



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

January - February 2006

A Brief History of SCVAS

As 80th anniversary approaches, we celebrate the past — and future!

Brenda Torres-Barreto
Executive Director

Happy New Year everyone! It's finally 2006, and this year the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society celebrates its 80th anniversary. This is reason for celebration but also time to rethink where our organization is now, and what we would like to accomplish in the coming years.

By digging through past *Avocet* newsletters, old copies of *The Wren-Tit*, *The Bulletin* and the "History of the SCVAS from 1925-1962" compiled by Mr. Warren Turner, I have put together a timeline of significant events that are representative of SCVAS' 80 years of conservation work in the Santa Clara Valley:

• 1920's – SCVAS was created by a group of 45 residents of Santa Clara County. The Society was devoted principally to birding trips and bird-related studies. Signs of threats to condors and pelicans were already present in the 1920s. During this decade we established our first newsletter, *The Wren-Tit*, in 1928, and we began the San Jose Christmas Bird Count tradition in 1929.

• 1930's – This decade was full of monthly conservation meetings and field trips to various sites such as Lone Hill, Alviso Salt Marshes, Milpitas and Alum Rock Canyon. Discus-

sions on wildlife crises, specifically regarding the Clapper Rail, took place at SCVAS meetings. At a national level, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president and put 2 million unemployed young people to work on forest protection, soil conservation, and other jobs in national parks and forests.

• 1940's – In 1940 the National Association of Audubon Societies became the National Audubon Society and later its publication, *Bird-Lore*, became Audubon Magazine. Local conservation issues of interest were the establishment of a game refuge for shorebirds and the California Clapper Rail on the margins of San Francisco Bay. Our Chapter was conducting strong outreach efforts and sponsoring overnight field trips to Soap Lake Valley and Brown Valley. In this decade, *The Bulletin* was our main communication vehicle.

• 1950's – *The Avocet* was born in 1954, after a fun contest that was won by one of our members, Dr. Sibley. The Society was engaged in various conservation projects such as the development of a wildlife sanctuary, the re-examination of California's game laws, and helping to set aside a wildlife reserve in San Francisco Bay (working with other Audubon chapters and the Sierra Club). In 1951, The Nature Conservancy was established in Washington, D.C.

• 1960's – Achievements and progress were noticeable during the

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General Membership Meeting "Changes in Breeding Birds in the S.F. Bay Area Since Grinnell and Wythe"

with Bill Bousman

Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Wednesday, Jan. 18

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Joseph Grinnell and Margaret Wythe published a "directory" of the birds in the nine counties that border the San Francisco Estuary in 1927. They were deeply pessimistic as to the effects of urbanization on our local birds, but their predicted declines did not happen. What did happen is the subject of this talk. Come and find out about birds we've lost, such as Willow Flycatcher, and the many we've gained, such as Snowy Egret.

Bill Bousman has kept track of the bird sighting records in Santa Clara County since

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**Endangered
Species Act
in trouble!**

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◆ Plethora of rarities
— Field Notes, Page 6

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endemics — Page 8

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◆ Help SCVAS grow!
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Jan. - Feb. '06 Field Trips

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

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

NF = No facilities available

Sunday Jan. 1, 7:30 AM

County Chase

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Jump-start your County Year List for 2006 with some vagrant chasing. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch, and field guides as we attempt to track down some of the unusual birds from local Christmas Bird Counts. Meet in Alviso Marina parking lot. 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. Be prepared to car pool. **RC**

Wednesday Jan. 4, 12 noon

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

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

Saturday Jan. 7, 8:00 AM

Panoche Valley

Full day. Leader: Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260. Meet at Paicines Store on Hwy 25 approx. 11 miles south of Hollister. Targeted species include Phainopepla, Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle; other possibilities include Mountain Plover, Bald Eagle, Vesper Sparrow, Greater Roadrunner and Chukar. Bring lunch and a full tank of gas, carpooling strongly recommended. FRS radios useful on this trip.

Sunday Jan. 8, 9:30 AM

Butterfly watching, Ardenwood Park

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

Sunday Jan. 8, 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 on unnamed road toward Model Airplane Park where power towers cross Hwy. Meet at gated entrance to ponds. **RC**

Wednesday Jan. 11, 8:30 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward hills, then left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd. into park. Turn left at intersection, meet at far end of last parking lot. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. May be muddy. **LO, RC**

Saturday Jan. 14, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. Birding geared toward beginners but all are welcome. Spotting scope helpful. **RC**

Sunday Jan. 15, 8:30 AM

Coyote Point, Foster City & vicinity

Half day. Leader: Al Eisner (days and voicemail: (650) 926-2018; evenings: (650) 364-3686). Meet at parking lot adjacent to yacht club at Coyote Point. From 101 northbound exit at Dore Ave, immediately turn north along frontage road. After about a mile, follow road as it bears right around a golf course. Enter park (not golf course) through kiosks, continue along golf course fence to end of road. Shorebirds, waterfowl, landbirds. A scope will be very useful. **LO, RC**

Saturday Jan. 21, 8:00 AM

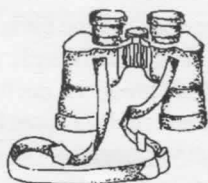
Palo Alto Duck Pond & vicinity

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Take Embarcadero Rd east off Hwy 101; follow signs to Duck Pond. Help leader ID winter plumage gulls. Scopes helpful. **RC**

Sunday Jan. 22, 9:00 AM

San Francisco's Southern Parks

Half day. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. Meet at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, a good place for shorebirds, bay ducks, loons and raptors. We will then visit S. F.'s second largest park (McLaren Park) for land birds and dabbling ducks. Other lesser-known but birdy parks may be visited, time permitting. From Hwy 101 exit just past Brisbane Lagoon at Candlestick/3Com Park off-ramp. Continue east along Harney Way, turn right onto Jamestown/Hunters Point Expwy, watch for entrance to Candlestick State Rec. Area on right and enter (no fee). Meet at end of paved road through park. **RC**



Saturday Jan. 28, 8:00 AM

Almaden Lake Park, Alamos Creek

Half day. Leader: TBD (questions - call Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527). Meet in west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. From Highway 85 take Almaden Expwy south. Park is on east (left) side of Almaden Expwy. Continue just past Coleman Rd (and Park) and return northbound on Almaden Expwy to Park entrance on right. About 3 miles of easy walking. Waterfowl, raptors, variety of riparian birds. **LO, RC**

Saturday Jan. 28, 8:30 AM

Alviso, Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge

Half day. Leaders: Les Chibana (SFBBBO) and SCVAS volunteers; contact Juliana (408) 252-3747. Meet at entrance to Environmental Education Center. From Hwy 237 take Zanker Rd exit heading north; continue on Zanker to EEC entrance (sharp right turn at Grand Blvd). Trip is part of SCVAS Endangered Species Act event; birders of all levels are welcome. Loaner binoculars will be available. RSVP to conservation@scvas.org requested, but not required.

