



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

July - August 2006

New Executive Director has a passion!

by Grant Hoyt

There's no mystery behind newly-hired Executive Director Bob Power's reason for joining Santa Clara Valley Audubon: "I love birds, birding, and birders—in all of their various plumages!" is how he put it in a recent interview. "It's really a dream job for me."



Bob Power,
SCVAS Executive Director

Bob brings a strong, varied set of skills and considerable experience to the ED position. For the past six years he has worked as Project Coordinator for the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, and before that he managed the Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) store in Cupertino. His commitment to the environment, experience in the non-profit sector, and passion for birding should serve him well as he steps into the position recently vacated by Brenda Torres-Barreto.

He's excited to lead SCVAS in its mission to educate South Bay citizens about birds and wildlife, their habitat, and developing a deeper appreciation for the benefits of a healthy ecosystem in our urban region. "I'm thrilled to be part of an organization that works to educate the next generation about preservation, conservation, and restoration of what's out there in the natural world. This is a wonderful opportunity for me."

Bob is not only an avid birder, he recently entered the teaching arena as an instructor in the Palo Alto Adult School. For the past two years he has taught an evening class on

Beginning Birding to enthusiastic response. He particularly enjoys helping students who may already have an appreciation of the outdoors develop an interest in birding, and to better understand the relationship of birds to various habitats and healthy ecosystems.

With the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, Bob has developed strong working relationships with numerous groups and agencies, such as the Santa Clara Valley Water District, that play a major role in determining land use policies. His vision for working with these groups includes a "big picture" perspective, as he notes, "We must take a long view in land-use planning." The ability to effectively navigate the complex network of governmental bodies and private sector interests in the pursuit of progressive environmental policy is vital to anyone in a leadership position for a conservation organization, and Bob's experience should serve him well as he represents SCVAS.

SCVAS is pleased to welcome Bob Power as our new Executive Director, and grateful to the Board for its diligent efforts in the hiring process. The following is a message from Bob, taken from our website:

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July - Aug. '06

Field Trips

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

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

NF = No facilities available

Saturday July 1, 8:00 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. All are encouraged to attend but birding will be geared toward the beginning birder.

Saturday August 5, 8:30 AM Ano Nuevo State Reserve

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

Saturday August 19, 9:00 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. All are encouraged to attend but birding will be geared toward the beginning birder.



Introducing Bob Power *cont'd. from Page 1*

“Over the past eighty years, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has worked with a talented and dedicated staff, generous and committed volunteers, and a visionary Board of Directors, to implement our mission: to preserve, to enjoy, to restore and to foster public awareness of native birds and their ecosystems. I never cease to be amazed at how vital that mission continues to be today. When we experience native birds in their and our ecosystems, wondrous transformations occur. Children giggle, teenagers say “wow” and “cool”, and grown adults wonder why they don’t do this more often.

Our staff and volunteers look forward to helping you bridge the disconnect between our hurry-up existence and the slower, sublime wonders of the natural world. If you’re new to Audubon, please consider joining and supporting our

organization. If you’re already a member, we want this organization to be vital for you. From participation in field trips, volunteering for bird counts, taking an educational class, or introducing our programs to the next generation, there are countless opportunities for maintaining that vital connection to native birds. We’ll look for and be responsive to your ideas as we continually refine our work in habitat preservation and protection, public education and outings, and the advocacy so vital to all of our efforts.

As we strive to ensure that SCVAS is representative of and relevant to our diverse community, I’d love to hear from you about why you joined Santa Clara Valley Audubon, what our strengths are, from your eyes, and how we could be even more relevant in the coming years.”

*Yours in birding wonder,
Bob Power*



SCVAS volunteer, Lisa Baurmeister guides children in creating colorful nature arts and crafts at SCVAS and the City of Gilroy's co-sponsored 2006 Earth Day Festival.

Celebrating the Earth – A Success in Community

By Kim Yuan-Farrell
Programs Coordinator

SCVAS' education programs have expanded and flourished over many years under the guidance of our active and dedicated Education Committee, hard-working staff and volunteers, and frequently in partnership with other organizations and entities. Our Earth Day Festival in Gilroy, an annual event that we've co-sponsored with the City of Gilroy since 2001, is a great example of a successful education effort that has grown and improved over the years and with the help of cooperation.

