

# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

September - October 2005

## 14th Annual Wildlife Education Day Oct. 22 — don't miss it!

by Elaine Gould  
SCVAS Education Committee

Mark your calendars for the 14<sup>th</sup> annual SCVAS Wildlife Education Day on Saturday, October 22. Based on past performance, this one promises to be bigger and better, as the list of participating environmental groups and families continues to increase.

Last year, the 22 organizations included: Environmental Volunteers, Santa Clara Valley Woodcarvers, Sky Hunters Environmental Education, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, Home Composting Education Program, Marine Mammal Center, Humane Society of Silicon Valley, Wildlife Rescue, Inc., California Native Plant Society, Bay Area Amphibian and Reptile Society, Rolling Hills 4H, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, Cupertino Historical Society, Our City Forest, Sierra Club Regional Group, Coyote Point Museum, Youth Science Institute, San Francisco Zoo, Cupertino Parks and Recreation, Stevens & Penitencia Creeks Watershed Council and Ulistac Natural Area. This impressive list indicates the growing importance of Wildlife Education Day in Santa Clara County.

Of course, the many live animals on hand, from birds to reptiles to mammals, make the day a special one for families.

Add to this the popularity of the poster contest, where numerous children of all ages have an opportunity to see their award-winning posters on display and to win a prize. This one aspect alone provides the Education Committee with a wonderful evening as we meet over pizzas the week before the event to sort through posters, agonizingly choosing the best from the many outstanding submissions by public school and art school students.

Each year the number of volunteers increases as high school students and SCVAS members assist children in building birdhouses, pinecone bird feeders, and a variety of other arts and crafts activities. Kids are always entranced by the demonstrations such as Bird Banding, Amazing Bats, Reptiles and Amphibians, and Raptors. They can watch a puppet show and view a blacksmith at work. One of the newest features of Wildlife Day is the early morning bird-walk at Charleston Slough, which is increasingly popular with families.

The final event of the day is always the awarding of prizes and a raffle. Please join us this year for what promises to be

another entertaining and educational event. Bring a child, a grandchild, or a friend. You can help the Education Committee by volunteering (see *Volunteer Ventures*, Page 4) or just stroll around and enjoy the excitement of Wildlife Education Day.

### General Membership Meeting “Birds of Santa Clara and Adjacent Counties” with Mike Danzenbaker and Lee Hung Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds. Wednesday, Sept. 21

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Mike Danzenbaker and Lee Hung are long-time Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society members who have traveled extensively both domestically and abroad in pursuit of viewing and photographing birds. Tonight they will present a program on a very familiar topic, Birds of Santa Clara County and Adjacent Counties. The program will include beautiful photos of birds we see every day, as well as some rarities that Mike and Lee have encountered in Santa Clara County. Mike has been seriously photographing birds since he moved here in 1986. He now has about 3000 bird images on his website, [www.avesphoto.com](http://www.avesphoto.com). His pictures have graced the covers

*continued on Page 4*

Spring  
Birdathon  
Results  
Pages 10-11

◆ Hooded Warbler  
*Field Notes*, — Page 6

◆ Swainson's mystery  
— Page 7

◆ Jack Cole's extraordinary  
bird sighting — Page 8

# Sept. - Oct. '05 Field Trips

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

**LO = Lunch optional**

**RC = Heavy rain cancels**

**NF = No facilities available**

## Saturday Sept. 3, 9:00 AM

### Point Reyes

Full day. Leader: Peter LaTourette (650) 961-2741. Our annual trip to the west coast's most active vagrant trap, where birds and weather are always exciting and unpredictable! From Hwy 1 in Marin Co. take Sir Francis Drake Blvd west approx. 14 miles; turn left to Drake's Beach, meet in parking area. Bring lunch, liquids, full tank of gas, and be ready for fog, wind, sun and lots of difficult to ID birds. Be prepared to carpool from Drake's Beach.

## Sunday Sept. 4, 9:00 AM

### Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. From Hwy 101 in Mtn. View take San Antonio Rd. north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Road. Trip recommended for beginners but all are welcome to attend.

## Wednesday Sept. 7, 12 noon

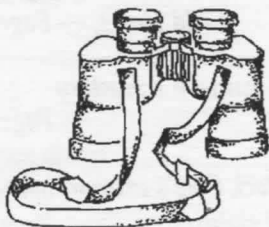
### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

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

## Saturday Sept. 10, 8:30 AM

### Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Al Dieckmann (408) 379-5641. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward hills, then left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd. and continue into park. Drive under bridge, meet at far end of parking lot. Possible entrance fee; moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. **LO**



## Sunday Sept. 11, 8:00 AM

### Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right toward Model Airplane Park (street is unnamed). Follow road for 1/4 mile; park in gravel lot at first bend in road (meet at gate if entrance is locked).

## Wednesday Sept. 14, 9:00 AM

### Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough

Half day. Leader: Norm Kikuchi (831) 459-9424. Meet at Jetty Rd. and Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Gulls, terns, ducks, shorebirds, raptors. **LO, RC**

## Saturday Sept. 17, 8:00 AM

### Moss Landing & vicinity

Half day. Leader: Norm Kikuchi (831) 459-9424. Meet near kiosk on Jetty Rd. off Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Itinerary includes Jetty Road and Moon Glow Dairy; this is perhaps the best season to visit these legendary birding hot spots. Shorebirds, early waterfowl migrants. Dress in layers and bring lunch and liquids.