Sunday Jan. 29, 8:30 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd northeast toward hills, then left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd; continue on into Park. Pass under bridge and meet at far end of upper parking lot. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. Possible Rufous-Crowned Sparrow and Canyon Wren, early migrants, and lingering winter birds. Be prepared for some mud! **LO, RC**

Wednesday Feb. 1, 12 noon

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

(See directions under Jan. 4 listing)

Saturday Feb. 4, 8:30 AM

Coyote Reservoir

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy take Leavesley Rd east for 1.5 miles, turn left on New Ave then right on Roop Rd. Go left at "T" intersection, then after 1.3 miles left again on Coyote Reservoir Rd and on to Lakeview Picnic area. **LO, RC**

Sunday Feb. 5, 8:30 AM

Arastradero OSP

Half day. Leader: Al Dieckmann (408) 379-5641. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd west; turn right on Arastradero Rd, meet in parking lot about 1/2 mile on right. Raptors, oak woodland birds. Moderate walking. **RC**

Field Trips *continued*

Wednesday Feb. 8, 8:30 AM

Ed Levin County Park

Half day. Ceal Craig & Phyllis Swanson (408) 259-2836. Take Hwy 237 east, crossing I-880 and I-680 (becomes E. Calaveras Blvd in Milpitas, then Calaveras Rd.) to Ranger Station/Visitor Center parking area on right just past Spring Valley Golf Course. Entrance fee. *LO, RC*

Saturday Feb. 11, 8:00 AM

Oka Ponds

Half day. Leader: Peggy Don (408) 257-3889. From Hwy 17 in Los Gatos take Lark Ave exit west. Turn right on Oka Rd, left on Mozart Ave and an immediate right on Oka Lane. Meet at gate. *RC*

Sunday Feb. 12, 8:30 AM

Soap Lake

Half day. Leader: Mark Paxton (831) 637-3039. Soap (San Felipe) Lake forms the headwaters of the Pajaro River at the confluence of southern Santa Clara Valley, Pacheco Pass and Pajaro Gap. Consistent mix of winter shorebirds and waterfowl. Usually birded from a pullout off Hwy 152, this trip is an opportunity to visit this privately held property from the other side of the fence. Meet at intersection of Frazer Lake and Shore Roads at large pullout on south side of Shore Rd. for carpooling to enter Soap Lake Ranch. Trip follows all-weather gravel road to lake and wetlands along Calaveras Fault. No restroom facilities. Birding through the morning; excellent lunches and restroom available at nearby cafe. Scopes helpful, but not necessary. Trip goes rain or shine. *NF*

Saturday Feb. 18, 7:30 AM

Santa Cruz Coastal Hot Spots

Half day (optional plus). Leader: Todd Newberry (831) 426-8741. Meet at Santa Cruz lighthouse. From Hwy 17 take Hwy 1 north toward Half Moon Bay, turn left on Bay St (just after MacDonald's), go to its end, turn right onto W. Cliff Drive, follow bluff-top to lighthouse. Trip will also visit Struve Slough and possibly other Watsonville sloughs. Dress in layers; trip goes rain or shine. If running late, meet at 8 AM overlooking Natural Bridges at west end of W. Cliff Dr.

Sunday Feb. 19, 8:30 AM

Coyote Hills Regional Park

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

Wednesday Feb. 23, 9:00 AM

Redwood Shores, Radio Road

Leader: Rose Green (650) 493-8378. From Hwy 101 north take Holly Street/Redwood Shores offramp toward Bay. Meet in parking lot at Nob Hill Market on right side of Redwood Shores Parkway just past Pacific Athletic Club. Spotting scopes helpful. *LO, RC*

Saturday Feb. 25, 8:30 AM

Merced & San Luis Wildlife Refuges

Full day. Leader: Grant Webb (408) 578-0409. Meet at parking area near first Observation Platform in Merced National Wildlife Refuge. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy take Hwy 152 east past Los Banos, (no services past Los Banos: check your gas gauge), approx. 20 miles then north 7 miles on Rte. 59 to Sandy Mush Rd. Turn left, go approx. 8 miles to Merced Refuge on left. Allow 2.5 hrs driving time from San Jose, more if it's foggy. Raptors, ducks, geese, Sandhill Cranes, White-faced Ibis possible. Primarily a driving bird trip; FRS radios set to channel 11 sub code 22 helpful but not required. After Merced, caravan to San Luis Wildlife Refuge for lunch and more birding. Dress in layers, bring lunch, liquids, full tank of gas. *RC*

Sunday Feb. 26, 9:00 AM

Pescadero Marsh & vicinity

Half day. Leader: Sue James (650) 348-0315. Meet at first parking lot south of the bridge over Pescadero Creek on Hwy 1. Shorebirds, gulls, grebes, and ducks. Don't forget that spotting scope. *LO, RC*

Saturday Mar. 4, 8:00 AM

Windy Hill OSP

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

Sunday Mar. 5, 9:00 AM

Stanford Campus

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

Plan Ahead

Saturday Apr. 15, 7:30 AM

West Pinnacles National Monument

Leader: Rick Fournier (831) 632-2473, Awarbler@aol.com. Trip limited to 15 participants.

