, ChW). First, a female **Bullock's Oriole** was found near the main buildings and then an immature male **Hooded Oriole** was seen afterwards. **Red Crossbills** continued at Henry Coe SP in this invasion winter, with a high count of 40 on 6 Dec (WGB). Numerous birds were found along the Santa Cruz Mountain crest with a total of 130 on the Palo Alto CBC (*fide* AME). Further to the southeast, two were over the Old Santa Cruz Highway on 18 Jan (DLSu). The winter incursion of **Pine Siskins** continued as well. It was mostly concentrated in the Santa Cruz Mountains at first, but by early December birds were being found widely in the flatlands, with some flocks in

CBC reports *cont'd*

Mt. Hamilton, Jan. 2

We had 88 species and 8,995 individuals and some beautiful scenery on the snow covered mountain top. Once again we owe thanks to Lotus and Keith Baker for hosting the compilation dinner.

We did really well with 6 Roadrunners and Lawrence's Goldfinches were back. The Bald Eagles apparently have left Lake Isabel since they haven't been seen for a few years now. I was surprised that we had no Anna's Hummingbirds or warblers of any kind and only a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets, but I'm told there were almost no flowering trees down in the lower areas. Wilson's Snipe was also a surprising miss. Blackbirds and Starling made up most of the masses. Lewis's Woodpecker and Wood Duck, always a treat, showed well this year.

Like most other counts robins were quite low although two teams spotted Varied Thrushes and one team had a Townsend's Solitaire. The weather did not help us find land birds and kept our time in the field a little lower than normal. The temperature ranged from 31° to 48° F depending on elevation. Generally there was light to moderate rain below 2,900 feet and snow above that. The accumulation at the top for the dinner was about 3 inches by the time we ended.

Thanks to Mike Rogers and Mike Mammoser for owling and doing an outstanding job on the Isabel area again. Thanks to Bill Bousman, both Mikes again and Don Schmoldt for reviewing the data. Welcome to the newcomers and thanks to those who have made it a success over the years.
—Bob Hirt

the Diablo Range. Notable numbers included over a hundred at the Charleston Road marsh on 24 Dec (SCR, DL), 69 near San Felipe and Las Animas roads on 26 Dec (MMR), 28 in Isabel Valley deep in the Diablo Range on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM), and about 75 over Casa de Fruta on 14 Jan (DLSu). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** are seldom found in winter so concentrations in the Santa Cruz Mountains were surprising. Two to 14 were found at Monte Bello OSP 20 Dec 04-13 Jan 05 (RWR, FV, GHa, PD) and a single bird was in Palo Alto's Foothills Park on 20 Dec (RL, KS, KP). Three males in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM) was the only report from the Diablo Range.

Observers: Linda Adams (LA), Kumaran Arul (KA), Bruce Barrett (BBA), Leonie Batkin (LB), George Bing (GB), Kim Blythe (KB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Summer Brasuel (SB), Phyllis Browning (PMB), Jack Cole (JAC), Rob & Rita Colwell (R&RCO), Chuck & Joan Coston (C&JC), Emilie Curtis (ECu), Mike Danzenbaker (JMD), Gary Deghi (GD), Al DeMartini (ADeM), Bruce Deuel (BD), Matthew Dodder (MDd), Peggy Don (PD), Peter Doyle (PDo), Art Edwards (ALE), Al Eisner (AME), Garth Harwood (GHa), Bob Hirt (BH), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Roland Kenner (RK), Pat Kenny (PK), Don Keller (DK), David Kohler (DKo), Peter LaTourrette (PLaT), David Lewis (DL), Randy Little (RL), Janet Little (JL), Jim Lomax (JLo), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Dean Manley (DMa), David McIntyre (DMcI), Steve Miller (SEM), Bev Murphy (BM), Jean Myers (JMy), Tom Olsen (TO), Larry Owens (LO), Rich Page (RP), Kathy Parker (KPa), Kay Partelow (KP), Janna Pauser (JPa), Paul Pickering (PP), Bob Power (BP), Gwyneth Ragsone (GR), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jennifer Rycenga (JR), San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO), Willie Skinner (WS), Kendrick Smith (KS), Dale Stahlecker (DS), Kep Stone (KS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Phyllis Swanson (PS), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Frank Vanlager (FV), Sue Van Stee (SVS), Ann Verdi (AV), Bill Walker (BW), Dave Weber (DW), Mary Wisniewski (MW), Shirley Wodtke (SW), Chris Wolfe (ChW), Jim Wright (JW), Linda York (LY), and James Yurchenco (JY).

