



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May - June 2005

Introducing new Executive Director Brenda Torres-Barreto

by Grant Hoyt

SCVAS is pleased to welcome Brenda Torres-Barreto as the chapter's new Executive Director, succeeding Craig Breon. After an intensive three-month interview process, Brenda emerged from a strong list of applicants as the Board's first choice to become our second ED, and she officially started work on February 14th.

Brenda brings an impressive resume and a deep commitment to SCVAS' mission to her new position. A native of Puerto Rico, she has a BSc. in Environmental Studies from the University of San Juan and a Master's degree in Environmental Management from Yale. Her work experience includes stints in the private, public, and non-profit sectors in Puerto Rico, and when she moved to the Bay Area last year, her mind was made up: "I was completely clear that I wanted to work in an environmental, non-profit position, and the Audubon Executive Director job was a perfect fit."

In her most recent position as Executive Director of the San Juan Bay Estuary Program, Brenda was responsible for overseeing 49 coastal restoration actions in the areas of water quality, fish and wildlife, aquatic debris, and public involvement. At the same time she managed the design, funding and

implementation of 30 other diverse projects, from designation of natural reserves and reforestation to community volunteering and educational initiatives. The SCVAS job posting described numerous similarities to her previous job, including grant writing, interacting with multiple agencies, managing a small staff and modest budget, and focusing on habitat protection and restoration. In addition, some unexpected signs materialized to draw her toward the Audubon position.

First, she contacted several local groups via the Internet from her home in Puerto Rico. One such contact was Craig Breon, who just happened to be planning his departure from SCVAS and encouraged Brenda to think about the ED job. "Then, last fall," she relates, "my father-in-law showed me a fascinating article in Smithsonian magazine about John James Audubon. When I moved here I had a new appreciation for birds, and knowing the SCVAS Executive Director position was available, I knew I had to apply." Much later in the interview process, she and her husband were enjoying a lovely afternoon in their Palo Alto yard and let a phone call go unanswered. Her husband wondered if the call was from Audubon offering the job; just

then two Anna's hummingbirds flew in front of them, put on a brief, intense romantic display, and then buzzed away. Brenda

continued on Page 4

General Membership Meeting "California Birds in Motion" with Larry Arbanas of Earthwhile Nature Productions

Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds.
Wednesday, May 18

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Don't miss this program by Larry Arbanas, an exceptional Bay Area bird and nature videographer. He has spent endless hours kneeling in swamps swatting mosquitoes and flies while shooting footage of birds, so we don't have to. "California Birds in Motion" uses the same large lens and television camera that brings NFL Football and Olympic Ice Skating into our living rooms. Larry hopes people will enjoy his bird movies as much as the 49ers.

Larry provides footage for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Visual Media Collection and their online version of the comprehensive bird species account, [The Birds of North America](#).

continued on Page 5

**Annual Potluck
Dinner
Wed. June 15
6:30 PM**

See Page 3 for details

◆ *Special Kenn Kaufman
book signing —Page 3*

◆ *Sapsucker surprise
— Field Notes, Page 6*

◆ *Fall Fundraiser donors
— Page 9*

◆ *Schoolkids discover
wetlands — Page 10*

May - June 2005 Field Trips

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

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

NF = No facilities available

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, meet in first parking lot. A top riparian birding spot for migrants, local breeding birds. \$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 in Del Puerto Canyon, working 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 first pullout. Possible Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinch. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch and liquids.

Sunday May 8, 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 Mountain View. Trip designed for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend.

Wednesday May 11, 8:30 AM

Almaden Lake and Los Alamitos Creek

Half day. Leaders: Janna Pauser (408) 997-1727 & Summer Brasuel. Meet in west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south. Park is on east (left) side of Almaden Expwy. Continue just past Coleman Rd. (and the park) and return northbound on Almaden Expwy to park entrance on right. Easy walking. Waterfowl, raptors, riparian birds. **LO**

Saturday May 14, 8:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. Directions: see May 1st. write-up

Sunday May 15, 8:00 AM

Arastradero OSP

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd west; turn right on Arastradero Rd., meet in parking lot about a half-mile on right. Moderate walking.

Saturday May 21, 8:00 AM

Almaden Quicksilver County Park

Half day. Leader: Al Dieckmann (408) 379-5641. A short loop of 1.5 miles taking Mine Hill, Guadalupe and Senador Mines Trails. Summer birds (W. Wood-Pewee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, W. Tanager), newly fledged titmice, chickadees, juncos, woodpeckers, etc. Take Almaden south past Blossom Hill Rd and Coleman Rd; turn right at next exit (McAbee Rd.) and follow until it dead-ends at entrance to park. Pierce dairy farm will be on right, parking is along the street. Meet at trailhead entrance. **RC**

Sunday May 22, 8:00 AM

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Meet at northeast corner of Skyline Blvd (Hwy 35) and Page Mill Rd (the corner nearest San Francisco and the bay). Do not park in Russian Ridge Parking lot. Moderately strenuous walk with some elevation change. Possible Chipping Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager. Bring extra layers of clothing as temperatures can vary wildly. **LO**

Wednesday May 25, 8:00 AM

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Leaders: Rob and Rita Colwell (650) 949-1869. Meet at large Monte Bello OSP parking area on left side of Page Mill Rd about 7 miles southwest of I-280. Possible Grasshopper Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Ash-throated Flycatcher. Be prepared for any kind of weather. Moderate, but hilly walking. **LO**

Saturday May 28, 7:30 AM

Twin Gates/Smith Creek

Birding by ear

Half day. Leader: Grant Hoyt (650) 969-7892. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd, go past main entrance to Grant Ranch Co. Park (approx. 9 miles), continue uphill another 2 miles to Twin Gates parking lot on left. Probable Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, woodland and riparian breeding birds. Moderately strenuous hike.

Sunday May 29, 8:00 AM

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From I-280 in Palo Alto take Page Mill Rd west, toward Skyline Blvd (Hwy 35), for approx. 7 miles and meet at Monte Bello OSP parking area on left. Possible Lazuli Bunting, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Chipping and Grasshopper Sparrows. Be prepared, it can be cold, wet and foggy. **LO**

Saturday June 4, all day

Palo Alto Summer Bird Count

See notice on Page 7.

Sunday June 5, 8:00 AM

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. Meet at northeast corner of Skyline Blvd (Hwy 35) and Page Mill Rd (corner nearest San Francisco and the bay); we'll then drive to where we will park for the trip (do not park in Russian Ridge Parking lot!). Bring extra layers of clothing in case it's foggy and cold. Possible Grasshopper Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting. **NF**

Saturday June 11, 8:00 AM

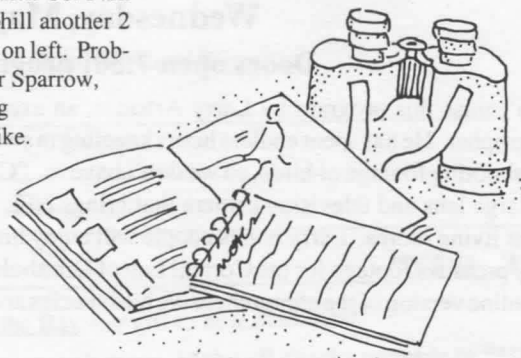
Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see May 8th write-up.