Events Calendar

Tues. 1/3, 4 PM

Education Committee Meeting

McClellan Ranch Park

Wed. 1/4, 7:30 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers

features Eric Preston's program on water birds from New Zealand, Antarctica and North America. Lucie Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto

Tues. 1/10, 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: Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Thurs. 1/12, 7 PM

Diversity Committee Meeting

McClellan Ranch Park

Mon. 1/16 — Office will be closed for

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Wed. 1/18, 7:30 PM

General Meeting

Palo Alto Art Center (see Page 4)

Thurs. 1/19, 7 PM

Nestbox new volunteer meeting

Find out how to adopt and monitor nestboxes to help cavity-nesting birds. RSVP (408) 252-3740. McClellan Ranch Park

Wed. 1/24, 7:30 PM

Environmental Action Committee

meeting, McClellan Ranch Park

Sat. 1/28, 8:30 AM - 12 noon

SCVAS Endangered Species Act Event

(see Pages 4, 10)

Tues. 2/14, 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: Brewer's Blackbird

Wed. 2/15 7:30 PM

General Meeting

Palo Alto Art Center (see Page 4)

Sun. 2/19, 9 - noon, 1 - 5 PM

Nestbox training (first session)

Learn first-hand how to install and monitor nestboxes at Arastradero Preserve, Palo Alto. RSVP (408) 252-3740 by 2/17.

Sun. 2/26, 9 - noon, 1 - 5 PM

Nestbox training (second session)

(see above)

Volunteer Ventures

by Kim Yuan-Farrell
Programs Coordinator

Happy New Year! These first months of 2006 usher in a new cycle of seasons and, with them, another cycle of nature's activities. The winter migrants are here for a couple more months before they return to their nesting and summering grounds, where they'll introduce their young to the cycles of life. Eventually, we'll see these wintering birds again, but not before a couple more seasons come and go.

I invite you to visit me at McClellan Ranch Park to see the winter migrants at our feeders and become a regular part of the SCVAS cycle. We've got many ways you can get involved in our cycle of programs and events. From short-term to long-term positions, come explore the variety of opportunities we offer. I'll help you find activities that match your interests, skills, and schedule. And, hey, if you visit our office to become a volunteer and set "volunteering with SCVAS" as one of your New Year's resolutions, you'll be killing two b—well, you get my meaning.

Hospitality Volunteers – Do you enjoy planning, decorating, and creating a welcoming environment? Become a Hospitality Volunteer! You'll have the opportunity to help with a variety of special events, such as the endangered species field trip coming up this month, our 80th Anniversary Celebration in the fall, and a new luncheon speaker series. Each event has its own flavor and provides opportunities for creativity, fun, and teamwork. This is an ongoing position, but we also welcome volunteers who would like to help with a specific event.

Wetlands Discovery Program Docent – That's right, it's that time of year again! The spring Wetlands season will start again in March, and we need some more classroom and field trip docents. The Wetlands Discovery Program shares the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with third through sixth graders throughout Santa Clara County. Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat both in the classroom and in the field. Teachers rave about our program and the fabulous volunteers who work as a team to serve more than 750 students each year. For many students, the Wetlands Discovery Program is their first major exposure to nature. We have both docent leader and support positions to match a variety of personalities and experience levels. No experience is necessary, we will provide training for both field and class sessions. All that is required is a willingness to be fingerprinted and enthusiasm to share with the children.

Cavity Nest Monitor – You can help save cavity-nesting birds of Santa Clara Valley from population decline! Habitat destruction has left native cavity nesters such as Western Bluebirds, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, and Barn Owls, without natural cavities in which to raise their young. Fortunately, our team of dedicated nestbox volunteers are bringing these populations back. In 1997, the Santa Clara County California

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Endangered Species Act Birding Field Trip and Round-table Discussion

SCVAS is hosting an Endangered Species Act event on Saturday, January 28th at the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge in Alviso from 8:30 AM to 12 noon. For both experienced and beginning birders alike, this will be an extraordinary opportunity to participate in a round-table discussion on the Endangered Species Act with local experts (and keen birders!) Lynne Trulio, SJSU professor and lead scientist on the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration project; Sarah Matsumoto, Field Director at Endangered Species Coalition; Clyde Morris, Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge manager, and Trent Orr, Legal Counsel for Earthjustice.

You'll also get to bird the diverse habitats that are home to the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and California clapper rail with experienced field guides including Les Chibana, one of the main collaborators with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory on its "Birding the Bay Trail" brochure. (See Page 10 for more on this event)

Bluebird Recovery Program fledged 229 birds of 8 different species. In 2005, we fledged 1,821 birds of 11 species! As a nestbox monitor, you can help families of these and other cavity-nesters make their homes and raise their young. You may install nestboxes yourself or monitor pre-installed boxes. Monitoring involves consistent, weekly visits to boxes to record their use and can be very personally rewarding. A minimum one-year commitment is strongly encouraged. No experience is necessary, as we will provide training materials and guidance. Join us on Thursday, January 19 at 7 PM at McClellan Ranch to find out how to adopt and monitor nestboxes. We'll also hold monitor training sessions in February (see Events Calendar on Page 3). RSVP to (408) 252-3740.

Field Trip Coordinator – SCVAS is proud to offer wonderful birding trips to interesting locations free of charge to our members and the public. These outings are fun, social, casual affairs scheduled by our fabulous Field Trip Coordinators and led by volunteer leaders. We currently need a Coordinator to schedule trips on the fourth Wednesday of the month (not Dec, June-August). This coordinator will recruit field trip leaders for eight events per year and help leaders 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.

Contact Kim at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org to volunteer for one of these positions or explore the many other possibilities.

Winter 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.

Introduction to the Birds of South Texas with Steve Rutledge

The Rio Grande Valley of South Texas is one of America's premier birding destinations. Here you can find many species that are seen nowhere else in the United States — tropical birds reaching the northernmost limit of their range. Some, like the Green Jay, are more colorful relatives of familiar birds. Still other South Texas denizens, e.g. the noisy Plain Chachalaca and the colorful Black-bellied Whistling Duck, seem decidedly exotic to the North American birder. This February Steve and students will embark on a tour of some of the best birding spots in South Texas. From a base in McAllen, the class will explore birding hotspots along the Rio Grande, including Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge and the Sabal Palms Sanctuary near Brownsville. They will also travel to Laguna Atascosa and to South Padre Island.