## Sunday Sept. 18, 8:00 AM

### Arastradero Preserve

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west approx. 1/2 mile to Arastradero Rd. Turn right and meet at parking lot 1/2-mile on right. Woodland, grassland species; variety of raptors. 2 miles of moderately strenuous walking. **RC**

## Saturday Sept. 24

### Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands

Full day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. Carpoolers meet at Page Mill/I-280 Park 'n' Ride at 8 AM. All others meet at tunnel entrance near parking area on Hawk Hill at around 9 AM. Directions to Hawk Hill: after crossing Golden Gate Bridge, exit just past Vista Pt., cross under Hwy 101 and turn right just before entrance back onto 101 south. Drive up hill to highest point and park. Highlights: Migrating raptors including possible Broad-winged Hawk. Weather conditions variable — dress in layers, bring lunch and liquids. **NOTE:** This will be our only field trip to Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands this fall. Heavy fog may change itinerary.

## Sunday Sept. 25, 8:30 AM

### Coyote Hills Regional Park

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. Take Hwy 84 (Dumbarton Bridge) east to Newark. Exit right at Thornton, then go left on overpass, as Thornton becomes Paseo Padre. Turn left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd into park, meet at far end of Quarry parking lot located on left, 1/4 mile past park entrance. Entrance fee probable. **LO, RC**

## Saturday Oct. 1, 9:00 AM

### Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Dick Stovel (650) 856-6105. See write-up for Sept 4th.

## Sunday Oct. 2, 8:30 AM

### Carmel River

Half day plus. Leader: Kathy Parker (408) 358-2832. Take Hwy 1 south to Carmel, turn left at Rio Rd., then immediately turn right into Crossroads Shopping Center. Meet near Crossroads Cinema at back of shopping center near river. After birding Carmel River and the lagoon we may chase locally reported vagrants in nearby areas. Bring lunch and liquids or buy food at meeting place. Temperatures vary, so bring extra layers of clothing. Rubber boots optional (there may be puddles in the riverbed).

## Wednesday Oct. 5, 12 noon

### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leader: Freddy Howell. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. All are welcome, but birding will be geared toward beginners. Loaner binoculars will be available. Learn about the birds of this closed landfill. **RC**

## Saturday Oct. 8, 8:00 AM

### Local Hot Spots

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Meet at Alviso Marina. From Hwy 237 in San Jose take Gold St. north to end of street, bear left on Elizabeth St. then right on Hope St. to Marina parking lot. A chance to visit some local hot spots you hear about and, we hope, to see some "good" birds.

## Sunday Oct. 9, 8:30 AM

### Windy Hills 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 (Portola Rd.); turn right and go 0.8 miles to parking lot on left side of road just past The Sequoias. **RC**

**Wednesday Oct. 12, 8:30 AM**

**Los Gatos Creek/Oka Ponds**

Half day. Leader: Gail Richardson (408) 267-9837. From Hwy 17 exit San Tomas Expwy; go south on Winchester (toward Los Gatos), left on E. Hacienda, left on Dell, right into Park. Meet at end of parking lot. Possible entrance fee. **RC**

**Saturday Oct. 15, 8:00 AM**

**Ogier Ponds**

Half day. Leader: TBA; questions call (408) 253-7527. See write-up for Sept 11th.

**Sunday Oct. 16, 8:30 AM**

**Grant Ranch County Park**

Half day. Leader: Dave Cook (408) 275-1492. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave north-east, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. and go approx. 9 miles to Park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot located on left after main park entrance. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2 mile walk. **LO, RC**

**Saturday Oct. 22, 8:00 AM**

**Elkhorn Slough, Moss Landing area**

Half day plus. Leader: Rick Fournier (831) 632-2473. Meet in parking lot north of Elkhorn Slough Bridge just off Hwy 1 in Moss Landing at Sea Harvest Restaurant. Seasonal and regional specialties as well as reported vagrants. Plan on birding through lunch (stopping at Phil's Snack Shack) and finishing up early afternoon. Bring food, liquids; dress in layers.

**Sunday Oct. 23, 8:30 AM**

**Alum Rock Park**

Half day. Leader: Al Dieckmann (408) 379-5641. See write-up for Sept 10th.

**Saturday Oct. 29, 8:30 AM**

**Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility**

Half day. Leader: TBA, questions call (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 take Hwy 237 east, exit North on Caribbean Dr., turn right on Borregas Ave then left to parking area. A great place to study ducks. A fairly easy but long walk. Scopes recommended. **RC**

**Sunday Oct. 30, 9:00 AM**

**Western San Francisco**

Half day. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. *Note change in Daylight Savings Time — "fall back" or be an hour early for this trip.* From I-280 take 19th Ave to Golden Gate Park. When entering park on 19th Ave be in left lane and take Crossover Dr. to 25th Ave to Geary Blvd, then left on Geary. Meet in parking lot at Mirrie Way above Sutro Baths and Cliff House. **LO, RC**

**Saturday Nov. 5, 8:00 AM**

**Grant Ranch County Park**

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. See write-up for Oct 16th.

**Sunday Nov. 6, 8:30 AM**

**Mount Madonna County Park**

Half day. Leader: Mark Paxton (831) 637-3039. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy take 10th St. west, right on Hwy 82, then left on First St. (Hwy 152, Hecker Pass Hwy). After approx. 6.4 miles turn right and meet in Sprig Lake parking lot. Route gently climbs on the way out, descends on return. Mixed oak woodland, grassland, chaparral, coastal forest of Redwood and Douglas Fir offer varied birding. Dress in layers, bring lunch and liquids. **RC**

**Plan ahead:**

**Friday - Saturday Nov. 25 - 26, 9 AM  
Sac'to Valley Wildlife Refuges, Gray  
Lodge, Sutter Buttes**

Full day and a half. Leaders: Mike Mammoser & Frank Vanslager. For information contact Mike (408) 578-2429. Meet at Sacramento NWR headquarters on I-5 approx. 20 miles north of Williams. Take Road 68 exit east (toward Princeton) from I-5, then immediately north on frontage road to Refuge. Bring spotting scope, full tank of gas. Allow for a three-hour drive from South Bay. Highlights include ducks, geese, swans, cranes, and raptors. Trip highly recommended for beginning birders. (No children under 12 please.)