Sunday June 12, 8:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. 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. A top riparian birding spot for migrants and local breeding birds. \$4 entrance fee. **LO**



Kenn Kaufman en Español!

Monday May 23rd, 7:00 PM (6:30 social)

Author presentation and book signing

Wine and light hors d'oeuvres Le Petit Trianon Theatre (Main Theatre)

72 N. Fifth St. San Jose between E. St. John and E. Santa Clara Streets

Kenn Kaufman y nosotros, nos encontramos en la misma sintonía, y logrando una misión en común: incorporar a toda comunidad a la faena de la conservación de nuestros recursos naturales. Mas aún, nos dirigimos a una comunidad en particular, los hispanoparlantes. A través de la Guía de campo a la aves de Norteamérica, Kaufman ofrece una herramienta de conservación hermosísima. Los invito a la presentación de este libro en Le Petit Trianon el 23 de mayo en la ciudad de San José. Enhorabuena Kaufman!

Kenn Kaufman and we are on the same wavelength, and accomplishing a mission in common: the integration of every community to our conservation efforts. Furthermore, we are targeting the same community: Spanish speakers. As part of our new plans, we will be providing resources to nearly half a million Hispanics in this County; likewise, Kenn is currently offering his Field Guide to Birds of North America to 30 million people in the United States through its Spanish version. This version reflects the same excellence as reflected in his English version. Please join Kenn Kaufman and us on May 23 at Le Petit Trianon in San Jose at 6 PM for the presentation of Guía de campo a las aves de Norteamérica.

Saturday & Sunday, June 18 - 19 Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

Leader: Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260. Meet at 7:00 AM Saturday at Yuba Pass parking lot on south side of Hwy 49. From South Bay take Hwy 80 to Truckee; go north on Hwy 89, then west on Hwy 49 to Yuba Pass. Saturday will be spent exploring the Yuba Pass area for Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed and Black-backed Woodpecker, American Dipper, Townsend's Solitaire, Evening Grosbeak, Yellow-rumped, Hermit, Nashville & MacGillivray's Warblers, Lincoln's Sparrow and more. On Sunday the group will bird east of the pass in drier habitat where Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee, Sage Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow, and other Great Basin specialties occur. Last stop is the fresh water marsh of Sierra Valley, where Sandhill Crane, Yellow-headed Blackbird, White-faced Ibis, various ducks, and some years, Black Tern, breed. Lodging is available in Sierra City and Downieville, camping at a number of sites throughout the region and near Yuba Pass. Trip limited to the first 20 people to call Clay and reserve a space.

Saturday, June 25, 8:00 AM

Rancho del Oso/Big Basin State Park
Half day plus. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. Take Hwy 17 to Santa Cruz, then go north on Hwy 1. Meet at beach parking area along Hwy 1 just north of Waddell Creek Bridge at MP 36.30; 2 miles south of Ano Nuevo State Reserve and 7 miles north of Davenport. A 5-mile, fairly level hike along

Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail looking for Swainson's Thrush, Winter Wren, Wilson's Warbler, woodpeckers. Carry lunch, liquids (in backpack if possible), dress in layers.

Sunday June 26, 7:30 AM

Alamitos Creek and Lake Almaden
Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south then left on Camden Ave. After 4-way stop as road bears right, park in small lot on left just before Graystone Lane. 3 miles of easy walking. LO

Saturday July 9, 9:00 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. For directions see write-up for July 9th.

Saturday August 6, 8:30 AM Ano Nuevo State Reserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. A 3 to 4 mile walk (half of it in sand), fog, bright sun and wind. Bring a scope, lunch, liquids, and dress in layers. Possible Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet, early returning shorebirds, Black Swift if we're lucky. Entrance is along Hwy 1 about 30 miles south of Half Moon Bay or 20 miles north of Santa Cruz. \$5 per car parking fee; meet at far (south) end of parking lot. LO

Saturday August 21, 8:00 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see write-up for July 9th.

Events Calendar

Wed. 5/4, 7:30 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents "Light Fading: The Imperiled Everglades" featuring the wildlife images of Joel Curzon. Lucie Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Tues. 5/10, 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: Bewick's Wren.

Wed. 5/11, 10 AM

Nestbox trail tour/coffee chat with Dick Blaine, McClellan Ranch Park.

Sat. 5/14, 11-4

Int'l. Migratory Bird Day
Alviso. See Page 3

Wed. 5/18, 8:00 PM (doors open 7:30)
General Mtg. Palo Alto Art Center

Sat. 6/4, all day

Beak & Feather Boutique
De Anza flea market

Tues. 6/14, 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. This will be a picnic; bring a sandwich. We'll plan discussion schedule for 2005-06.

Tues. 6/28, 6:30 PM

Birdathon Awards Ceremony
Fabulous prizes! Outrageous birding exploits! All Birdathon participants encouraged to attend!



Annual Potluck Dinner Wed. 6/15, 6:30 PM McClellan Ranch Park

Join your fellow SCVAS members for the potluck dinner and volunteer recognition awards. Meet the Audubon staff, Board members and officers, and do some birding while you dine. Bring a main dish, casserole, salad or hors d'oeuvres to share — SCVAS provides beverages and desserts. Bringing your own plates and cups helps reduce use of wasteful plastic and paperware.

Volunteer Ventures

by Kim Yuan-Farrell
Programs Coordinator

As summer approaches and the school year comes to an end, some of our volunteer opportunities wind down. Educational programs in classrooms pause for the season. Chapter General Meetings wait to begin again in August. Still, we have plenty of ways to get involved. Read below about several options, contact me to discuss additional choices, and join our chapter on June 15th at 6:30 for the **Annual Potluck Dinner** at McClellan Ranch Park. We'll enjoy a sumptuous feast, review the year, and honor just a few of our noteworthy volunteers.

Webmaster – Volunteer Peter LaTourrette has served generously and effectively as SCVAS webmaster for seven and a half years; he helped our organization become one of the first in the area to communicate to its members via the net. He is now ready to hand over the webmaster task to another willing volunteer. This long-term position is vital to our chapter's outreach and communications with members and the general public. Duties primarily involve helping the staff with regular site updates. Experience with web design and maintenance is required.

Adult Education Coordinator – The offerings and popularity of SCVAS Adult Education classes have grown tremendously over the last two years. We need help coordinating and scheduling classes in order to continue to offer such wonderful and diverse classes as Beginning Birdwatching, Birding by Ear, and Pen & Ink Bird Art. This coordinator will contact instructors to schedule classes roughly six times each year. Courses can be scheduled in advance, so the actual time commitment is somewhat flexible. While organization and a friendly demeanor are important for this position, no particular skills or experience are required.

Field Trip Coordinator – Wednesday Trip Coordinator Rosalie Lefkowitz has kindly dedicated time and energy for eight years to scheduling field trips. She needs someone to replace her in scheduling trips on the fourth Wednesday of the month except December, June and August. This coordinator would recruit leaders for eight field trips per year and help them submit brief notices for *The Avocet's* Field Trips section. This job is usually not very time-consuming, and no experience or specific skills are required. Training and background will be provided.

Spanish-Speaking Volunteers – We're looking for individuals fluent in Spanish to aid in our Hispanic community outreach efforts. These volunteers could help in a variety of ways, from presenting scripted bird slideshows or leading field trips in Spanish to helping at events hosted in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. The time commitment and exact involvement will vary based on your interest and availability. This is an exciting opportunity to build bridges and help us expand our horizons to include an important part of the South Bay community.