Steve will combine the traditional format of a birding tour (visiting hotspots for local birds) with the slower approach of a birding class (taking time to discuss bird biology in the field). Join the class for an exotic winter birding adventure!

Dates: 2/16 – 2/20 (3.5 days of birding), 2/9 pre-trip meeting
McClellan 7-9 PM

Location: Rio Grande Valley, based out of McAllen, Texas

Fee: \$400 (not including hotel, airfare, some meals)

Minimum 5 students, maximum 8

Steve Rutledge has a background in Environmental Biology (M.S., 1981) and has continued his study of field ornithology in recent years. He has birded in about two dozen US states or Canadian provinces, as well as about a dozen countries. His small classes are informal, light-hearted, and fun!

Interactive Lecture Series on 15 Families of Birds with Lisa Myers

We have a few more spots left for this six-week lecture series. Lectures, visual presentations, bird vocalizations, and weekly handouts will concentrate on the different bird species found in the West that make up each family. These presentations are geared for the beginner to intermediate birder. Gain a better understanding of the behaviors associated with each family, their migration patterns, preferred habitat and simply how each group of birds does life! Optional signup for the entire series or specific lectures: 1) Ducks, Geese and Swans; 2) Grebes & Herons; 3) Hawks, Eagles & Vultures; 4) Swifts, Kingfishers &

Woodpeckers; 5) Jays (Corvids) and Swallows; 6) Wrens and Blackbirds

Dates: Wednesdays, 1/11 – 2/15 (six evenings) 7-9 PM

Location: Conference room at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino

Fee: Entire 6-week series \$100, individual lectures \$20 each

Minimum 8 students, maximum 22

Lisa has been a birder for most of her life. She teaches classes and conducts workshops throughout the Santa Clara Valley. She strives to get new people into birding and introduce them to SCVAS. Lisa's classes are very creative and offer a fun and non-intimidating environment in which all can learn. Lisa also has her own business, Let's Go Birding. Her goal is to provide people with exciting opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and the avian world.

General Membership Meeting “A Potpourri of North American Birds”

with Norm Kikuchi
Palo Alto Arts Center,
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.
Wednesday, Feb. 15

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Santa Cruz photographer Norman Kikuchi will present an in-depth slide show of birding hotspots of North America, beginning with the Monterey Bay region, then some breeding bird sites of the Sierra Nevada. He'll follow with the tundra of Hudson Bay near Churchill, Manitoba, the wetlands of South Florida, and the Roma photo blinds in the Rio Grande valley of South Texas. Finally, he'll feature the grasslands and mountains of Colorado, (including grouse!) and the incomparable Bosque de Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico.

Norm's childhood interest in birds began while stalking Ring-necked Pheasants (aka pterodactyls) in the foothills of Mt. Diablo. His real bird epiphany occurred during his college days when he witnessed the impalement of a Western Fence Lizard by a Loggerhead Shrike on a Joshua Tree spine in the Mojave desert. Transfixed by the moment, he vowed never again to mistake a Turkey Vulture for a Golden Eagle!

Norm has always found time for birds. But before acquiring the big telephoto lenses for bird photography, Norm actively traveled the world's oceans in pursuit of underwater images. Highlights from this period include being bubble-netted by a Humpback Whale defending her calf to being knocked around in cages by Great White Sharks. If you have seen Norm's recent programs for Bay Area Bird Photographers, you will agree that his bird photography captures avian action at its best. You will not want to miss this program!

Cheesemans' Belize Trip

Doug and Gail Cheeseman have 6 spaces available for their Belize natural history trip (birds, mammals, whales, sharks and archeology) May 1 - 17, 2006; group size is 14. They will donate \$100 of the trip price to SCVAS for any Audubon members and friends who register for the trip. Visit www.cheesemans.com or call 1-800-527-5330 for more information.

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl through Shorebirds

An early juvenile **White-fronted Goose** was seen at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 15 Oct (RWR et al.) and was probably the same bird seen with Canada Geese at Calero Reservoir 30 Oct to 5 Nov (AV, MJM). A juvenile **Ross's Goose** was found at Calero Reservoir on 21 Nov (AV). An immature male **Eurasian Wigeon** on the Lockheed-Martin ponds on 6 Oct (MMR, SBT, SCR, JCS) was the first of the fall. These wigeon were fairly scarce in November with two males on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 3 Nov (MMR, MJM) and two birds on the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant oxidation ponds on 22 Nov (RWR, FV). **Blue-winged Teal** were found in a number of typical locations, including five on the Lockheed-Martin ponds on 29 Oct (FV, KHo et al.) and six males on Adobe Creek in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 16 Nov (WGB). The first **Redheads** of the fall were single males on Salt Pond A10 in Alviso and one on Calaveras Reservoir, both on 6 Oct (MMR, SBT, SCR, JCS). Increasing numbers were found toward the end of the month and a high count was of 38 on the Alviso saltponds on 3 Nov (MMR, MJM). Single **American Bitterns** were seen at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 15 Oct (RWR et al.), along San Tomas Aquino Creek below Agnew Road on 19 Oct (MJM), and one continued at the Santa Clara Valley Water District ponds 24 Oct to 27 Nov (JPa, v.ob.). An adult **Bald Eagle** was seen at Anderson Reservoir on 11 Nov (ECu) and was the first one found this winter. A 'Harlan's' **Red-tailed Hawk** was seen west of the Newby Island landfill on 13 Oct (EFe), but it is unclear whether this is the same bird that has wintered along the Guadalupe River in the past. The first **Ferruginous Hawks** of the year were an adult and immature seen in the grasslands west of Felter and Marsh roads on 15 Oct (MMR, SCR, SRv). An adult between Marsh and Calaveras roads on 9 Nov (MO'N, MK)

was likely the same bird seen earlier. An adult at Richmond Avenue and Santa Teresa Boulevard on 13 Nov (MJM) is likely the same bird that has been found there in previous winters. An adult roosting near New and Rucker near Gilroy, first seen on 22 Nov (BB-W), has wintered at this locations for many years. An injured **Peregrine Falcon** with leg bands, found in Palo Alto on 22 Nov (GHt, KHT), was hatched at the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group in 1990 and raised in a foster nest on Mt. Diablo. That places this bird in its 16th year. May it leave rehab and hunt successfully for many

Canada Warbler (new for the County), Chimney Swift, E. Phoebe, Gray Catbird, N. Parula, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Dickcissel were notable Fall rarities

more to come. **Prairie Falcons** often winter on the valley floor. One along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237, first seen on 26 Oct (MMR, MJM), has remained into November (v.ob.). Another bird was seen at Calero Reservoir on 1 Nov (AV).