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

“Go Guided” — The Easiest Way To Do a Birdathon

Too busy to plan a Birdathon? We'll do the planning for you! It's easy to join one of the **Guided Birdathon** teams below. All you have to do is collect the minimum pledge requirement of \$50, grab your binoculars and then go birding! You and your team are eligible to compete for all prizes. To compete for the best prizes, raise as much money as you can, just as you would if you organized your own team. Space on Guided Birdathon teams is limited, so call the SCVAS office at 408-252-3747 early to register for your team. The deadline for registration is one week before the trip occurs. Each leader will contact you with complete details.

The Varied Twitchers

with Mike Rogers
Saturday, April 23

This high intensity 24-hour Birdathon is for intermediate and advanced birders. It's a great opportunity to join one of the state's premier birders, Mike Rogers, for a full day of birding that everyone only dreams about. You'll start owling in the early morning then bird all day until sunset. Last year this team found 157 species in Santa Clara County! (See "Running with the Varied Twitchers" at right for an account of this birding insanity!)

The Persistent Picidae

with Lisa Myers
Saturday, April 23

A less aggressive, but still fun 24-hour Birdathon for beginning and intermediate birders. Join top-notch birder Lisa Myers as she strives to get interested adults outside and into birding. Lisa has lots of experience teaching birding classes in our community, and is a knowledgeable and enthusiastic leader. She welcomes beginners to her non-intimidating environment for some great birding. She'll need your help (regardless of experience!) with the Birdathon and welcomes your participation on her team. Expect to see over 80 species.

The Wacky-Capped Chickadees

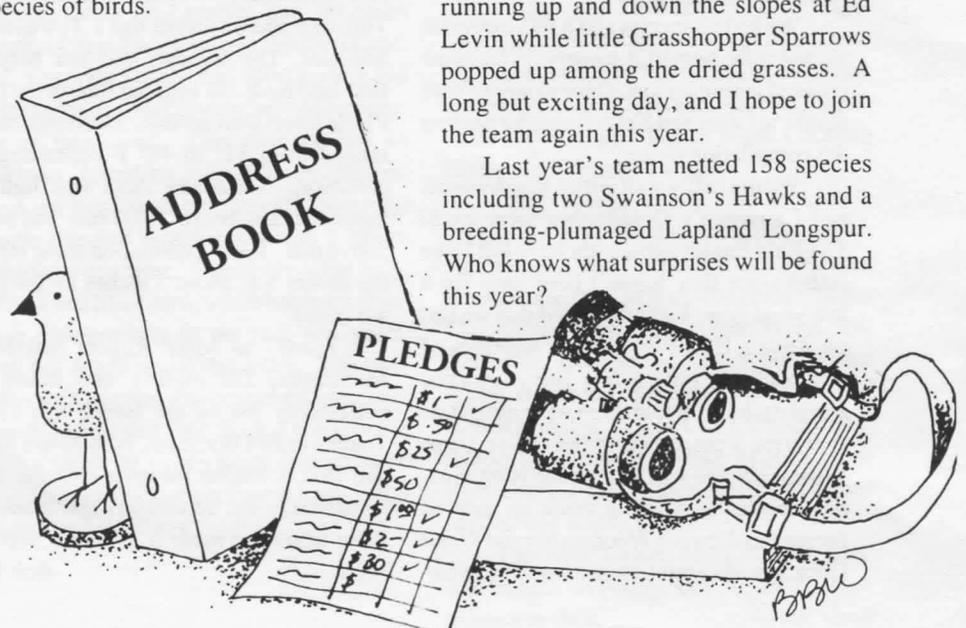
with Debbie Thompson
Sunday, April 17

The great "Big Sit" Birdathon for beginners or those who are too darn busy to spend the entire day running around for their birds. We'll have lots of fun with SCVAS Board President Debbie Thompson, trying to identify all the birds we can while standing within a 200-meter radius circle in four hours at Charleston Slough in Mountain View. Expect to see 50 species — not bad for a small circle!