The Avocet 4

Brenda Torres-Barreto *from Page 1*

returned the phone call, which was indeed from Board President Debbie Thompson with a job offer!

Brenda's duties as the new ED include fundraising and grant-writing, both of which she has considerable experience with and welcomes enthusiastically. She also has some fresh ideas about community outreach, which she shared with the Board during her interviews and is eager to implement: "My new goal is to reach out to the Hispanic community through SCVAS, and be a role model as a Hispanic person in the



Brenda
Torres-Barreto

environmental community. My strategy is to identify social organizations in the community and partner with them to provide conservation material to educate and empower them to help further Audubon's mission." Look for a regular feature written by Brenda in Español in future issues of *The Avocet*.

Before accepting the Audubon position, Brenda began networking with other local environmental groups and individuals such as Terry Bott, who offered advice and encouragement for her during the job search. When Terry learned of the SCVAS job opening, he excitedly told her that he was a birder, Audubon was a great organization, and she should go for the job! After being hired, outgoing ED Craig Breon worked together with Brenda for three weeks, providing invaluable assistance in the transition. Office Manager Susan Bell and Programs Coordinator Kim Yuan-Farrell have also been instrumental in getting Brenda acquainted with the office, volunteers, and various SCVAS programs.

The members of the Board of Directors deserve a sincere note of thanks from the chapter for their thorough and diligent completion of the labor-intensive task of selecting our new Executive Director. Brenda's experience, professionalism, and enthusiasm earned her the position in a highly-qualified field of candidates, and she has embraced her new job with great energy and an upbeat attitude. The challenges are formidable—no one ever got rich heading an environmental non-profit, the specter of habitat loss and overdevelopment lurks everywhere in our County, and she is filling the shoes of a unique and respected predecessor—but Brenda is not one to back down from these challenges. We welcome Brenda to our Audubon family, and encourage our members to meet her at the office or at an event in the community. Becoming involved in one of our conservation, education, or birding programs would be a great way for our members to help Brenda get off to a dynamic start in her new job! Bienvenidos, Brenda!

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.

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.

Drawn from Nature's Wonders with Joan Hill

This class will help you learn or refine drawing skills. You'll look at many of Nature's wonders as a source of artistic enjoyment while giving special attention to details that matter most. Your drawings with pen or pencil will be your interpretation of the world of Nature, as you see it. The instructor will lead you through looking, seeing, and drawing activities designed to help you draw pictures which are fresh and simple in style. Birds, bees, butterflies, and other wonders will be your subjects. A supply list will be provided upon registration.

Dates: Mondays, 6/6, 6/13, 6/20, 6/27 7-10 PM

Location: Conference Room at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino

Fee: Members \$95, non-members \$110. Minimum 6 students, maximum 12.

Joan Hill is an experienced instructor in Drawing, Design, and Color Theory at De Anza College. Her artwork, in a variety of media, has Nature as its primary focus and theme. As a member of the American Society of Botanical Artists and SCVAS, she is committed to teaching and developing programs that offer hands-on art activities for Nature lovers.

Beginning Birdwatching with Lisa Myers

This class welcomes anyone who has thought about birdwatching and wants to learn more. Lisa creates a fun-filled environment for you to learn about the different species found in your back yard and North America. She'll review field guides, optics, ethics, taxonomy, verbiage, 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, then practice what you've learned in the field.

Dates: Class: Mondays 7/11, 7/18 7-9 PM; field trip: Saturday 7/16 8-12 PM

Location: Conference Room at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino

Fee: Members \$30, non-members \$35. Minimum 8 students, maximum 22.

2nd Annual Beak & Feather Boutique

Saturday, June 4

De Anza Flea Market

*Here is your chance to
pick up some great
bird related treasures!*

Donations of your nearly new bird items are being accepted through May. That means binoculars, books, scopes, birdhouses, bird feeders, paintings, photography, bird jewelry, DVDs, CDs, tapes, etc.

Questions? Call the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747.

International Migratory Bird Day



Saturday, May 14, 11 AM - 4 PM

All Activities are Free!



~ Bird Walks ~ Live Birds ~
~ Poster Contest ~ Activities for Kids ~
~ Environmental Fair ~

Don Edwards Environmental Education Center
San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Alviso

For more information, call 408-262-5513 or visit
desfbay.fws.gov/imbd.htm

*Reservations are required for bird walks and
morning bird banding demonstrations*

General meeting with Larry Arbanas *cont'd. from Page 1*

He produces bird and natural history videos for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His work appeared in February and March at the New York Historical Society's recent showing, Audubon's Aviary, showcasing the original paintings of America's premier nature painter accompanied by video and sound. He also shoots for Watchable Wildlife, covers events for California and Oregon nature festivals, and is the videographer for the Klamath Basin Birding Trail.

SCVAS Wish List

Our office and education and conservation programs run almost entirely on donated furniture and equipment. We would appreciate any of the following items in good working order. As we are a non-profit organization we can provide you with a Donation Receipt for tax reimbursement.

- Motorola Two-Way Radios (Walkie Talkies)
- Spotting Scope Tripod
- Digital Projector
- Laptop Computer (PC or Mac)

Contact Kim at (408) 252-3740. Thank you!

The Avocet 5



SCVAS NATURE SHOP.
OPEN
MON-FRI 10-5
SATURDAY 10-2
VISA & MASTERCARD
ACCEPTED

Questions? Call the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747.

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl

Our rare geese became decidedly more so in late winter. **Greater White-fronted Geese** were represented by three adults near Salt Pond A5 in Alviso on 26 Feb (MMR, MJM, RGJ) and three immatures were still at the Palo Alto Muni GC on 21 Mar (RWR, FV). The **Snow Goose** in the Palo Alto area was last reported on 12 Feb in the Geng Road pond (LCh et al.). Another bird was over Hwy 101 and Tennant Road on 25 Mar (SCR). A **Ross's Goose** was at the Arzino Ranch 11 Feb-5 Mar (DW, v.ob.) and may be the same one seen there in mid-January. The number of **Eurasian Wigeon** in Salt Pond A2W tapered off in late winter. At least six males were there on 2 Feb (MMR, RWR, FV) and 19 Feb (MJM, RK, PK), five males were still present on 2 Mar (WGB) and one remained on 16 Mar (WGB). The last female was seen on 5 Mar (MBr). The only other report was of a male at the mouth of Guadalupe Slough on 26 Feb (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A pair of **Blue-winged Teal** was in a small stormwater pond at Moffett Field on 3 Feb (MMR, WGB), where also found in January.