Shorebirds through Catbirds

Ten **Snowy Plovers** were seen on closed refuge ponds on 29 Oct (MMR, MJM, RGJ), but had been missing elsewhere in the last month. Numbers of **Lesser Yellowlegs** quickly tapered off in October with one to three birds at the New Chicago Marsh (v.ob.). The last bird there was seen on 5 Nov (MMR) and another late bird was in the Mountain View Forebay on 25 Nov (DC). A few **Sanderling** winter in the South Bay each winter, although we think of them as birds of the beach. The first birds seen this season were six on closed refuge ponds on 29 Oct (MMR, MJM, RGJ).

Thirty-two **Pectoral Sandpipers** on the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 6 Oct (MMR, SBT, SCR, JCS) was the high count of the season. Two to four birds were seen in the New Chicago Marsh 23-27 Oct (SCR, RWR, FV). A juvenile **Stilt Sandpiper** was seen on the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 6 Oct (MMR, SBT, SCR, JCS) and may have been the bird found at New Chicago during August and September. Two **Elegant Terns** were photographed on Salt Pond A4 on 10 Oct (BM), but did not stay. An ill adult **Common Murre** was found pulled out at Byxbee Park on 9 Oct (BZ). Most Common Murres in the South Bay are found in late August and early September and many are sick. Two **Long-eared Owls** were heard on 6 Oct (MMR, SBT, SCR, JCS). The first was along San Felipe Road near Highland School and the second was at Monte Bello OSP. **Common Poorwill** are occasionally found in the winter months, so one on Mt. Hamilton on 16 Nov (EG) and three heard near Loma Prieta on 20 Nov (DLSu) were of interest. A **Chimney Swift** over the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 27 Oct (SCR) is a fourth county record and, seasonally, the latest of our local observations. An immature **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at Casa de Fruta on 3 Oct (DLSu) was quite late. A male **Costa's Hummingbird** was at a feeder in Saratoga on 26-27 Oct (BF). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found along East Bayshore Road in Palo Alto on 6 Oct (TAC, RC fide KO). A juvenile was found in Stevens Creek CP on 17 Oct (PD) and enjoyed by many through 29 Oct. A **Pileated Woodpecker** was heard at Monte Bello OSP on 6 Oct (MMR, SCR, SBT, JCS). A single bird was seen at Mt. Madonna CP on 5 Nov (JAB, HF et al.), which represents the continuing expansion of this woodpecker to the southeast. On a loop from Charcoal Road to Grizzly Flat, two to three birds were found on 7 Nov (RKe). A late **Willow Flycatcher** was seen at Calero Reservoir on 2 Oct (AV). The big flycatcher news of the period was an **Eastern Phoebe** at

Field Notes *cont'd*

the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds on 18 Nov (PD, JPa). This bird, seen for less than a minute, is only the third county record. A **Plumbeous Vireo** was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 5 Oct (SBT fide MMR), but was not seen again until 27 Oct (MMR, MJM, SCR) and was seen more or less regularly through 4 Nov (v.ob.). The influx of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** in early September petered out. One was in a Stanford yard on 16 Oct (TGr) and four were at Lake Cunningham on 4 Nov (SCR). There has been a weak movement of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** away from the Santa Cruz Mountains. Between one and five birds were seen along Coyote Creek from 15 Oct to 13 Nov (v.ob.). At least six birds were seen in Sunnyvale Baylands Park 27-31 Oct (MMR, v.ob.). A **Gray Catbird** was banded at the Coyote Creek Field Station on 26 Oct (SFBBO) for a third county record. Searched for eagerly over the next few days, it was never refound.

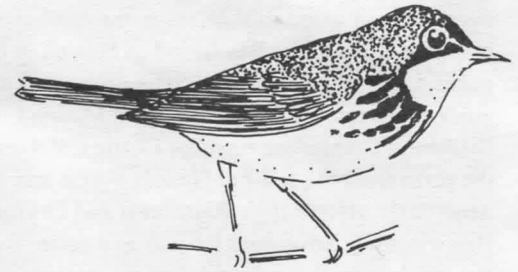
Warblers through Goldfinches

An adult **Nashville Warbler** was seen at Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 6 Oct (RKe, PKe), always a good find in the fall. It was a very good fall for eastern vagrants. An immature female **Northern Parula** was found along the Guadalupe River Trail north of Coleman Avenue on 7 Oct (AV). An adult male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 27 Oct (PKe, RKe) and, through modern communications, was seen by many local birders through noon of that day. A **Hermit Warbler** was seen along Coyote Creek between Tasman and Hwy 237 on 6 Nov (SCR). A **Blackpoll Warbler** was found at the end of Embarcadero Way 6-8 Oct (SCR, MMR, SBT, JCS, AME). A **Northern Waterthrush** was seen along the Guadalupe River between Montague and Trimble again on 5 Nov (MMR) and is likely one of the same birds first found there in early September. The big excitement of the fall was an immature female **Canada Warbler** found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 6 Oct (SCR, MMR, SBT, JCS)