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**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 2-way radios (walkie talkies)
- Spotting scope tripod
- Digital projector
- Laptop computer (PC or Mac)
- Mobile file cabinet

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

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**Events Calendar**

**Tues. 9/6, 4 PM**

**Education Committee mtg.**

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

**Wed. 9/7, 7:30 PM**

**Bay Area Bird Photographers**

features a Members' Slide Show presentation. Lucie Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto

**Wed. 9/7, 6 PM**

**Field Trip Committee meeting**

McClellan Ranch Park

**Tues. 9/13 9:30 AM**

**Eve Case Bird Discussion Group** will

meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave, Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Summer birding

**Thurs. 9/15, 7 PM**

**Bluebird Recovery Program meeting**

Review of nesting season; nestbox monitoring results and stories.

McClellan Ranch Park

**Tues. 9/20, 7 PM**

**80th Anniversary Planning meeting**

McClellan Ranch Park

**Wed. 9/21, 7:30 PM**

**General Meeting, Palo Alto Art Center**

**Wed. 9/28 7:30 PM**

**Environmental Action Committee mtg.**

McClellan Ranch Park

**Tues. 10/11 9:30 AM**

**Eve Case Bird Discussion Group** will

meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave, Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Ivory-billed Woodpecker

**Wed. 10/19, 7:30 PM**

**General Meeting, Campbell**

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**SCVAS & United Way**

SCVAS is a proud partner of the United Way of Silicon Valley. You can donate to United Way and direct your gift or pledge to Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society at the same time! When you fill out the United Way form, simply indicate Gift Designation Number 39156 and your gift will be credited to SCVAS.



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# Volunteer Ventures

by Kim Yuan-Farrell  
Programs Coordinator

How much is your time worth? Time is certainly prized in our society. Americans have been criticized for being too time-conscious, for hurrying from one activity to the next, for "doing" and not "being." Time is money, right? Well, that's an interesting thought . . .

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, 64.5 million people volunteered at least once from September 2003 to September 2004. The Independent Sector, a coalition for philanthropy and citizen action, announced that the 2004 estimate for the value of a volunteer hour is \$17.55. This number was generated from the "average hourly wage for all non-management, nonagricultural workers . . . with a 12 percent increase to estimate for fringe benefits" such as the availability of support for short periods of time.

If I apply that rate to Laura Dangerfield, one of our regular Nature Shop volunteers who helps in the office at least 2.5 hours per week, that means Laura donates \$43.88 each week and well over \$2000 each year! Who knows if that includes the fringe benefits that Laura brings by happily filling feeders to keep McClellan Ranch birds satisfied or filling staff tummies with the baked goodies she brings in now and then?

Now, I must apologize to my Statistics professor for using these numbers so casually, but I just want to demonstrate the point that volunteer time is extremely valuable. Even with lower rates for the worth of a volunteer hour, the contributions are enormous. SCVAS benefits greatly from the generous in-kind contributions of our many dedicated volunteers, some who are nearly half-time, unpaid workers and others who help on short-term and occasional bases.

With that in mind, please check out the following volunteer opportunities. I'm ready and excited to help you find a position that suits your interests, skills, and schedule. You can fill your calendar with volunteering as you please; your time commitment is determined by you. And I think volunteering helps us stop to smell the roses – or watch the birds, in our case.

**Taxidermist** – It's time to clear out the freezer! We've got a lot of fine, frozen specimens that are waiting to be transformed into beautiful, educational tools for our education programs. Now we just need a skilled hand to prepare them. If you have experience and are willing to donate your services, please contact me. Length of commitment and hours are flexible.

**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee Member** – Our organization is about to turn 80! If you'd like to help plan and organize a special celebration for 2006, come to McClellan Ranch Park for the first planning meeting on Tuesday, September 20 at 7 PM. Please RSVP for this meeting by calling (408) 252-3747 by September 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Wetlands Discovery Program Docent** – This program shares the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with fourth and fifth graders throughout Santa Clara County. Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat both in the classroom and out in the field. This program is rewarding for both volunteers and the hundreds of South Bay children who participate – 936 students in '04-'05! No experience is necessary, as we will provide training for both field and class sessions. All a potential docent needs is a love of nature and a desire to share it with children.

**Wildlife Education Day Support** – As our largest annual event, Wildlife Education Day hosts a plethora of ways in which you can volunteer. With wonderful interactive booths, environmental organizations, educational presentations, live animals, a poster contest, raffle, and much more, this fun-filled affair will require volunteer support weeks before the event as well as on the big day – Saturday, October 22. Check out these exciting and varied ways YOU can help:

**Prior to the Event:**

Poster Contest Coordinator  
Publicity  
Mailing Support / Handout Prep  
Classroom Presenter (CA Wildlife, fully-scripted)

**Day of Event:**

Set Up  
Registration  
Nature Arts & Crafts  
High School Volunteer Coordinator  
Nest Box Building Station  
Event Photographer  
Parking  
Clean Up

That's not all! There are even more ways that you can get involved with Ed Day. Call or email me to explore the possibilities!