A male on Adobe Creek in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 12 Feb (LCh et al.) was in a more expected location. Rains seemed to have made the Sunnyvale Baylands Park attractive once again for teal and a pair of blue-wings were seen there on 7 Mar (RS). A bird in Salt Pond A1 on 19 Mar (JB) was less expected. Birders returned to Llagas Creek and the old Gilroy sewer ponds on 24 Mar and found three male Blue-winged Teal near Bloomfield Road (MP) and three males and a female closer to the sewer plant (RWR, FV). A single male **'Eurasian' Green-winged Teal** in Stevens Creek near the tidal marsh on 16 Mar (WGB) was likely one of the two males that wintered near here. Salt Pond A2W held the last of our wintering Red-head through 2 Mar (WGB). The high count was a good total of 93 birds on 13 Feb (MMR). A male **Tufted Duck** was found on Salt Pond A2W on 2 Feb (RWR,

FV) and enjoyed many through 5 Mar (AV, MBr). This male, with a full tuft, is likely the same bird found in Salt Pond A1 in late December. An adult male **Surf Scoter** on Stevens Creek Reservoir on 10 Mar (PB fide RSTh) was unusual inland. The hybrid male **Common X Barrow's Goldeneye** was seen once again at Shoreline Lake on 19 Feb (RK, PK, DSt). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** seemed out of place in a small stormwater pond on Moffett Field on 2-3 Feb (WGB, MMR). A male was seen again at Shoreline Lake on 3 Feb (GB), 5 Mar (MBr), and 6 Mar (TGr) and a female was there on 3 Feb (GB) and 6 Mar (TGr).

Sapsuckers were the season's surprise—a male Yellow-bellied at Hidden Villa and a female Williamson's at Lake Cunningham

Cormorants through Gulls

Missed in early February, the **Pelagic Cormorant** was seen once again on 19-20 Feb (RK, PK, DSt, LSu, KL). The only **American Bittern** of late winter was one at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 11 Mar (FV). A **Cattle Egret** at Calero Reservoir on 11 Mar (FV, RWR) was followed by one in a flooded field north of Bloomfield Road on 23-25 Mar (MP, v.ob.) and another bird north of the Gilroy sewer plant on 24 Mar (RWR, FV). We've found few Cattle Egrets in the county in the last five years. Wintering and migrant **Osprey** have been more common in the last eight years, however, one feeding in the center of San Antonio Valley on 17 Mar (WGB) was unusual for the interior of the Diablo Range. The adult **Bald Eagle** wintering at Calero Reservoir was last seen on 2 Mar (AV). The last **Ferruginous Hawks** of the winter were two

along Felter Road on 3 Feb (BP), another at the south end of Calaveras Reservoir the same day (BP), and an immature at Richmond and Santa Teresa in the Coyote Valley on 6 Feb (MJM). **Snowy Plovers** have returned to closed refuge ponds near Alviso on 26 Mar (MMR, MJM, RGJ), perhaps because of the rainfall. Eighteen were seen on Salt Pond A8 and a pair was on A8S. Always rare in late winter, a **Lesser Yellowlegs** was seen at the Palo Alto Muni GC on 21 Mar (RWR, FV). A single **Sanderling** was at the mouth of Stevens Creek on 18 Feb (RWR, FV). Surveys in closed refuge ponds near Alviso recorded 28 on 26 Feb and 74 on 26 Mar (MMR, MJM, RGJ). An alternate **Red-necked Phalarope** was found in these same ponds on 26 Mar (MMR, MJM, RGJ), which is very early for our weak spring passage of these birds. One of the major events of the period was a possible 2nd-winter **Ice-land Gull** that was found at Hidden Lake in Milpitas on 22 Feb (AJ). Well photographed, this bird delighted many through 7 Mar (JAC, CM). We will wait to see if the record is accepted by the California Bird Records Committee. A 1st-winter **Glaucous Gull** remained in the vicinity of Salt Pond A16 in Alviso through much of February (m.ob.).

Roadrunners through Warblers

The Alviso **Greater Roadrunner** has remained there at least through 5 Mar (MBr). A **Long-eared Owl** was found once again at Ed Levin CP on 22 Feb (RWR, FV). The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the season was one in a Milpitas yard on 3 Feb (MO'B). One to two males were found at Ed Levin CP 6 Feb-28 Mar (AV, v.ob.) as well as variant *Selasphorus* males that could be either Rufous or Allen's. Single Rufous were also found in a Gilroy yard on 19 Feb (BB-W), in Alum Rock Park on 2 Mar (KB), and on Fortini Road on 12 Mar (JPa, KB). Up to three **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were seen in San Antonio Valley 12-17 Mar (ALE, GB, WGB) where they are resident. A female **Williamson's Sapsucker** was found at Lake

Field Notes *cont'd*

Cunningham on 11 Feb (KB) and seen by many through the end of March. This is either the second or third record for the county. Nearly as rare was a male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** found at Hidden Villa on 2 Feb (GHa) and also seen by many to at least 17 Mar (LCh). **Pileated Woodpeckers** were found in typical locations with birds in Stevens Creek Canyon during February and March (v.ob.), one west of Table Mountain on 11 Mar (LCh), and one off Wrights Station Road on 12 Mar (DLSu). Wintering **Red-breasted Nuthatches** continued at Lake Cunningham in February and March with a high count of six on 13 Feb (KB, JPa). Birds were also in the coniferous forests of upper Stevens Creek Canyon where they are not known to breed and at least 14 were heard there on 7 Mar (GHa). A single bird at Ed Levin CP on 22 Feb was also wintering, while birds along Wrights Station Road on 17 Mar and Charcoal Road on 30 Mar may be residents (all RWR, FV). An **American Dipper** continued at Herbert Creek, being seen 5 Feb and 14 Mar (AV), while a bird at Alum Rock Park 12 Feb-15 Mar (MMR, v.ob.) was the first one noted there this winter. A bird was refound along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road on 2 Mar (RWR, FV). At least two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were heard singing along Wrights Station Road on 12 Mar (DLSu) and are likely resident. A **Townsend's Solitaire** was on Mahonney Ridge Road in Henry Coe SP on 6 Feb (JY) for our only report this winter. Trips to San Antonio Valley found three **Phainopepla** on 4 Feb (MO'B) and two on 17 Mar (WGB). The wintering **Northern Waterthrush** in Charleston Road Marsh stayed quiet during January, but was found again on 16 Feb (RWR) and seen by many through at least 17 Mar (LCh).

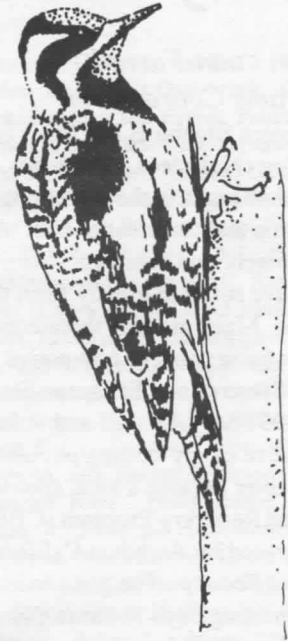
Tanagers through Goldfinches

Wintering male and female **Western Tanagers** were at Edenvale Garden Park on 13 Feb (JPa). A singing **Grasshopper Sparrow** was at Ed Levin CP on 12 Mar (MMR), which is quite early. A **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was found in outer Charleston Slough on a low tide on 2 Mar (PS), but was not seen

again. The **Swamp Sparrow** wintering along the wastewater outfall at the Palo Alto Baylands was seen once again on 22 Feb (RK, PK). A **White-throated Sparrow** at a Los Alto feeder on 19 Mar (RCo) was the only one found during the period—generally we have a half dozen or more records for February and March. A male **Great-tailed Grackle** was found at Lake Cunningham 15 Mar (KB) and seen through 24 Mar (KB, SB). The **Red Crossbill** invasion continued at Monte Bello OSP through at least 14 Mar (GHa, m.ob.). The high count was of 76 birds at Page Mill Road on 3 Feb (GHa) and numbers declined in February. Three to four were at Morrill and Summit roads south of Hwy 17 on 12 Mar (DLSu). There were no reports from Henry Coe SP. The remarkable **Pine Siskin** incursion wound down a bit in February and March and more birds were found at feeders. Peak counts were nothing like the movement of fall birds or those found in early winter. Good totals were 80 at Twin Creeks on 6 Feb (AV) and 42 at Monte Bello OSP on 7 Mar (GHa). The incursion does not appear quite over. A few **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were found at Monte Bello OSP with a male there on 6 Feb (AME) and five birds on 14 Feb (GHa).