and seen again on 7 Oct (DMa, MJM, RGJ). This is the first record for the county. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 15 Oct (SRv, SCR, SBT). The mostly tail-less **Brewer's Sparrow** found along the Guadalupe River Trail north of Blossom Hill Road on 30 Sep (JPa) was seen through 2 Oct (v.ob.). Another Brewer's was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 15 Oct (SBT). One or two **White-throated Sparrows** came to a Los Gatos feeder on 20 and 21 Oct (JD). Another white-throat was at a Los Altos feeder on 7 Nov (RCo). An immature was seen at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park 27-29 Oct (RGJ, MMR, RWR, DWe). Two birds were seen along Coyote Creek between Tasman and Hwy 237 on 6 Nov (SCR). An immature was at Charleston Slough on 17 Nov and another immature was along the Stevens Creek Trail near Landels Park on 25 Nov (both JLi). An immature **Blue Grosbeak** was found along Stevens Creek below La Avenida on 22 Oct (RKe, PKe), the second seen this fall. An immature **Dickcissel** seen on 14 Oct (MMR), also along Stevens Creek below La Avenida, was the third record for the county. During this fall period, **Pine Siskins** have been found in small numbers at Monte Bello OSP with three on 20 Oct and two on 1 Nov (GHa), more than one at a Mt. Hamilton feeder from 21 Oct to 17 Nov (EG), and at an Almaden Valley feeder on 30 Oct (BH). Twenty-three **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were seen on Mines Road south of Colorado Creek to the junction on 12 Nov (WGB).

Observers: Bonnie Bedford-White (BBW), Bill Bousman (WGB), Juliette Bryson (JAB), Dotty Calabrese (DC), Ted Chandik (TAC), Rita Colwell (RCo), Rigdon Currie (RC), Emelie Curtis (ECu), Peggy Don (PD), Jean Dubois (JD), Al Eisner (AME),

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



Canada Warbler sighting was a county record. Drawing is a male; the female's breast markings are much lighter.
— Bonnie Bedford-White

Jan. General Meeting

continued from Page 1

1980. *Avocet* readers will be very familiar with "Field Notes," the summary of unusual birds observed in the county in every single issue for 25 years. The 25th anniversary is an appropriate time to show our appreciation for all he has done. Bill also submits records to *North American Birds* and is the Project Coordinator for the soon to be published Santa Clara County Breeding Bird Atlas.

Bill Ferguson (BF), Eric Feuss (EF), Harold Fukuma (FK), Elinor Gates (EG), Tom Grey (TGr), Barbara Harkleroad (BHa), Garth Harwood (GHa), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Karen Hoyt (KHt), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Mary Kelly (MK), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Jim Liskovec (JLi), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Bill Maney (BM), Dean Manley (DMa), Kris Olson (KO), Martha O'Neal (M'O), Janna Pauser (JPa), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Steve Rovell (SRv), San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO), John Sterling (JCS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Scott Terrill (SBT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), and Brian Zeiler (BZ).

Birdathon prize — birding Hawaii's Big Island!

by Jim and Sue Liskovec

As in the past, this year's SCVAS Birdathon Thank You event offered wonderful prizes to the fundraisers. We were planning a trip to the Big Island of Hawaii in October, and guess what? One of the six raffle prizes was an all-day guided bird tour on Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. Board and Birdathon Committee member Dottie Calabrese had solicited the prize from the folks at Hawaii Forest and Trail, and they generously offered their Rainforest and Dryforest Birdwatching Adventure for two as a prize. By putting all our coupons in that prize basket, we thought we could increase our chances of winning — and it worked!

Our Forest and Trail trip was advertised as an all-day outing. We started about 6:30 AM with Kevin, our guide, and headed inland and uphill. Along the drive through the open, hilly grassland of Parker Ranch we spotted our first Hawaiian native species, the Pueo or Hawaiian Owl, a race of our mainland Short-eared Owl. The species hunts not only by night but also by day. We made eight owl sightings that day — some hovering in the air, some flying by, and some just staring at us from a fencepost along the road. Other birds seen on this first portion of the trip were a host of species transplanted from other parts of the world: Wild Turkey and California Quail from North America, Erckel's Francolin from North Africa, and European Skylark, to name a few.

We stopped for an out-of-the-van breakfast of delicious morning breads, fresh island fruit, hot drinks and juice when we reached our first destination. The sub-alpine dry forest of the Puu Laau Reserve on Mauna Kea at about 7,000 feet is home to our most sought-after bird for the day, an endangered member of the Hawaiian honeycreeper family, the Palila, which now numbers only in the hundreds. The Palila occurs only in mamane forest on the slopes of Mauna Kea from 6,000 to 8,000 feet on the Island of Hawaii. It's about six inches long, with bright yellow head and breast, gray back and grayish-white abdomen. The bill is short, stubby, parrot-like, and dark on the adults. Feeding mainly on the green seed pods of the mamane tree, which the Palila is dependent on for survival.

Therein hangs a tale. When humans introduced goats and mouflon sheep on Mauna Kea, the Palila went into a serious decline. Goats and sheep feeding on the mamane were literally eating the Palila into extinction.

To the rescue in the 1980's came the Sierra Club. As a result of two court cases, the Hawaii Department of Forestry was forced to fence the mamane forest areas to keep the goats and sheep out. Hawaii argued that the birds were not being harmed directly, per words of the Endangered Species Act. The Sierra Club countered that allowing the habitat to be destroyed was equivalent harm. The Hawaiian court agreed with the Sierra Club, and since then Palila numbers have increased. The Palila has the distinction of being the only bird ever to be the plaintiff in a lawsuit!

We saw our first Palila after Kevin heard a bird calling in big trees down the hill from where we were walking. A second bird was seen nearby. Our best view was of another bird sitting quietly in a bare tree.

Our second destination was the cloudmist kipuka rainforest off the Saddle Road between Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, at about 6,500 feet. A kipuka is an island of forest that has survived lava flowing all around it during an eruption. We hiked a long way over lava, hundreds of years old, to a kipuka that Kevin had visited many times and knew well. In the course of our wandering through the kipuka we had a close encounter with two juvenile Io's, or Hawaiian Hawks, another Big Island-only species. The birds were sitting in two trees at eye level, screaming their lungs out for food from their parents. This buteo gets its Hawaiian name from its shrill, high-pitched scream: "kee-oh" or "i-o." We had seen the Io many times before, soaring overhead as we traveled around the Big Island, but this was our best "up-close and personal" view.