The Eager Eaglets

Sunday, April 10

This is a special Big Sit Birdathon for youths aged 7 to 18 at Charleston Slough in Mountain View, where lots of shorebirds are easily identified. It's the perfect opportunity for those younger birders to compete for the prize for most money raised by a youth under 18. We reduced the minimum pledge requirement to \$20 for each youth for this one Guided Birdathon Team only. This is a great opportunity to teach your kids the value of raising money for a good cause. The Birdathon should take about two hours and binoculars will be available. All youths 14 and under must be accompanied by a parent. Expect to see about 30 species of birds.



Running with The Varied Twitchers

by Ann Verdi

Two years ago in 2003 I joined the "Varied Twitchers" guided Birdathon team led by our energetic and seemingly tireless leader, Mike Rogers, and what an adventure it was!

We began at 4:00 AM at the Coast Casey Forebay listening for rail calls. Then up to Monte Bello for owls—Great Horned Owl, Western Screech-Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl. As the dawn chorus began we picked up more heard-only birds such as Common Poorwill, and then finally some "seen" birds, including Hammond's Flycatcher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Western Tanager among others.

Then the great race around the county picking up more birds as the day progressed—Olive-sided Flycatcher and American Dipper at Stevens Creek Canyon Park, orioles at SCVAS McClellan Ranch, shorebirds, gulls, terns, and Black Skimmers at the Baylands, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lazuli Bunting, and Rufous Hummingbird at Ed Levin CP, then finally some closing minutes at Coyote Creek Field Station as the sun was setting for White-tailed Kite and Black-crowned Night-Heron.

We ended up with 157 species for the day with our "best" bird being a male Calliope Hummingbird seen at Ed Levin. My favorite scene of the day was Mike running up and down the slopes at Ed Levin while little Grasshopper Sparrows popped up among the dried grasses. A long but exciting day, and I hope to join the team again this year.

Last year's team netted 158 species including two Swainson's Hawks and a breeding-plumaged Lapland Longspur. Who knows what surprises will be found this year?

Birdathon *continued from Page 1*

to read about how easy and worry-free it is to join the Guided Team of your choice. We've also come up with a packet containing examples of letters, entry forms, pledge sheets and some pledge hints we'll provide to help you get started.

Worried about getting pledges? Actually, it's easy. Remember — you are raising money for a terrific cause in our local community. People collecting pledges for the first time are always surprised at how easy it is. At least one person (who considers herself a lightweight when it comes to fundraising) got all her pledges using only e-mail and ended up raising over \$1500! So don't be afraid to ask your mom, fellow birders, co-workers, jogging companions and everyone you bought Girl Scout cookies from. Some examples of pledging include giving a set amount; an amount for each species seen; or even for the number of hours spent birding. One team got a bonus for each mockingbird they found or for the number of miles covered! Being creative makes pledging fun and easy.

There are three Birdathon competition categories: 48-Hour, 24-Hour and the Big Sit. The 48-Hour Birdathon is our most challenging — participants count species within Santa Clara County plus one adjoining county in any continuous time interval of up to 48 hours. The 24-Hour Birdathon is our most popular — competitors count species within Santa Clara County in any continuous time interval of up to 24 hours. And the Big Sit Birdathon is great for beginners, families or those who can't spend a whole day birding. Participants count bird species while standing anywhere within a 200-meter radius circle in Santa Clara County during one continuous time interval of four hours or less.

Here are the easy steps for participating on a Self-Guided Team (see page 12 if you want to join a Guided Team):

- **Form a Self-Guided Team** with your friends. Now is your chance to come up with a legendary team name! Each team must have at least 2 members.
- **Register your team** and members in one of the three categories by calling our office at (408) 252-3747 by May 9. We will then

send you a packet containing detailed information about the Birdathon.