Observers: Gordon Barrett (GB), Bonnie Bedford-White (BB-W), Josh Bennett (JB), George Bing (GB), Kim Blythe (KB), Pat Boor (PB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Matt Brady (MBr), Summer Brasuel (SB), Les Chibana (LCh), Jack Cole (JAC), Rita Colwell (RCo), Art Edwards (ALE), Al Eisner (AME), Tom Grey (TGr), Garth Harwood (GHa), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Roland Kenner (RK), Pat Kenny (PK), Kristine Long (KL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Charlie Moores (CM), Matt O'Brien (MO'B), Janna Pauser (JPa), Mark Paxton (MP), Bob Power (BP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Dick Stovel (DSt), Rosalie Strait (RS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Patti Sutch (PS), Ron Thorn (RSTh), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DW), and James Yurchenco (JY).

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



*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
— Bonnie Bedford-White*

Palo Alto Summer Bird Count

June 4th is the date — circle it on your calendars! Make no plans other than to count birds, for this is the day when we once again canvas the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count circle, recording not only each bird we find, but their breeding behavior as well. This count has been continuing for over 20 years, and the data assembled has helped chart trends in our local birding populations. The format is the same as the Christmas count: eight regions with their eight leaders, and the same faithful people counting, recording, tabulating and later sharing their experiences and sightings.

But, in order assure the continued success of this count, we are always in need of new people. Birders of all levels of expertise are welcome and encouraged to participate. If you subscribe to South Bay Birds, you will be reading more details about the Summer Bird Count, or you can contact me at SNOYOWL@Yahoo.com or 408-996-0434 to sign up. You'll be glad you did!

—Jack Cole

Cavity-nesters love our nest boxes

by Kim Yuan-Farrell
Programs Coordinator

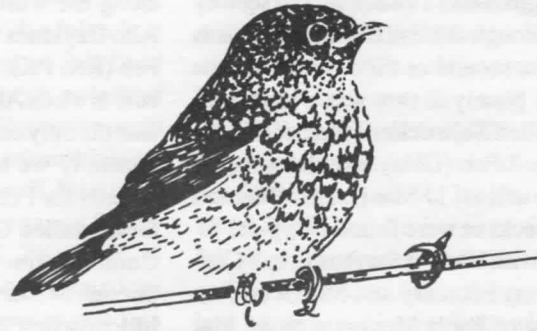
Western Bluebirds and other cavity-nesting species including chickadees, nuthatches, swallows and wrens face many challenges in the increasingly developed landscape of California and the broader U.S. As a result of urban development and habitat destruction, populations of these birds have suffered greatly from the loss of natural tree cavities. Many are also threatened by competition for cavities by aggressive non-native species such as the English House Sparrow and European Starling.

In 1997 SCVAS staff and volunteers began an effort to help native cavity-nesting populations recover from decline. Our chapter became a local sponsor of the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP), a statewide endeavor cosponsored by Audubon California and the North American Bluebird Society. The goal: to increase the number of native cavity-nesting birds in Santa Clara County. The strategy: to provide artificial cavities for native nesting birds in areas where natural cavities have been removed. Volunteers built, installed, and monitored nest boxes (a.k.a. birdhouses) in parks, preserves, and private lands throughout the County. In the first season alone, volunteers added 170 new nest boxes to the approximately 60 existing ones. Since then the program has continued to grow tremendously as volunteers add new boxes each year and continue to maintain and monitor boxes during the nesting season. These efforts have paid off. The first season saw 229 birds fledge. We now have more than 500 nest boxes in the County and between 1200 and 1500 fledglings each year!

The force that has driven the expansion and success of our recovery efforts are the more than 60 volunteers who participate in our CBRP County program. We are fortunate to have energetic, creative, and dedicated volunteers to build, install, and monitor hundreds of nest boxes throughout Santa Clara Valley. I would like to highlight just a few of our extraordinary volunteers.

David "Tex" Houston leads our team of nest box monitors as the volunteer County Coordinator. Tex enthusiastically and patiently orients new volunteers to the program and guides them through the process of monitoring nest boxes. He helps monitors solve predator problems, works with scouts in designing and carrying out Eagle Projects, and organizes an annual meeting to review the monitoring season — not to mention that he monitors dozens of his own nest box trails!

Norman Watenpaugh is one of our key volunteers in the South County. Norman has installed countless nest boxes in and around Gilroy, earning him the title of "The Birdhouse Man of Gilroy" in *The Pinnacle* (June 2003). He has also used his creativity and continual observation in the field to develop new, increasingly effective, problem solving, and beautiful designs for all types of nest boxes — from



Juvenile Western Bluebird, one of 1200 - 1500 that fledge each year, thanks to the cavity nesting program.
— Bonnie Bedford-White

chickadee houses to Barn Owl boxes. Norman also helps others install heavy raptor boxes and spreads awareness of cavity-nesting species at numerous chapter events.

Another long-time SCVAS volunteer, Chuck Wade, coordinates the large-scale production of nest box kits — pre-cut, pre-drilled box parts ready for assembly by children in classrooms and at events like Wildlife Education Day in the fall. He recruits co-workers, interns, friends, and neighbors to do this work, spreading awareness of the plight of cavity nesters and our ability to help them and engaging these individuals in active remedial efforts.

Nest box monitor and data compiler Dick Blaine recently designed new CBRP pages for our chapter website that will support nest box monitors in box installation, monitoring, and problem solving and in submitting annual data electronically. These new web pages are a great resource for novice and veteran monitors and will greatly simplify and support the jobs of the coordinator, data compiler, and staff.

These volunteers have contributed generously and creatively to our nest box program. I am happy to say that we have many more who deserve our warmest thanks.

While we do have a strong number of volunteers, we are always in search of more help. We need new volunteers to adopt nest box trails as our efforts expand and as volunteers move in and out of the program. We're eager to find those who want to establish and monitor new trails or back yard boxes. Volunteers find CBRP to be a very fulfilling program. The rewards of providing a home for families of our feathered friends can be great; watching a cavity-nesting couple make their home and raise their young is a unique and, for some, profound opportunity. Please contact me at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org to get involved or learn more about the program.

Interested in seeing the California Bluebird Recovery Program in action? Join us at **10 AM on Wednesday, May 11th at McClellan Ranch Park for Coffee and a Nest Box Tour** with veteran monitors. We will see boxes active with nesting chickadees, swallows, and bluebirds!

2004 Fall Fundraiser Donor List

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you who donated to the 2004 Fall Fundraiser. I am happy to report that we raised over \$70,000 in donations from 438 people. SCVAS is your chapter and it is all of you who help make our education and conservation efforts so successful. So give yourselves a big round of applause for caring so deeply about your community!