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

## Sept. 21 General Meeting

from Page 1

and articles of American Birding Association's *Birding* magazine, *Birder's World*, *Wild Bird*, Cornell Lab's *Living Birds* and many other birding magazines, books and calendars. His pictures have also appeared in Audubon and Sierra Club calendars. The largest number of his pictures are used in photo-based field guides such as those produced by Kenn Kaufmann, Don and Lillian Stokes, National Audubon, Smithsonian, and the many "family" references, such as hummingbirds, sparrows, warblers, shorebirds, etc., of U.S. and Canada.

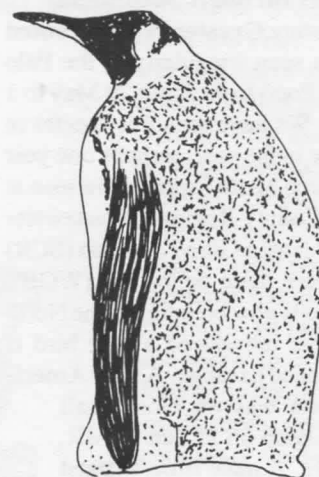
Join us for an evening of beautiful photos of birds in our back yard.

**General Membership Meeting  
"Penguins!"**

**with Ted Cheeseman  
Campbell Community Center  
1 West Campbell Avenue  
Wednesday, Oct. 19**

**Doors open 7:30; program 8:00**

Ted Cheeseman will go in-depth about penguins for the October program, which will be held in Campbell. With the superb "March of the Penguins" film sparking interest in Emperor Penguins, Ted will delve into more of the amazing behavior of Emperors and other penguin species, too. He has photographed penguins in Antarctica, on the Peninsula, South Georgia, and in the South Orkneys, as well as New Zealand, the Falklands and Galapagos. Join us for an exciting evening featuring one of Nature's most fascinating bird families!



**FUN ACTIVITIES for KIDS & ADULTS**



**14<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Wildlife Education Day!**

**Saturday, October 22, 2005  
10am-2pm  
McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino**



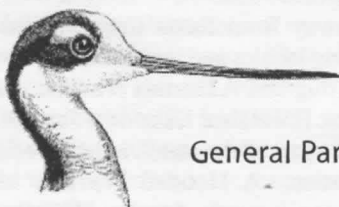
**"Early Bird" ~ Shorebird Walk**

8:00 am @ Charleston Slough  
RSVP Required. Call (408) 252-3740

**!!! Poster Contest !!!**

Prizes and Awards announced @ 1:00 pm  
For details, call (408) 252-3740 or visit the SCVAS website  
Submission deadline 10/7

Make a Bird Feeder • Learn about CA Wildlife & Habitats • Fabulous Raffle Prizes  
Educational Presentations • Build a Birdhouse  
Live Animals . . . birds, reptiles, & more!  
Over 20 Nature Organizations



**General Parking at Monta Vista High School with Free Shuttle Service!  
Disabled Parking ONLY at McClellan Ranch Park**

*In the event of heavy rain, the event will be cancelled*

# Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

## Waterfowl through Skimmers

An immature **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen irregularly at the Palo Alto Duck Pond from about 29 May to 1 Jun (HH). We have seen this species in the summer in the past, perhaps one year in five. Three **Mute Swans** were seen at the South County Regional Wastewater Authority plant in Gilroy on 4 Jun (SCR) and two were there on 24 Jun (WGB). This species is now breeding in the North Bay and this introduced aviary bird is likely to expand its range. A male **American Wigeon** was on closed salt ponds in Alviso on 25 Jun (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A male **Blue-winged Teal** was in the vicinity of Adobe Creek and the Mountain View Forebay on 4 Jun (DC, JPa) and two more males were in Salt Pond A3W on the same day (MJM). A pair of Blue-wings were east of Artesian Slough from the Alviso Environmental Education Center (EEC) on 1 Jul (EFe). Single male **Canvasbacks**, perhaps the same birds, were seen at the Stevens Creek mouth on 4 Jun (MJM, WGB) and 30 Jun (RWR, FV), and in outer Guadalupe Slough on 30 Jun (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A 1st-summer **Common Loon** was a one-day visitor at Almaden Lake on 1 Jun (KPa). A **Pelagic Cormorant** again visited Shoreline Lake on 8 Jun (FV, KPa). It seems likely that this is the same bird seen here briefly last fall and also in the winter. Single adult **Little Blue Herons**, will-o-wisps, were seen over Artesian Slough on 24 Jun and along Guadalupe Slough on 14 Jul (both EFe). The 1st-summer **White-faced Ibis** found in the Mountain View Forebay in late May was joined by an adult on 2 Jun (DC) and both remained through 8 Jun (m.ob.). The 1st-summer bird was last seen on 14 Jun (BW). Always rare in summer, an adult **Bald Eagle** was observed over Lexington Reservoir on 1 Jul (JMy). A **Prairie Falcon** near Bloomfield Road and Hwy 152 on 24 Jun (WGB) was probably an early dispersant from the Diablo Range. Four **Snowy Plovers** were found on the Ravenswood salt ponds on 4 Jun (AME). Four birds

were also found during surveys on closed Refuge salt ponds near Alviso on both 25 Jun and 30 Jul (MMR, MJM, RGJ). Three adult **Lesser Yellowlegs** found at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) waterbird pond 3-4 Jun (MJM) started the fall migration. Birds were found elsewhere in small numbers through the end of the month with the first juvenile noted on 31 Jul at the waterbird pond (MJM). Four **Red Knots** at the Stevens Creek mouth on 28 Jul (RWR, FV) were the first of the season. A high of fourteen were counted there the next day (MMR). An adult **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was seen at the CCFS waterbird pond on 4 Jun

*Two eastern vagrants  
brightened the summer season:  
a Hooded Warbler and  
a Rose-breasted Grosbeak*

(MJM). The first juvenile was found at the Stevens Creek mouth on 29 Jul (MMR). Five **Least Terns** staging at Salt Pond A2E on 30 Jun (RWR, FV) were the first of the season. High counts at the end of the month included at least 82 birds at A2E on 29 Jul (MMR) and 74 birds on closed Refuge ponds at Alviso on 30 Jul (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A precocial young **Black Skimmer** with six adults on closed salt ponds near Alviso on 25 Jun (MMR, MJM, RGJ) was the only certain breeding record this summer.