- **Now get pledges!** You'll find it is really very easy when you use the hints contained in your packet. Make sure to explain that you are raising money for SCVAS' local youth education programs and that all donations are tax-deductible. All participants must collect at least \$50 to compete for prizes.

- **Go birding** on your chosen birdathon day(s) between April 9 and May 9.

- **Collect your pledges.**

- **Enter to win a prize** by sending the completed entry form(s) and the collected pledges to our office by 5 PM on June 3.

- **End the suspense!** Find out who won the big prize at the Birdathon Awards Dinner on June 28. Complimentary pizza will be served. There will be games and door prizes, but most of all, come for the fun and stories of everyone's big day. Please RSVP by calling our office.

Be a Birdathon Prize Sponsor! No prize donation is too small!

It's not too late to sign up to be a Spring Birdathon prize sponsor. We had over 40 sponsors last year that participated in many different ways; most donating prizes. No prize donation is too small! Sponsors will be honored in *The Avocet*, on our website, and at our General Meetings and other gatherings. Call our office if you are interested in becoming a sponsor.

The most important reason to participate in the Spring Birdathon is the satisfaction of supporting a good cause in your community. SCVAS depends on the money raised during this fundraiser to continue and, if we raise enough, expand our youth education programs throughout the year. So dust off those pledge sheets and help make a difference while having fun at the same time! Visit the Birdathon section of our website, www.scvas.org, or call the office for more information.

Birdathon fundraising — It's easier than you think!

*by Dotty Calabrese
"Wild Women Birders"*

At the 2003 SCVAS Birdathon Celebration Dinner, I was surprised to discover that the single highest individual fundraiser in the event had raised just over \$1800. I immediately thought to myself, "If I really tried, I bet I could raise over \$2000. It's not that hard." In 2003, my first Birdathon, I had barely tried and had raised just under \$500. In the past five years I had helped a friend raise \$4000+, \$2500+ and \$2000+ to participate in three AIDS Bike Rides. I knew that with a little organizing and a little work, \$2000 could be raised pretty easily for a good cause.

For the next few months I plotted and planned, making lists of potential donors, mentally composing my fundraising letter, etc. In February, I contacted the SCVAS Office to find out a bit more about the environmental education programs the Spring Birdathon funds support, as I wanted more specific information for my letter.

Imagine my delight to discover that the biggest educational program benefits students at Title I (low income area) public schools. I teach part-time at San Miguel School in Sunnyvale, a Title I school. I immediately arranged to have information about the program sent to 4th and 5th grade teachers and the principal at San Miguel. I realized that by raising at least \$2000, I could be paying the cost of including the 5th graders at San Miguel School in the Wetlands Field Trip Program. Now, I was REALLY psyched.

As the 4th/5th teachers read over the material for the program the next week, they immediately noticed two things, that the material presented and covered was exactly in line with their grade level science curriculum, and that a FREE BUS would be provided. Their classes are now scheduled for the program in early November 2004.

This is an incredible addition to curriculum support. Because of the low-income population at this school, classes usually are limited to only one field trip per year provided by the school district.

continued on Page 15

The Big Birds

Progress at Altamont — good news for raptors?

by Craig Breon
Executive Director



Re: Altamont Pass Wind Turbine Permit Appeals, CUP Nos. C-8161, C-8191, C-8201, C-8203, C-8233, C-8234, C-8235, C-8236, C-8237, C-8238, C-8239, C8241, C-8242, C-8244, C-8023, C-8031, C-8036, C-8037, C-8134, C-8136, C8137, C-8173, C-8182, C-8216, C-8224, C-8225, C-8231, C-8232, C-8240, & C8263.

How's that for a gripping introduction?

Now imagine that each of those numbers represents the lives of five Golden Eagles this year, plus five Burrowing Owls and 50 passerines. The stakes are high at Altamont Pass, and the conservationists are gaining ground.