Debbie Thompson
SCVAS Chapter President

Gayle Adams, Cheryl Adams, Scott Akin, Emily L. Allen, Keith R. Anderson, Jennifer W. Angel, Marlow Bray Antonucci, Jane Ardley, Charmon Ashby, Judy Atterholt, Michael E. Baggett, M.D., Barbara Baldwin, Nada Ballator, William Barnhart, Jean S. and William A. Barrett, Candice Basham, Gary R. Bea, Laurie Bechtler, Joseph Belli, Ann Bender, Harriet Benson, Peg Bernucci, Janet Bertaina, Dr. Barbara Bessey, Pat Bitton, Dick and Sharon Blaine, John and Olive Borgsteadt, Tom and Gay Brasher, Patricia A. Brennan, Carryl Breon, Keith Breon, G. Scott Briggs, Dr. and Mrs. Richard A. Brody, Byron and Kay Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Brown, Jr., Elizabeth Brownell, Linda Brownrigg, Mrs. Arthur E. Bryson, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Cada, Roy S. and Helen Cameron, William F. Cameron, Rosalie Regina Cape, Allen Carkner, Dudley Carlson, Mary Carlson, Eric and Marilyn Carlson, Brian L. Carr, Charlotte Casey, John Caulfield, J. Morse Cavender, Lyn Chambers, Helen Charpentier, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Paul Chestnut, Margaret Chilton, Robert Christiansen, William and Jean Y. Clark, Daniel Cloak and Jennifer Millar, Joanna Cohen, Jack Cole, Janice Coleman, Kevin and Kim Coleman, John Colwell, M.D., Rita and Rob Colwell, Robert Cook, David M. and Barbara Cook, Jeanne Corrinne, Dr. Charles Coston, Constance Crawford, James and Lee Crowley, Elna Cunningham, Betsy Currie, Kate Curry.

Laura M. Dangerfield, William R. Danielson, Mary Davey, Joe De Lellis, Karen DeMello, Michael and Bernadine Denenberg, Dinesh and Joy Desai, Louise B. Detwiler, Michelle Dimas, Greg Dittmer, Donna L. Ducey, Jennifer Dungan, Rob Eastwood, Lloyd Eater, Doris B. Ebert, Tom Edsall, Jane Edwards, Alan M. Eisner, Alan Elderon, Linda Elkind, Charlotte Epstein, Sharon Erickson, Spence Everson, William R. and Gisela Evitt, Margaret L. Falk, Albert B. and Sheila Faris, Daniel and Janet Farmer, Thomas Faxon, Robert and Janet Fenwick, Gordon and Linda Ferguson, Thomas J. and Pauline Ferrito, Andrew and Betsy Finfrock, Vivian Fleming, Christel Fliss, Jeroen Fonderie and Fransien Van Den Berg, Art Fong, Mark and Nancy Franich, George Fukuhara, Lindy Fung, Kim Gahrahmat, Margaret Gainer, Mark Galbraith, Joan Gardner,

Robert Garner, Jan Garrison, Janet Garvey, Steven M. Gelber, Harriet Gerson, Hazel A. Gibson, Peggy Gin, Gail Glen, Morey Goldstein, Jean Gomes, John Gonsalves, Marie Gordon, Tom Gough, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley G. Gould, Frances Grabau, Leda Beth Gray and David Drake, Kenneth Green, Rose Green, Jay Greenberg, R. R. Greene, Doug and Ardeth Greenquist, Waldo Griffin, Fred Grindle, Sherman Gromme, Joan Hadden, David and Lauren Hall, Kelly Hall, Robert Hall, Philip and Susan Hammer, Conlyn and Autumn Hancock, Carl and Bobbie Handen, Joann Harrington, Lauren Hasenhuttl, Grace and John Hattori, Walter and Nancy Hay, Walter Hays, Ray and Elsa Heald, Jim Heckenbach, Kathleen Hendig, Julie Hendriks and Larry Prather, Barbara Heninger, Beverly Hesse, Dr. Robert A. Hicks, Jan Hintermeister, Robert and Deborah Hirt, Margaret Hohenshelt, Kirsten R. Holmquist, Mr. and Mrs. Julius Honig, Janel Hopper, Diane Horn, John and Freddy Howell, David Hoyt, Grant and Karen Hoyt, Harriet N. Huls, Lee Hung and Mike Danzenbaker, Sue Hunt, June H. Hymas, Diana and Michael Irvin, Catherine Jagelski, Denise Lee Janjigian, Richard G. Jeffers, James Jeffery, Marilynn J. Jennings, Barbara Johnson, Martha Johnson, James and Kathryn Johnson, Lynne Johnson, Stanley Jones, Jerry A. Joutet.

Jerry and Ginny Kaminski, Jerry and Mary Kamprath, Richard Karren, Jana M. Kattenhorn, Marcia and Jeffrey Keimer, Mary Kelly, Mary Kenney, Enrique and Judy Klein, Judd Klement, Karen and Joel Korelitz, Wayne Krill, Martha Kudlacik, Michael Kulakofsky, Peter La Tourette, Edwin F. Laak, Bill Lane, Jr., Barry and Ginger Langdon-Lassagne, Mondy and Shelley Lariz, Ann Latta, Aldora Lee, Rosalie C. Lefkowitz, Joan Leighton, David Lewis, Rebecca Lim, Tom Lipkis, Mr. and Mrs. James Liskovec, Florence Lloyd, Kristine Long, Andy Lott, Sandy Louthian, Robert Lowen, M.D. and Marilynn Gallaway, Bill Lundgren, Charlotte MacDonald, Peter Maltbaek, May Manabe, Albert J. Mangini, Dean Manley, Bert Manriquez, Georgina Marion, Elizabeth Maroder, Mary Muir Marti, Alice Martineau and Olivia Bartlett, Stuart A. Matheson, Julia Dean Mayberry, Hugh and Debbie McDevitt, Sharon McFarlin, Carl McGrew, Mr. and Mrs. Ken McKay, Elena McKean, Eileen McLaughlin, Perry and Martha McCarty, Ms. Gloria McClain, David McIntyre and Antoinette Konski, Jean McNamara, Thompson and Beatrice Mead, Ethel B. Meece, Loren J. Mendel, D.D.S., Marilee Mifflin, Joann Milburn, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Mill, Sandy Moore, T. Charles Moore, Douglas B. Moran, Jean and Barbara Mordo, Marc Morris, Bobbie Morrison, Jane and David Moss, Thomas J. Moutoux, Jennifer and Patricia Moylan, Mary K. Murphy, Michael and Susan Murphy, Vance J. Nau, Elaine Nelson, Mrs. M. E. Neuman, Dallyn M. Newman, Spaulding A. Norris, M. Kent and Rita Norton.