This year's celebration took place on Saturday, April 29 at Christmas Hill Park. Twenty community and nature organizations welcomed event participants with interactive, hands-on displays, games, and craft projects. Kids and their families enjoyed making pinecone bird feeders, coloring bird mobiles, searching for nature scavenger hunt treasures, eating free food, and competing for raffle prizes including beautiful potted plants and tickets to the Children's Discovery Museum. Insect, bird, and nest displays attracted kids of all ages who gazed in wonder at the detail of the design on a butterfly wing, the wild colors of a Wood Duck's plumage, or the delicate assemblage of materials in a miniature hummingbird nest. Children ushered their parents excitedly to the Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center's tables where the representatives held live raptors, including a tiny Pygmy Owl which captured many hearts. Adults learned about composting and solar energy homes and checked out the hybrid and veggie oil cars on display. SCVAS volunteer Norman Watenpaugh led walks to his nearby nest boxes where he introduced children to local, native cavity-nesting birds and the importance of restoration. He then encouraged participants to visit the Nest Box Station where they could learn more

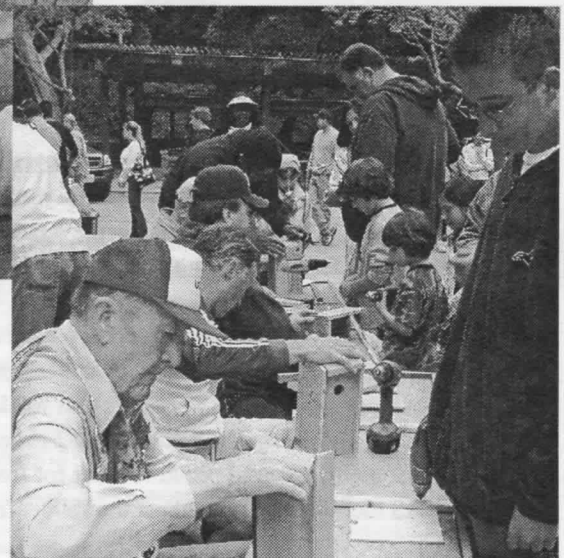
about these threatened birds and build take-home nest boxes with the help of Gilroy Lions Club members.

With more than 500 attendees, this year's festival was comparable to Wildlife Education Day, our largest annual event held in the fall at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino (coming October 21!). The community has truly embraced this event and joined us in sharing environmental education and nature celebration, making this Earth Day Festival a success in community.

Big thanks to our co-sponsor, the City of Gilroy, as well as the many organizations and enthusiastic SCVAS volunteers who created a wonderful educational and celebratory occasion. Special Thanks to Norman Watenpaugh and Bobbie Handen and the Education Committee for their months of preparation and planning.



Above, SCVAS volunteer Norman Watenpaugh led children and their families to nearby nest boxes to introduce them to cavity-nesting birds at the 2006 Earth Day Festival.



Events Calendar

Tues. July 4
Office closed for holiday

Tues. July 11, 6:30 PM
Birdathon Committee meeting,
McClellan Ranch Park

Wed. July 26, 7:00 PM
Environmental Action Committee,
McClellan Ranch Park

Sat. Aug. 5, Board of Directors
retreat

Sat. Aug. 12, Young Audubon Bird
Banding, See page 5.

Wed. Aug. 23, 7:00 PM
Environmental Action Committee,
McClellan Ranch Park



Below, Gilroy Lions Club members help Earth Day Festival attendees assemble free, pre-cut nest boxes.

Volunteer Ventures

by Kim Yuan-Farrell
Programs Coordinator

At the Annual June Potluck, SCVAS staff recognized a small number of our chapter's dedicated volunteers for their exemplary service to our organization and community during the year. We were happy to accept the difficult task of selecting from our many skilled and generous volunteers the following individuals:

Laura Dangerfield – for the luminous smiles and joyful spirit she shares while working with Nature Shop visitors, our staff, and the ravenous birds at McClellan Ranch

Debi Jamison – for her passionate advocacy for the wildlife and habitats of McClellan Ranch Park and the South Bay

Ken Peterson – for his generous donations of equipment and on-call tech support which keep our office operations afloat

Allen Royer – for helping SCVAS educate children and adults about birds and habitat, engaging beginning birders through our Field Trips Program, and sitting on the Diversity Committee

Carolyn Straub – for her time and talent dedicated to editing the Creekside News and creating a checkout system for our outreach slides

Debbie Thompson – for her unparalleled devotion to SCVAS as President; and her presence and support at all events and monthly meetings and activity on numerous committees

Ann Verdi – for her cheerful planning and coordination of the 60+ Calero-Morgan Hill Christmas Bird Count volunteers who use citizen science to keep tabs on the birds of the South County

Laurie West-Roberts – for her creative contributions to our special events, from catering delectable dishes to selecting and decorating breathtaking venues

A warm thanks to these volunteers and others who have enabled our chapter to carry out another successful year of conservation, education, and birding.