Each of the numbers above refers to a Conditional Use Permit issued by Alameda County to the wind farms at Altamont Pass. Combined, they represent the largest area of wind power generation in the United States (5,200 turbines). Those permits have been appealed by the Center for Biological Diversity, Golden Gate Audubon Society, and others. SCVAS is involved through letter writing and appearances in front of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

Raptor mortality

According to the California Energy Commission (CEC), an estimated 880 to 1,300 raptors are killed each year by the Altamont wind turbines, including 75 to 116 Golden Eagles. The Diablo Range, where Altamont sits, has the highest density of Golden Eagles in the world. This level of mortality has been occurring at Altamont for the last twenty years, and is apparently increasing. While federal and state laws protect raptors such as Golden Eagles, there has been little effort to enforce those laws against the wind farms. As a result, conservation organizations have had to step in where the government failed to act.

To their credit, many wind energy companies are acknowledging the problems at Altamont. The numbers are simply too large to ignore, and the industry seems to realize that what happens at Altamont will reverberate throughout the United States.

Conservationists support wind energy. Wind represents one of the most promising alternatives to fossil fuels, and thus a key component in efforts to address global warming. That said, the issue of bird strikes remains a fundamental roadblock to full endorsement of wind energy by environmentalists. To the extent that the bird strikes at Altamont can be reduced, the entire wind industry will be the biggest beneficiary.

Nonetheless, the initial plan put forth by the wind companies fell far short of what is needed at Altamont. Backed by the evidence and recommendations of the CEC, conservationists are demanding a series of changes and mitigation measures to dramatically reduce the bird strikes at Altamont, and it appears that the Alameda Board of Supervisors is listening.

The flight path forward

Some level of bird strikes at Altamont is, unfortunately, inevitable, but substantial progress can be made without crippling the ability to produce wind power in the area. The CEC does not have permit authority over the wind farms, but they have a strong interest in the overall health of the wind industry, and thus have laid out a series of recommendations that are backed by the conservationists. These include:

- A goal of 50% reduction in bird strikes in the next three years, and 85% within 6 years.
- A credible, peer-reviewed monitoring program to verify the above.
- A permanent shutdown of 7-16% of the turbines (those located in areas that have been mapped as having the greatest number of mortalities).
- A seasonal shut-down of 43-100% of

the turbines (shutting off the turbines in winter would greatly reduce mortality, while the summer months produce far more wind power).

- A mitigation fee for remaining bird strikes, the fees to be used to conserve important habitats elsewhere.

Another idea embraced by some of the companies is "repowering." This would mean replacing many of the smaller turbines with a lesser number of large ones. Turbines up to 250 foot high could produce as much energy with fewer bird strikes. Of course, the visual impacts of such turbines would increase.

Lead impact on condors

In other "Big Bird" news, conservationists have petitioned the California Fish and Game Commission to phase out the use of lead bullets in the State, in particular in areas of California Condor habitat.

Lead poisoning was one of the central concerns leading to the capture of the last 22 wild condors in the mid-1980's. Since then, captive breeding has greatly increased the condor numbers, and nearly 100 have been released back into the wild, including to nearby Big Sur and Pinnacles National Monument.

Despite this seeming success, wild condors remain at serious risk from lead. Since 1997, five condors have died from lead poisoning and more than 30 have required blood treatment. The obvious cause is lead bullets, fragments of which the condors often ingest after feeding on carrion left behind by hunters, ranchers, and others.

Many years ago, lead shot was eliminated from licensed waterfowl hunting. Concerns included not only danger to wildlife, such as Bald Eagles, but to humans as well from the ingestion of small amounts of lead. Lead-free waterfowl hunting is now the norm, and there is little reason why that should not also be the case for other hunting and shooting. Copper and composite bullets

Wild Women Birders *continued from Page 13*

At schools in higher income areas, parents either drive or pay money for bus use for additional trips. Most of the parents at Title I schools are unable to drive on field trips as they are either working two jobs just to get by and/or they cannot afford to carry enough car insurance liability coverage to qualify as a field trip driver.

I decided I would not ask a single teacher at the school for a donation. I know they all pour their extra money back into their classrooms. I didn't want to detract from that. However, retired teachers proved to be more than willing to make a donation, as did my friends, family, neighbors, auto mechanic, printer, doctor, etc. I raised \$2253.10, including a \$100 donation from my ex-husband and his wife! Fundraising for an event like this is easier than you think. I sent out 135 letters and received donations ranging from \$5 to \$100 from 76 individuals and families.