## Roadrunners through Warblers

Two **Greater Roadrunners** were seen along Coyote Ridge on 25 Jun (SCR). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard calling near Coon Hunters Gulch in Henry Coe SP on 9-10 Jun (GHa). This Santa Cruz Mountain specialty is rarely found in the Diablo Range. Eight **Black Swifts** were seen over Monte Bello OSP on 14 Jun (GHa). This rare migrant is most often found in late May or early June. **Vaux's Swifts**, probably all local, were found more extensively this year along

the eastern side of the Santa Cruz Mountains. At the southern end, 4-5 swifts were over Almaden-Quicksilver CP on 13 Jun (AV, JPa, KB) and, at the northern end, two were near Sandhill and Whiskey Hill roads on 4 Jun (RGJ). The largest group seen, 15 birds at Hidden Villa on 18 Jul (GHa), may have been two family groups. **Pileated Woodpecker** sightings from the Santa Cruz Mountains included single birds in Wunderlich Park on 4 Jun (RW, AS) and at Sanborn-Skyline CP on 10 Jun (BP), two birds along Skyline west of Table Mountain on 15 Jun (LCh) and another two in El Corte Madera OSP on 18 Jul (AP). A **Willow Flycatcher** was found along Stevens Creek below La Avenida on 4 Jun (MMR) — we rarely see this Empidonax during the spring migration. A **Say's Phoebe** at Almaden-Quicksilver CP on 31 Jul (JPa) is likely an extralimital bird from the Diablo Range. Returning winter visitants are not usually found until late September. A female **Purple Martin** over Morgan Hill on 13 Jun (SCR) and a male at Mt. Umunhum on 18 Jun (RWR, FV) were our first records since 2002. This swallow probably no longer breeds in Santa Clara County. One to two **American Dippers** were found along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road 3 Jun–3 Jul (m. ob.). A juvenile was seen along Los Gatos Creek above the Main Street Bridge on 25 Jun (LMy), and it is likely that they breed nearby, although the creek is mostly just a channel here. A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was heard near Horseshoe Lake in Skyline Ridge OSP on 4 Jun (GHa et al.) and may nest nearby. Two **Swainson's Thrushes** heard singing near Uvas and Little Arthur creeks on 21 Jul (JMy) represent a remnant population that still may breed near the valley floor. A **Yellow-rumped Warbler** on Geng Road in Palo Alto on 4 Jun (L&WG) is well away from Santa Cruz Mountain breeding locales and is a month late for a spring migrant. A **Hermit Warbler** singing near Horseshoe Lake on 4 Jun (GHa et al.) is part of the small, local breeding population. A **Hooded Warbler** was heard singing north of the Page Mill Road and Skyline Boulevard intersection on 2



## Field Notes *cont'd*

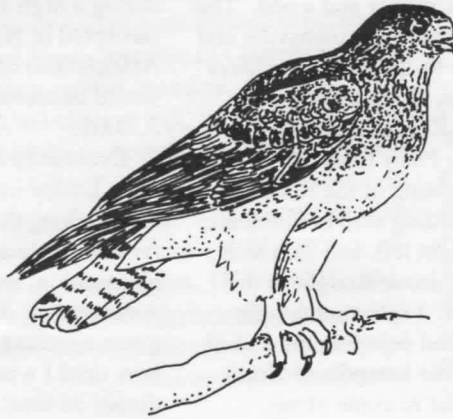
Jun (GHa), but could not be seen. Lowland **Wilson's Warblers** seemed unusual for 4 Jun with one along Stevens Creek below La Avenida (MMR) and another along Geng Road (L&WG). A singing **Yellow-breasted Chat** along Llagas Creek above Bloomfield Road continued to be found 3 Jun–2 Jul (MPx, WGB, MJM, SCR).

### Sparrows through Goldfinches

A juvenile **Grasshopper Sparrow** at Monte Bello OSP on 7 Jun (RWR, FV) suggests successful breeding this year. Fifteen plus birds were at Joseph Grant CP 10 & 18 Jun (WGB, DG) and many were found along Coyote Ridge on 25 Jun (SCR). A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** that showed up at a Los Gatos feeder on 22 Jun (JD) was a pleasant surprise. A male **Great-tailed Grackle** was again found singing at the Palo Alto Duck Pond on 4 Jun (MMR, L&WG). This is the first record for the Palo Alto Summer Bird Count. A male was also seen over Hwy 85 near Blossom Hill Road on 23 Jun (DL) and a pair was along Llagas Creek above Bloomfield on 24 Jun (WGB). The latter birds may have nested near the wastewater plant here. Continued breeding activity by **Purple Finches** in Cuesta Park in Mountain View was seen through 19 Jul (MMR). There are unique records to be found in our urban parks! A **Red Crossbill** was heard near Horseshoe Lake on 4 Jun (GHa et al.). The last **Pine Siskin** seen at a feeder on Mt. Hamilton was on 8 Jun (EG). Did these birds nest nearby? Where did they go? The only **Lawrence's Goldfinches** found in the summer period were a pair with three fledged young along San Felipe Road on 2 Jul (MJM, SCR). They've bred here in past years as well. A pair of **Orange Bishops** were seen carrying nest materials on Calera Creek in Milpitas on 26 Jun and a nest was found on 16 Jul (MMR). It is unclear whether any young were fledged successfully. These birds apparently relocated to the CCFS waterbird pond by 30 Jun (MMR, MJM, RGJ) and may attempt to nest again. This is the second nest record in the county for this colorful escapee.