Our last native species was heard calling elsewhere in the kipuka, and identified by Kevin as an Akiapola'au, yet another Big Island endemic. The bird is a little smaller than the Palila, olive-green above and bright yellow below. The most striking feature of the species is the bill: upper mandible long and strongly decurved, lower mandible half the length and straight. The bird uses the upper mandible to probe for insect larvae and the lower mandible to peck like a woodpecker. Our look at the bird was quick but satisfying.

An old edition of the booklet *Hawaii's Birds* by the Hawaii Audubon Society was the basis for some of the species information presented here.

It was about 6:30 PM and nearly dark when we returned to Kona, ending a truly a wonderful day of birding. We saw nine different native Hawaiian species. Palila, one we had expected to see, and the bonus Akiapola'au were new birds for us. Having traveled the coastal areas of Hawaii and seen many introduced species, this day of birding native habitat and seeing native birds was special.

Thank you Dottie, the Birdathon Committee, Kevin, and Hawaii Forest and Trail. For this and other outings on Hawaii, check HFT's website, www.hawaii-forest.com.

The 2006 Spring Birdathon Is Coming— YOU Are Invited to Participate!

The Birdathon Committee wants YOU to join in the fun of the SCVAS 2006 Spring Birdathon. EVERYONE, from beginner to expert, is eligible. Start thinking now about taking part in this exciting event. Spend a day in April birding with friends or join a guided team and bird with a pro. Raise lots of money for SCVAS environmental education or just pay the entry fee. Compete for fabulous prizes or just bird for the fun of it. Look for all the details in the next issue of *The Avocet*.

Wildlife Education Day Highlights

by Kim Yuan-Farrell
 Programs Coordinator

Wildlife Education Day, our chapter's largest annual event, was once again a fabulous success! Mother Nature provided us with a beautiful, sunny day, as 25 participating nature and community organizations joined us with fun, hands-on activities for youth and their families. Live animals greeted children around every corner and engaged them in learning about wildlife and our relationship with nature. We had great presentations, a beautiful California Native Wildlife poster display, and over 500 people came to enjoy the day with us! Who could ask for more?

A Youth Science Institute representative invited happily squeamish children to touch a hairy tarantula as

they entered the park. Just two tables over, wide-eyed youth held snakes and petted tortoises who crawled slowly through a crowd near the Bay Area Amphibian and Reptile Society's booth. Meanwhile, kids led their parents over sidewalk-chalked bird tracks to the shade of a remote oak tree, where Freddy Howell of the Wild Bird Center, in full bat costume, greeted nearly forty audience members prior to her puppet show.

Back at the main fair, participants enjoyed interactive learning booths, such as the Sierra Club's watershed modeling activity and Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge's "Salty's Survival Game." Under the Nature Arts and Crafts tent, high school volunteers

helped children make pinecone bird feeders, bird badges, and nature origami. And near the McClellan ranch house, K-12 students from throughout Santa Clara Valley proudly posed for pictures next to their award-winning artwork at the California Native Wildlife Poster Contest display.

Big thanks to SCVAS' Education Committee Members for the generous donations of elbow grease that made this day possible, and to the 83 Audubon and high school volunteers who exceeded all expectations and filled whole-heartedly and with friendly faces every role we asked of them. We are also grateful to our generous sponsors and donors, listed below left.

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Recovery Plan for the Endangered Species Act

Audubon fights "Extinction Bill"

by Juliana Chow

Conservation Advocate Intern

Ever since the dismaying news that the "Extinction Bill" sponsored by Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA) passed the U.S. House of Representatives in September 2005, many of us have taken another look at the 32-year-old law which has successfully provided protection for many birds such as the Peregrine Falcon and Brown Pelican.

Audubon-CA has taken the lead on an Endangered Species Act (ESA) campaign to raise public awareness of the act, and remind our senators to oppose any bills that would weaken protections for endangered species and critical habitats. In coordination with this campaign, your Audubon chapter (SCVAS) will be hosting an event highlighting the ESA on January 28th at 8:30 AM at the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge in Alviso that will include both a birding trip and round-table discussion with prominent local scientists and environmental experts, including Lynne Trulio, SJSU professor and lead scientist on the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration project; Trent Orr, Legal Counsel for Earthjustice; Sarah Matsumoto, Field Director at Endangered Species Coalition; and Clyde Morris, Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge manager. This is a great opportunity for us to critically examine Pombo's bill and to explore the issues at stake in reforming the ESA.

Since its creation in 1973, the ESA has been modified by a series of amendments in 1978, 1982, and 1988. While some environmentalists agree that the ESA needs reform, Pombo's bill goes in the opposite direction and cripples the ability and resources of the ESA to protect and recover endangered species.

The House bill removes requirements for "critical habitat" designations, recovery plans, and other regulatory mechanisms crucial to the ESA. It also runs against the intentions of our political process by allowing bureaucrats to manipulate and disregard scientific data used to make endangered species decisions, and eliminates federal and scientific independent monitoring of ESA compliance.

What is most controversial about Pombo's bill is that it relies on market-driven compromises that favor landowners and developers in order to protect endangered plants and wildlife. Pombo's "Extinction Bill" allows destructive projects to continue by default unless government scientists intercede and even requires approval by private landowners before updates to Habitat Conservation Plans can proceed. Furthermore, it would set a precedent for the government to pay landowners and industries for any loss of profit due to ESA protections, which would reward developers who plan the most destructive projects.

At the heart of this controversy are the questions of how we should value the environment and how to balance public welfare and private interests.

Are economic analyses necessary to make clear and precise judgments about the environment? What methods

are available to determine what to value and its numerical value and weight, whether it be ecological functions, scenic views, nature-dependent recreation, or the benefits of biodiversity and habitat protection to the fishing, agricultural, and pharmaceutical industries?

And if endangered species protection means we must manage urban development and land-use effectively, then what kind of monitoring systems for the environment are possible and necessary? How can the government provide more assistance and guidance on habitat conservation plans and conservation easement programs?