Margaret Okuzumi and Bruce Hahne, Mr. and Mrs. Donald E. Osterbrock, Donna M. Padrick, Rebecca and Everett Palmer, Daniel Pappone and S.B. Meyer, David Passmore, Meg Pelose, John S. Perkins, Kent and Dale Peterson, Elaine Piini, Paul Pinsky, Shirley Porter, Donald and Dee Price, Pat Prickett, Carol Prussia, Paul Putter, Ted Raczek, Richard L. Rairden, S. Ramachandramurthi, Bonnie C. Rapp, Nadine Redding, Chuck Reed, Laurel Rezeau, James Richards, Eric Richert and Margaret A. Sloan, Louise and Wayne Richter, Robert Roadcap, Paul Roberts, Bess Roberts, Philip H. Robertson, Michael Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Rooks, Richard Rorty, Deborah Rose, Annemarie Rosengreen, Mrs. George Rossmann, Allen G. and Joanna Royer, Philip Ruhle, James E. Runyeon, Jr., Steve and Anna Rutledge, Marguerite Ryan, Donna Sadowy, Grace Sain, Betty Saito, Stanley M. Salomon, Sue Sarbaugh, Robert E. Savoie, Ruth Scarborough, Lynda R. Schafhauser, Robert J. Schauer, Abraham and Marian Scheuer Sofer, Brian Schmidt, Russell and Patricia Schonberg, Leslie Schroeder, Paul S. Seaver, Laverne A. Shaffer, Mark R. Shaw and Michelle Caplettem, Murray and Bernice Siegel, Tibby Simon, Joy Skarmoutsos, Nedra Skyles, Melanie A. Sloane, Katrina M. Smathers, Ken Smith, Kendric and Marion Smith, Kerry Smith, Philip E. Smith, Thomas Snell and Sarabelle Hitchner, Jana Sokale, Lawrence Spivak, Blakeney Stafford, Stephen D. Stearns, Robert Stephens and Julie Packard, Julie Stevens, Jan Stiles, Laura and David Stocks, Madeleine Stovel, Carolyn A. Straub and Stephen L. McHenry, Lise Strom, Neil Stuverude, Linda Sullivan, Mark Sutherland, David M. Swartz, Ellen Sweeney, Andrew and Kathy Switky.

Lillian Tanabe, Geoff and Colleen Tate, Ted Tawshunsky, William M. Taylor, Nancy R. Teater, Peter Thiemann, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Thomas, Deborah and Steve Thompson, Charles and Jean Thompson, Laura Thompson, Michael Thorburn, Joyce Todd, Harold and Carol Toppel, Leslie Train, Catherine Trejo and Martha Wright, Virginia and Gerald Tuft, Mike and Ellen Turbow, Mrs. Frank Ubhaus, Erin Ulrich, Elaine Van Bruggen, J. G. and Suzanne Van Stee, Peri Vattuone, Ann Verdi, Dee Vieira, Tom and Linda Vlastic, Ann Vollmer, David J. Vossbrink, Bill Walker and Mary Wisnewski, Bonnie Wallace, Alan Walther, Nicholas and Anne Ward, Ted and Jane Wassam, Milton West, Bart and Nancy Westcott II, Mary Ellen White and Jack Morton, Carl J. Widmer, Alyce Wiepking, Susan L. Wijeyesekera, Virginia Willcox, Duncan and Mercedes Williams, Jody Williams, Richard Williams, John Wills, Cynthia Wilson, Alan D. Woertink, Christine Wolfe, Bernard and Nancy Wood, Betty P. Wyatt, Des and Cathy Wytman, Nick and K.C. Yatsko, Nancy Yeend, Deme Yuan, Alex and Leah Zaffaroni, Robert Zeiss, Eugena Zolotar.

Staff, volunteers energize Wetlands Discovery Program

by Elaine Gould

Education Committee

In 1989, SCVAS Managing Director Lynn Tennefoss began the Wetlands Discovery Program with a focus on seasonal wetlands. Sixteen years later the program has been greatly expanded, undergone continual reevaluation and rewriting, and remains a major focus of the SCVASEducation Committee. The most important change has been the establishment of a cadre of Audubon volunteers who serve as docents on the field trips to Charleston Slough. Docent training is provided in the fall and spring. After this year's seamless transition from Jennifer Peritz to Kim Yuan-Farrell as Volunteer and Education Programs Coordinator, the Wetlands Discovery Program now serves about 12 Santa Clara County schools with trips during fall and spring, reaching approximately 800 upper elementary students each year. Here is an intimate glimpse of how the program works.

Kim schedules schools far in advance and then, a week or so before the field trip, meets with a lead teacher at the school to provide necessary instructions, activity sheets for duplication, a vocabulary list, bird flashcards, and a wetlands slide show with recorded script, which teachers show students in advance. The aim is to introduce students to wetlands ecology prior to the trip. On Tuesday mornings, Kim and docents report to the school early and set up hands-on wetlands materials at activity stations in the cafeteria. Kim greets each class, reviews with them what they've learned in their classroom and then divides students to work in small teams for one period. The teams circulate through the materials, having fun reading, experimenting and recording answers together. The docents are on hand to help students with this process. This generally takes two to three hours, depending on the number of classes. At the end of the morning, students meet with docents on the school ground to practice using binoculars in preparation for the field trip on the following Thursday.

On Thursday mornings, docents arrive at Charleston Slough at 9:30 AM to scout out the area for birds. New docents work with an experienced leader for as many trips as they wish. If they prefer, docents never have to lead a group, but may continue as assistants. Boxes of binoculars are distributed to each group. Students generally arrive between 9:45 and 10. Kim boards the bus to welcome them and gives last-minute instructions. On exiting the bus, each student is offered an apple provided by SCVAS as a snack. Teachers group students in advance, with parent chaperones assigned to each group. Generally there are 5 to 6 groups with 9 to 12 students each.

Binoculars are then distributed along with a few field identification cards per group. One school chaperone per group is asked to check off birds on an alphabetized list (this is easier for them than using taxonomic order). For the next hour and a half, groups make their way around Charleston Slough while docents try to connect students' observations with material learned in the classroom prior to the trip. The program incorporates basic "Big Ideas" from the California State Science Framework. Bird identification is just part of the program. Major components include a discussion of the following: **Adaptation** as applicable to the plants and animals observed; **Migration** and the importance of S.F. Bay as a stopover place and as year round habitat; types of **Wetland Habitats** observed, i.e. seasonal, freshwater creek, slough, salt pond, bay; **Food Webs and Food Chains**; and **Conservation and Stewardship**. Each trip is exciting and different, and docents incorporate lessons that spring from the moment. For example, there was much discussion and many questions from students last spring when we were fortunate to have Karen Hoyt of Sky Hunters Environmental Education release a rehabilitated Cooper's Hawk. This past fall, we were treated to the sight of a Peregrine Falcon stooping on the panicked ducks and gulls

and watched it chase after a Northern Harrier that had been flying low, moments before.

This year the Wetlands Discovery Program is further enhanced by an addition to the SCVAS website developed by Nicholas Zoffel, Jennifer Peritz's husband. It is a visually exciting and informative site that students use in the classroom or at home to review and test their knowledge about what they have learned about wetlands and their value. Have a look at this on your computer — just visit the education pages of our website: www.scvas.org.

In a number of classrooms, our program is also complemented by presentations featuring live, non-releasable raptors. Presenters from Sky Hunters Environmental Education visit classes that have completed the field trip, teaching them about raptor biology and woodland habitat and reinforcing many of the themes taught in the Wetlands Discovery in-class and field trip sessions. These presentations offer a great educational opportunity for students and fit well with the Education Committee's goal of educating for depth with multiple, related experiences.

The Wetlands Discovery Program is an important part of the Education Committee's mission. We welcome SCVAS members to accompany us at any time. New docents are always needed and welcome to be part of the fun and camaraderie and to share in the knowledge that we are making an important contribution to introducing children to the joys of nature.