## Swainson's Hawk strangeness

A century ago, Swainson's Hawks nested on the coastal slope of southern California, in the interior valleys of the Coast Ranges north to San Benito and Monterey counties, in the Central Valley, and in Great Basin areas of the northeast.



*The Swainson's Hawk hasn't nested in Santa Clara County for over a century. So how have three fledgling Swainson's turned up in the past 6 years?  
sketch by Bonnie Bedford-White*

*Observers: Kim Blythe (KB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Dotty Calabrese (DC), Les Chibana (LCh), Jean Dubois (JD), Al Eisner (AME), Eric Feuss (EFe), Don Ganton (DG), Elinor Gates (EG), Lois & Wally Goldfrank (L&WG), Garth Harwood (GHa), Hazel Holby (HH), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), David Lewis (DL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Jean Myers (JMy), Lisa Myers (LMy), Kathy Parker (KPa), Janna Pauser (JPa), Mark Paxton (MPx), Akkana Peck (AP), Bob Power (BP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Ashutosh Sinha (AS), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Bill Walker (BW), and Ron Wolf (RW).*

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

In the San Francisco Bay area (exclusive of the Central Valley province), there are only three breeding records: one from Sonoma County (<1859) and two from Santa Clara County (1889 and 1894). This hawk has declined in portions of its range and is now absent from coastal slope of southern California. In recent years, nestlings or fledged birds have been mysteriously turning up at local wildlife rescue organizations. The first of these was found at Summitpointe Golf Course in 1999. This July, two more have turned up: an unfledged young in a pool house near Villa Montalvo and a nearly fledged young in San Jose north of Tully Road. None of us has an explanation for these strange events. Unlike the

Red-tailed Hawk, Swainson's does not have a reputation as an urban nesting bird (long gone from urban Southern California, where once common). Rather, it is characteristic of riparian woodlands adjacent to grasslands and agricultural areas, such as along the San Joaquin River. This hawk is very rare in Santa Clara County and there are no summer records! For birders, the adults are generally quite distinctive and hard to confuse with Red-tails. If there were two nests in urban areas on the valley floor this summer, that means two males were foraging daily to feed the female while she incubated and, later, four birds were busy out there finding food for the hungry young. None was ever seen! Thanks to Mike Rogers and Karen Hoyt for their documentation of these records.

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# In birding, anything is possible

by Jack Cole

Last January my wife and I went on a cruise out of Galveston, Texas, with stops in Panama and Costa Rica, among others. Even though, to quote my wife, "This is not a birding trip," I never left the ship without my binoculars, and managed to see many beautiful tropical birds. Before we left home, I had been drooling over the raft of rarities that were appearing in the Rio Grande Valley. Fortunately, my wife has a cousin who lives in Pharr, near McAllen, and we arranged to visit her for three days after our cruise. My visiting consisted mainly of breakfast, dinner and a bed. The rest of the time I roamed the valley between Brownsville and San Ygnacio. In doing so, I was able to spot the four "lifers" I was after: Golden-crowned Warbler, Crimson-collared Grosbeak, White-throated Robin and Roadside Hawk.

February 3 found me returning to Pharr from San Ignacio after a long but successful sighting of the Roadside Hawk. I decided to make one final birding stop at Solineno, because 1), there was still some daylight left, and 2), I had managed to miss Green Kingfisher. I drove straight to the boat ramp, which was totally deserted. I spent some time just sitting on the ramp, reminiscing and enjoying the end of three fantastic days of birding one of the hotspots of North America, and waiting for the kingfisher to come along, which it soon did. Then I expanded my viewing range, and about 100 yards upriver I noticed a large hawk perched on a heavy, bare limb of a large tree, on the U.S. side of the river. What was unusual about the tree was that some of the limbs were black. What was outstanding about this hawk was that the entire body (it was directly facing me), from neck to tail, was a *bright, solid orange!!* The shoulders were wide; the body seemed to taper down, sort of like the Tazmanian devil.

I couldn't make out any details of the head, (I believe later because its whiteness blended in with the sky) and I could not see the tail because it was behind the limb. It seemed at least as large as a red-tail; one of the largest hawks I have ever seen. I knew immediately this was not a North American bird! The orangest Cooper's or Red-shouldered Hawks don't even come close to the *solid* brilliance of this bird. I recalled seeing an orange-breasted hawk in my Peterson's Mexican field guide, but thought: can it possibly be? I'd have to wait until I got home the next evening to find out.

I did not have a scope, and there was no one else present with whom to share my discovery. This was very frustrating. After some time, a photographer came along, armed only with a camera. He really wanted to walk up the path to take some pictures of other birds, so I finally decided to join him in hopes that I could get a closer look at the hawk. Unfortunately, when we could finally see the tree, the hawk was gone. Disappointed, I returned to my car, and as I was leaving, some birders arrived with a scope!