In the end, the world we live in is a home shared with countless species and uncertainties, and the world we wish to live in probably does not require every detail to be micro-managed and analyzed to death. But in order for that to be possible, we do need to use the means available, as well as find new ways, to create those spaces for wilderness.

Even with the Senate due to present its own alternative legislation under the direction of Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) who has a strong environmental record, the subsequent House-Senate conference to reach a joint bill proposal does not bode well. Now is the critical time to take part in making sure that we continue to share our homes with endangered species. We hope you'll join us at the SCVAS Endangered Species Act event and participate in the discussion.

Please see the Field Trip and Events Calendar for more exciting details about the birding trip and round-table discussion speakers. For more information about Audubon's ESA campaign, go to SCVAS' website (www.scvas.org) and click on the link in "Speak Up!" to read our most recent Armchair Activist issue about ESA written by Environmental Action Committee member Jill Clay.

Board Nominations due March 15

The SCVAS Board welcomes nominations by petition from our members. Such nominees will appear on the ballot for our next Board election on June 21, 2006 and, if elected, will serve for three-year terms beginning July 2006. Each petition should be signed by at least 1% of SCVAS members in good standing and be accompanied by the candidate's written agreement to serve. All signatures must have been gathered within eleven months of the election. Please deliver petitions to our office by March 15, 2006.

The Board is responsible for setting the mission, tone and direction of the Chapter while at the same time maintaining a social and fun atmosphere: Board meetings are held monthly, September through June, with a day-long retreat in the summer. Each Board member is also expected to serve on an SCVAS committee or devote time to an activity supportive of the Chapter. We currently have a well-rounded Board with members bringing a wide range of experiences and interests. Help shape your Chapter by applying to serve on the Board of Directors.

History of SCVAS cont'd from Page 1

60s. Our Society developed a field trip policy and a training program for field trip leaders. We secured a permanent location in a Santa Clara library to hold our monthly general meetings and managed to expand our Screen Tours. We were also making progress in our conservation work; the Wilderness Act was passed, which was a way to assure the welfare of the California Condor. Nationwide, the Audubon Society began documenting the decline of bird species, including Bald Eagles, which was mainly attributable to the widespread use of DDT herbicide. In 1962 Rachel Carson published Silent Spring, alerting the general public to the dangers of DDT.

• 1970's – During this decade our Christmas Bird Count became more popular, as our members were more educated on the bird species found in the Bay Area. At the same time, several legislative bills and developments were of concern for the Society, such as the Timber Supply Act, the work of the California Coastline Conservation and Development Commission, and the spilling of oil in the Santa Barbara Channel. Many calls to action were evident in *The Avocet*, as open spaces were decreasing and an explosive population growth was beginning. Issues of concern were the recovery of the Clapper Rail and the endangerment of the salt marsh harvest mouse and the Brown Pelican. In 1970 the first Earth Day was held, and the Clean Air and National Environmental Policy Acts were passed.

• 1980's – In this decade we began lengthy negotiations with the Santa Clara Water District regarding the planned channelizing of 32 miles of Llagas Creek. At this time 219 bird species were listed as endangered and 42 as threatened in the U.S. . Susie Formenti (former SCVAS director) wrote a thought-provoking column in *The Avocet* called, "Rare and Endangered." During this decade the Audubon Society helped capture the last wild California Condor, to be placed in a captive breeding program with other survivors.

• 1990's – This decade helped us set a strong identity within the Bay Area's conservation community. We moved to our current location in McClellan Ranch Park, created our Nature Shop, published Birding at the Bottom of the Bay, and created our most successful education program, the Wetlands Discovery Program. In 1994 we hired our first Environmental Advocate, Mr. Craig Breon. Craig's major goal was to establish an Audubon presence in the South Bay environmental arena, and we all know that Craig did an amazing job during these years. On the national scene, the Bald Eagle was down-listed from endangered to threatened.

• 2000's – During the first five years of this decade, we hired our first Executive Director, Programs Coordinator, and second Environmental Advocate. Together with our Board of Directors and members, SCVAS carried out important battles for the conservation of our valley, and developed great educational programs and resources for underserved communities and children of all ages. We celebrate numerous achievements in the new millennium, including the re-discovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Cache-Lower White River National

Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas, our 80 years of existence in this Valley, and a new administration of this extraordinary non-profit and chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Please join me in celebrating our past as well as future achievements for the years to come. Let's keep making history.



Brenda Torres-Barreto

Would you help us grow?

After 80 years of dedicated birding, environmental education, and conservation work, SCVAS understands that it is time to expand our services to a broader community. This will only be possible with your support. We have partnered with three key programs to help us raise money to reach our new goals: FreePledge.com, eScrip and United Way of Silicon Valley.

FreePledge.com is the new kid on the block. This program gives you the option to shop on-line, while contributing 1% to 7.5% of your total purchase to SCVAS. Begin your on-line shopping at <http://scvas.freepledge.com>. It's very simple, just shop as you would normally through this site — you'll find merchants such as Apple, eToys.com, Wine.com, Sony, Amazon and many others.

On the other hand, eScrip is a different system. In order to contribute you need to sign in your credit and/or debit cards under our name or group number 500001548. There are two ways of doing this: by calling us directly to fill the form, or on-line at www.escrip.com. If you are already enrolled in this program as a supporter of another non-profit, you could split your support between them and us.

SCVAS has recently partnered with United Way of Silicon Valley. If your employer already participates in the United Way, please contact the program liaison (possibly the Human Resources Department) and let them know that you would like your contribution to support SCVAS. Our vendor number is 39156.

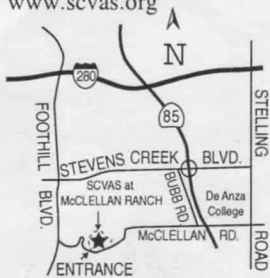
These three programs will allow you to support our efforts with no additional cost to you. The resources we obtain from these programs will supplement member contributions through our annual appeal process, which we conducted last month. We thank all of you who have already contributed and encourage those who haven't responded to consider doing so. We have great plans for this New Year and only with your support will we achieve them.

—Brenda Torres-Barreto

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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.

2006 Volume 53, Number 1

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

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Mar. 8, 12
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