Thank you!

A warm thanks to our wonderful Wetlands docents: Gordon Barrett, Janet Bertaina, Donna Breuer, John Callahan, Lee French, Elaine Gould, Linda Johnson, Jim Liskovec, Kris McNamara, Pam Price, Eleanor Sherman, Fern Walters, Marilyn Donahue, Karen Hoyt, Laurie Roberts, Ulf Stauber, Peg Bernucci, Bobbie Handen.

— Kim Yuan-Farrell

What they're saying about Wetlands Discovery:

"Thank you for the wonderful field trip. The Mayne staff who participated were very impressed with the whole process. We hope that this can become part of our yearly curriculum because it ties in so well with our unit on adaptation. Your volunteers had so much knowledge to share and were able to present it at a level that the students could understand. The students were thrilled to see those birds live and 'up close' with binoculars. They are checking out more wetland books from my classroom library, so they can revisit the birds they saw and learned about."

— Donna Hamane, Third Grade Teacher, George Mayne Elementary School, Alviso

"This is such a wonderful program. Many of my students and their families never get out to natural areas, so this is their first experience exploring nature. And not only for the kids; it's also an illuminating experience for the parent chaperones."

— Sherry Lane, Fourth Grade Teacher, Mildred Goss Elementary School, San Jose

"During the fall, we served 335 students in the Wetlands Discovery Program. Each of you touched the lives of dozens of children — and not in a shallow way. Each student experienced our program twice, through the In-Class and Field Trip Sessions. We are educating for depth and for quality. We are instilling enthusiasm for nature and scientific curiosity and a respect for other creatures."

"While sometimes you may feel unsure that they are absorbing everything you try to share with them, these students are learning a lot. They are taking in an experience that you cannot measure. Not only do we strive to offer teachers a program that is relevant to their students' education, we also offer these children a taste of the world so few of them know. Thank you for sharing your wonder at the world with them. I look forward to knowing that after our spring trips, we will have touched the lives of hundreds more."

— Kim Yuan-Farrell, SCVAS Programs Coordinator, in a note to Wetlands docents in March

Birding at the Sunnyvale Landfill and Water Treatment Plant

by Freddy Howell
Education Committee

In late October, Kim Yuan-Farrell got a call from Silviana Ruiz, a Landfill Technician with the City of Sunnyvale. Silviana had enjoyed seeing all the birds at this closed landfill and the adjacent water treatment plant. She saw all the people walking the dikes and thought that it might be fun to offer birding trips to the folks who worked in the buildings nearby. Her idea was to offer monthly bird walks, and she was looking for knowledgeable birders to lead the walks.

Lee French and I volunteered and did our first walk on the first Wednesday in November. Silviana's notice for the *San Jose Mercury News* didn't appear, so we only had 3 attendees. Still, we all had a great time and saw burrowing owl, white-

tailed kites, American kestrel, common moorhen, northern pintail and many more. December's notice did appear, and we had 17 people eagerly show up at noon. In January we had 19 people, and then because it was a gorgeous day in February, we had 35! They weren't just people from the surrounding businesses, but also people who were interested in birding this wonderful spot.

There are several different trails, some level with the ponds, some above which really give you a great overview. So, if you work near Caribbean and Borregas in Sunnyvale or you have free time mid-day, join us the first Wednesday of every month from noon to 1:00 PM. We meet at the trail parking lot at Sunnyvale Water Treatment Plant at the end of Borregas Avenue, near the Bay in Sunnyvale.

Bylaws revised

By Debie Thompson
Chapter President

The Board of Directors has revised and approved a new version of the SCVAS Bylaws, replacing the original, decades-old Bylaws. A bylaw is a "rule made by a local authority to regulate its own affairs." They include checks and balances for chapter management.

Members must ratify the new Bylaws with a majority vote of a quorum (defined as 31) members. Voting will be done at the Annual Meeting and potluck in June, so please come and place your vote!

Highlights of the new Bylaws:

- The Board of Directors will consist of between nine and 15 Directors, four of which will be Executive Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer); the remaining five to 11 will be Directors-at-large.

- Directors-at-large serve staggered terms of three years with some terms expiring each year. Executive Officers serve one-year terms.

- No person shall serve in any capacity on the Board for more than twelve consecutive years or serve as Executive Officer for more than three consecutive years.

- The Board of Directors shall appoint or approve the Chairpersons of Standing Committees. No one shall serve as Chairperson of the same committee for more than ten consecutive years.

- Two classes of members will be allowed: Supporting (members of SCVAS only, what we now call local members) and National (members of both National Audubon Society and SCVAS). Also Honorary and Non-voting memberships will be allowed.

- The required standing committees are Finance, Nominating, Personnel, Conservation, and Education. Other committees are encouraged and optional.

- Teleconferencing, email and other modern means of communication are allowed during meetings and for voting by the Board of Directors.

Both the old and new versions of the Bylaws will be posted on the web if you want to read them in entirety before voting. Members also can call the SCVAS office to request copies of the old and new Bylaws to be mailed. Please call or email the office with any comments on these proposed Bylaws.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
 22221 McClellan Road
 Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: 408-252-3747
 Fax: 408-252-2850
 E-mail: scvas@scvas.org
 www.scvas.org

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. Postage Paid
 San Jose, CA
 Permit No. 5869



OFFICERS

President
 Debbie Thompson 408/227-4604

1st VP
 Bob Hirt 408/821-2732

2nd VP
 Dave Cook 408/275-1492

Treasurer (interim)
 Bob Hirt 408/821-2732

Secretary
 Nancy Teater 650/321-0252

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joan Leighton '03-'06 408/252-3747
 David McIntyre '04-'07 650/561-9356
 Rita Norton '04-'07 408-395-5435

STAFF

Executive Director 408/252-3748
 Brenda Torres-Barreto brenda@scvas.org

Office Manager 408/252-3747
 Susan Bell scvas@scvas.org

Programs Coordinator 408/252-3740
 Kim Yuan-Farrell programs@scvas.org

Office Fax 408/252-2850

E-mail scvas@scvas.org

Website www.scvas.org

CHAIRPERSONS

Avocet
 Editor: Grant Hoyt 650/969-7892
 Graphics and Print Preparation
 Bonnie Bedford-White 408/261-8210

Bay Area Audubon Council Delegate
 Nancy Teater 650/321-0252

Christmas Bird Count
 Kirsten Holmquist 408/747-0988

Education
 Bobbie Handen 408/356-4263

Environmental Action
 Nancy Teater 650/321-0252

Field Trips: Weekend
 Bob Reiling 408/253-7527

Field Trips: Weekday
 Phyllis Swanson 408/274-2349
 Bev Murpy 408/257-7484

Finance
 Don Price 650/327-1254

Library
 Joy Robinson 408/252-3747
 Joan Leighton 408/252-3747

Membership
 Vacant

Nature Shop
 Freddie Howell 408/358-3459

Photo Club
 Pete LaTourrette 650/961-2741

Programs
 Doug & Gail Cheeseman 408/741-5330

Webmaster petelat1@stanford.edu
 Pete LaTourrette 650/961-2741

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 by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino, CA 95014. 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 3

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 _____

Membership \$ _____ + Donation \$ _____ = Total Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City State & Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____ **7XCH C14**

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.**