The next evening, back in San Jose, I went straight to my Peterson's Mexican guide, and sure enough, there on the third plate was my bird, a Black-collared Hawk! I then searched the Texas and North American checklists, and

learned that this bird had never been recorded north of Mexico. I knew, of course, that my sighting would never be more than just that, an interesting sighting. In hindsight, I should have at least asked the photographer if he thought he could get recognizable photos from the boat ramp, but in the excitement of the discovery, that thought never entered my mind.

Until this event, my most exciting 45 minutes of birding were spent aboard the *Miss Hatteras* on August 8, 1998, during a high-speed chase of the first North American record (accepted in North Carolina but not by the American Birding Association) of Swinhoe's Storm-petrel. I thought that would be an experience of a birding lifetime, until February 3, 2005.

Eventually I shared the sighting with my friends, and with Greg Lasley in Texas, who has seen this species in its normal range, along the rivers and wetlands of central and South America. He agreed that this was indeed an interesting observation, and regretted as I did that it could not have been documented. Would I have handled the situation differently, given a second chance? Of course. I should have forgotten how tired I was, or that I still had a long drive ahead to make dinner on time. A little more patience and we might have another species on the ABA list. But I am thankful for the experience, and the memory of that time and place will be etched in my mind forever. The moral to the story is: you just never know what might turn up, because in birding, anything is possible.



A Burrowing Owl family at Mountain View's Shoreline Park delighted scores of local birders this summer. It's encouraging to witness successful breeding of this species, whose status in Santa Clara County is severely threatened by development. SCVAS member Tom Grey contributed this photo, taken in early August.



## Help save Arctic Wildlife Refuge!

The fight over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is heating up — YOUR HELP NEEDED IN AUGUST & SEPTEMBER! The National Audubon Society is making a big push to save the pristine wilderness in Alaska from destructive oil drilling, and you can help!

After 25 years of fighting, our last best chance to protect the refuge will be in the House of Representatives on a vote quickly approaching in September. In August, members of Congress who will be casting deciding votes will be back home talking with their constituents — like you! All Audubon chapters and Audubon members around the country will be using this opportunity to weigh in with their members of Congress and fight at this critical time for one of the most pristine places left in America!

Critically important targets in the House of Representatives include: Bradley (NH), Ehlers (MI), Frelinghuysen (NJ),

Ferguson (NJ), Smith (NJ), LoBiondo (NJ), Gilchrest (MD), Kelly (NY), Kennedy (MN), Kirk (IL), Gerlach (PA), Reichert (WA), Schwarz (MI), Ramstad (MN), Castle (DE), Bass (NH), Boehlert (NY), Johnson (IL), Shays (CT), Simmons (CT), Johnson (CT), Leach (IA), Saxton (NJ), Fitzpatrick (PA), Walsh (NY), Bartlett (MD), and Inglis (SC).

Even if your lawmaker is not represented above, please make a point to call, write or e-mail your elected officials today! Every member of Congress will be voting on this measure, and right now, it's too close to call.

Log on to Audubon's special "Protect the Arctic" website — accessed via [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) — or contact Desiree Groves in Audubon's public policy office in Washington, DC at (202) 861-2242, x. 3038 ([dgroves@audubon.org](mailto:dgroves@audubon.org)) to find out more about how you can help!

—Desiree Sorenson-Groves

## Santa Clara Valley Audubon is an Official eScrip Member

What is eScrip?

eScrip is a hassle-free way for us to raise funds through everyday purchases made at eScrip merchants such as Whole Foods, Round Table Pizza, Payless Shoe Source, and hundreds more. Just visit eScrip's website at [www.eScrip.com](http://www.eScrip.com) to view a list of participating merchants. This is a nationwide program, so your friends and family members anywhere in the U.S. can participate as well by registering their cards.

How Does it Work?

eScrip and over 150 merchants have created a system that rewards customer loyalty by contributing a little over 2% of purchases made by you, your friends, and your family to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. You shop the way you like to shop for groceries, clothes, travel, entertainment, etc. It's simple and convenient; all you need to do is register your grocery club card and debit/credit card(s). Here's how:

(1) Simply log on to [www.eScrip.com](http://www.eScrip.com)

and go to "sign up".

(2) Designate SCVAS to receive contributions. Our Group ID is #500001548 or simply type in Santa Clara Valley Audubon.

(3) Register your grocery club card from a participating merchant, e.g., your Chevron card and your debit/credit cards.

If you already have an eScrip account, please remember that you can list up to three groups.

You can also sign up directly at SCVAS meetings, pick up a form at the meeting to send in via regular mail, or contact Susan Bell (408) 252-3147 to have a form faxed to you.

How will my participation help SCVAS?

SCVAS could earn hundreds of dollars from your participation alone! With this contribution, we hope to keep improving our environmental education programs and expand them to a broader community. Please register with eScrip today, and thanks in advance for helping to support our Chapter.

## Palo Alto Summer Bird Count Summary

Another successful Palo Alto Summer Bird Count is in the books, as compiler Bill Bousman has completed the final tally. Saturday, June 4 began with some fog along Skyline Drive, but by 8 AM it was not a factor, and the day grew to be warm and pleasant. Sixty counters spotted around 147 species, slightly above average for the Count, with some uncommon-to-rare birds adding to the thrills of the day.