Condors *cont'd*

are now available on the market.

With any luck, by the time you read this, the Fish and Game Commission will have taken the first steps towards removing lead from condor habitat. We'll keep you informed.

Information for this article was partially derived from the Center for Biological Diversity's website:
www.biologicaldiversity.org.

TAKE ACTION!!

Please help us reduce bird strikes at the Altamont wind farms. Use this article for the information needed to write the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and urge them to adopt new permits for the wind farms that incorporate all the recommendations of the California Energy Commission. Don't worry that you aren't an Alameda County resident. Birds don't worry about political boundaries, and in this case, neither should we. Write to:

President Keith Carson and Board Members, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

In November, 2004, the fifth graders at San Miguel School attended their free Wetlands trip, had visits from three predatory birds with presentations by their handlers, heard other curriculum related presentations, and enjoyed several hands-on activities. Their experiences far surpassed my high expectations. Students and teachers alike were excited and amazed at all they learned, thanks to funds raised by the 2004 Spring Birdathon.

Visit the back country of Henry Coe Park

It's that time again! On the weekend of **April 23-24, 2005** Henry W. Coe State Park will open the gate at Bell Station on Highway 152 east of Gilroy. The Coe Backcountry Weekend, held in the little-traveled east side of the 90,000 acre park, allows visitors vehicle access to a remote and beautiful area. Birders, hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians have a unique opportunity to see and enjoy an area isolated from the park's Morgan Hill entrance by long distances and rugged terrain.

The fees for entering the park on this special weekend are: for one day (either Saturday or Sunday) \$20 per vehicle; for both days (and camp overnight) \$40 per vehicle. There is no limit on the number of people in a vehicle. Carpooling is encouraged. Because of space limitations, there will be a random drawing, and if your application is chosen, you will receive a ticket for the day(s) you request. Your check will be returned to you if your application is not chosen.

More information and applications are available on our website www.coebackcountry.org, at park headquarters, and at the libraries in Morgan Hill, Gilroy, and Modesto. Written requests for applications (include a self-addressed stamped business envelope) should be addressed to Application Forms, Coe Backcountry Weekend, 1410 Terri Lynn Court, Gilroy, CA 95020.

If you have any questions, please email to coebackcountry@hotmail.com, or call 408-847-1193 or 650-324-1455.

SCVAS Education Committee on a mission

by Freddy Howell, Committee Member

Mission Statement: Our objective is to educate Santa Clara County residents, especially children, so that they may understand and appreciate the diversity, delicate balances, and dynamic interactions of the Bay Area's ecosystems as they relate to birds and other wildlife.

Mission Goals:

- Work to correlate state standards to our programs to make the programs more accessible and applicable to teachers.
- Reach out to communities with diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.
- Link our various programs to create a more in-depth and multiple exposure environmental education experience.
- Pursue a system of evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of our programs.

Current Programs:

Wetlands/Woodlands Discovery
Young Audubon
Audubon Adventures
Wildlife Education Day
Slide Shows

Teacher Resource Center
Classroom Visits
Adult Education Classes

South County Earth Day Program
Stewards of the Earth

Partnering with Community Outreach including the following:

Don Edwards NWR, SV Water Treatment Plant, Sky Hunters Environmental Education, UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, Hidden Villa, and Environmental Volunteers.

In future issues of *The Avocet*, we will highlight each of the above current programs. If any of these strike your fancy, please join us on this very active committee of as one of our program volunteers. Call Program Coordinator Kim Yuan-Farrell at (408) 252-3740.

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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.

RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422

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

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

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

2005 Volume 52, Number 2

Chapter Membership in the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) receives the SCVAS newsletter, *The Avocet*

\$ 20: One Year SCVAS Membership \$ 35: Two Year SCVAS Membership \$ 10: Living Lightly One Year Membership

Additional Gift: \$ 50 \$ 100 \$ 250 Other _____

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Check here if you would like a free copy of *Birding at the Bottom of the Bay*, our gift to new members!

Check here if you don't want your name and address shared with other organizations. **Make all checks payable to SCVAS.**