Near Horseshoe Lake in Region 1 Garth Harwood's party spotted a Hermit Warbler, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, and a fly-over Red Crossbill. Later they also recorded MacGillivray's Warbler, and two more were found in the usual spots along Rapley Ridge Road in Region 7. Singing Grasshopper Sparrows were in usual numbers along Russian Ridge. In Wunderlich Park, also in Region 7, Ron Wolf's party found a Northern Pygmy-owl and sighted a Pileated Woodpecker, which was also heard in Region 8 in expected habitat. Lois and Wally Goldfrank, down in Region 2, spotted a Great-tailed Grackle behind the Palo Alto duck pond, a first for the Count, and Mike Rogers, also in Region 2, had a Willow Flycatcher along Stevens Creek Trail for another Count first. Other notable birds discovered by Mike were Short-billed Dowitcher and Western Sandpiper. Two White-faced Ibis in the Coast Casey Forebay are probably the second records for the Count. In Region 1 Al Eisner found four Snowy Plovers on a salt pond levee, where they have been observed in the past. And at the Stanford dish, Grant Hoyt logged the reliable pair of Golden Eagles.

Thanks to the many regulars who make this count successful year after year — to Ruth and Gene Troetschler for hosting the countdown once again; to Kim at SCVAS for her logistical support, and especially to everyone who donated their time and effort to this worthwhile endeavor [*particularly Jack Cole, Al Eisner, and Bill Bousman — Ed.*]. See you all next year!

—Jack Cole

# 2005 Spring Birdathon nets \$25K For SCVAS Education Programs

This year's Spring Birdathon topped 2004's fundraising effort (which netted over \$24,000) by raising over \$25,000 to fund SCVAS Environmental Education Programs, more than half going to programs in low-income public schools in Santa Clara County. Many thanks to the efforts of our 44 participants, the generous donations of their 366 personal sponsors, our 32 prize sponsors (see opposite page) who donated superb prizes, Birdathon Committee Chair Debbie Thompson, and the Birdathon Committee members who volunteered countless hours to make this event a success. The Birdathon also generated 65 new SCVAS members!

## Top Fundraisers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Prize Received</u>
<b>Over \$2500</b>		
Dotty Calabrese	Wild Women Birders	7 night Sea Ranch Stay
Bob Hirt	Varied Twitchers	6 night Carmel Stay
<b>Over \$1500</b>		
Lisa Myers	Persistent Picidaes	2 night Point Reyes Stay
<b>Over \$1000</b>		
Steve Patt	Cupertino Creek Cruisers	Arcadia Spotting Scope
Debbie Thompson	Wacky-Cap Chickadees	Pentax Binoculars
Lori Cuesta	Wild Women Birders	Swift 8.5x44 binoculars
Lindsey Wolf	Persistent Picidaes	Cheeseman Pelagic Trip for 4
Laurie West-Roberts	Snipe Hunters	KGO Helicopter Ride
Linda Swanson	Wild Women Birders	Birding with Rich Stallcup
Bobbie Handen	Wrong Terns	Orion 8x42 binoculars
<b>Over \$500</b>		
Kim Blythe	Varied Twitchers	Swift Audubon 8x42 binoculars
Harriet Gerson	Persistent Picidaes	American Musical Theater Tickets
Barry Langdon-Lasagne	Varied Twitchers	Case of Ridge Wine
David McIntyre	Varied Twitchers	Pentax Binoculars
<b>Over \$400</b>		
Sue Hunt	Varied Twitchers	Framed Howard Jameson Photo "Eagles Fighting"
<b>Over \$300</b>		
Katy Obringer	Varied Twitchers	Framed Mark Bohrer Photo "Porcupine"
Ruth & Gene Troetschler	Cupertino Creek Cruisers	Framed Mark Bohrer Photo "Sandhill Crane"

## Top Youth (under 18) Fundraiser

<b>Over \$170</b>		
Robert Clarke	Eager Eaglets	Stanford Athletic Tickets REI Backpack & Binocular Strap

A handsome new plaque now hangs in the SCVAS Office announcing the 2004 and 2005 Spring Birdathon team winners for Most Money Raised by a Team, Most Species Seen by a Team, and Most Unusual Bird Seen by a Team.

## Team Winners

<u>Category</u>	<u>Winning Team</u>	
Most Money Raised by a Team	Varied Twitchers	Over \$6000
Most Species Seen by a Team	Varied Twitchers	157 Species
24-Hour Birdathon	Wacky-Cap Chickadees	58 Species
Big Sit 4-Hour Birdathon	Varied Twitchers	Dusky Flycatcher
Most Unusual Bird Seen by a Team		

Winners received their prizes at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Birdathon Awards Dinner on June 28. All Spring Birdathon participants who attended enjoyed pizza, raffles, bird quizzes and contests.

In 2006, we hope to expand the Spring Birdathon to include many new participants. How about you? Start thinking now about forming a team with your birding friends or joining a Guided Team. The fundraising is much easier than you think. Your Birdathon will be great fun. You might even see the Most Species or the Most Unusual Bird!

## Thank you, Birdathon sponsors!

Our 2005 Spring Birdathon was quite a success! We would like to extend a special "thank you" to our numerous prize sponsors. Please help us show our appreciation by patronizing our sponsors and let them know that you appreciate their support.

### **Golden Eagle Sponsors**

Those who donated more than \$600 in prizes:  
 SCVAS member David McIntyre  
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 Mountain and Desert Photography [www.kokophoto.com](http://www.kokophoto.com)  
 Orion Telescope, Cupertino [www.telescope.com](http://www.telescope.com)

### **Great Egret Sponsors**

Those who donated between \$250 and \$599 in prizes:  
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[www.wildbirdcenter.com/stores/los](http://www.wildbirdcenter.com/stores/los)  
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 Hawaii Forest and Trail [www.hawaii-forest.com](http://www.hawaii-forest.com)  
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### **Western Bluebird Sponsors**

Those who donated up to \$249 in prizes:  
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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 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 5

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