If you feel inspired to contribute to SCVAS, please check out a few of the options below and contact our new Programs Coordinator at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org. We'd love to help you find the right match for your time, talents, and interests. You may also view the most current volunteer positions online at www.scvas.org and read about SCVAS' Volunteer of the Month.

Field Trip Leaders – Calling all birders! We need more leaders to organize and lead field trips to various South Bay (and beyond!) locations on both weekdays and weekends. Take a look at the Field Trip listings on Page 2 to see just a few of the 90-some trips we're proud to offer for free each year to SCVAS members and the general public. Trips are

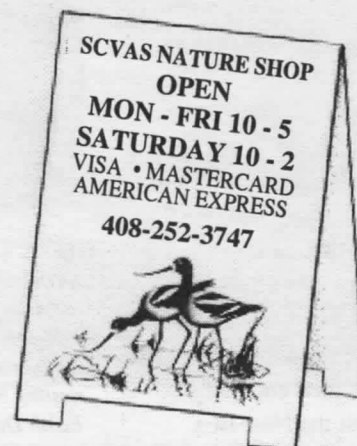
scheduled year round, with fewer trips during the summer due to travel. You can pick the location(s) that interest you the most and work with our Field Trip Coordinators in publicizing and planning for your trip(s). This is a great way to meet more birders and get involved in the SCVAS community!

Educational Presenters – With the school year approaching, we need more volunteers ready to fill requests for educational presentations in classrooms K-12 throughout Santa Clara County. You can use slideshows, stuffed birds, and real nests to teach youth about local birds and their habitat. These presentations are engaging and come fully scripted. No experience is necessary, though teaching and birding experience are helpful. Time commitment is flexible, and scheduling is based on classroom and volunteer availability.

Wetlands Discovery Program Docents – This program shares the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with 3rd-6th 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 our volunteers and for the hundreds of South Bay children who participate. 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

Remember, all members receive a discount of 10% at the SCVAS Nature Shop.

Volunteers receive a 20% discount!
Come in and see our wonderful array of bird and nature related items.



A Bittersweet Goodbye

Kim Yuan-Farrell
Programs Coordinator

Every morning before I hit the freeway on my way to work, I pass a complex of percolation ponds and search quickly, almost desperately, for the glimpse of a silhouette or the slightest bit of motion that might appear on the glassy water or dirt banks. During the winter I enjoyed the small, elegant, black and white body of the stately Bufflehead. During the spring, Mallard ducklings floating near an occasional cormorant, wings out-stretched in the morning sun. This newfound appreciation for the surrounding birdlife has been one of the many gifts I've received while working at the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

Prior to my nine-month conservation internship that started during the fall of 2003, I was not aware of the many treasures with which I would walk away from SCVAS. I could not foresee that the California Quail at McClellan Ranch Park would capture my fancy and imprint in my brain an instinct to search for birds wherever I go. I could not anticipate the inspiration and admiration I would feel for the many dedicated and generous individuals with whom I've had the pleasure of working. And I could not predict the enthusiasm and passion I would feel about our Audubon chapter's work in



conservation and education. My life has undoubtedly been enriched by my position as SCVAS' Education and Volunteer Programs Coordinator. I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this organization's mission and community for three years.

Now, I am leaving SCVAS and the Bay Area to pursue graduate studies on the opposite side of the country. My husband and I have enrolled in Yale University's Master of Environmental Management program where my study emphasis will be the Social Ecology of Conservation and Development. This program will prepare me to work with underserved communities in participatory, community-based stewardship. While I am very excited to begin my studies and move toward the next stage in my career, I feel sad to be leaving California and the organization, my work, and people I have come to care about so deeply.

To SCVAS' staff and volunteers:
Thank you for the many fond memories and for being sources of inspiration

whom I will always remember. You made my work an absolute pleasure, and I wish you and SCVAS' programs the best of luck in continuing with great success!

Drop by the SCVAS office to say farewell to Kim and welcome SCVAS' new Programs Coordinator, Toby Goldberg.

Young Audubon presents

BIRD BANDING

with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

**VIEW A WILD BIRD UP CLOSE!
SEE CONSERVATION SCIENCE IN ACTION!
EXPLORE RESTORED HABITAT!**

Meets at McCarthy Ranch in Milpitas

Donations appreciated.

Space is limited; call (408) 252-3740 to make reservations.

Groups with children receive priority.



Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl through Falcons

A lingering **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen in flight above Llagas Creek north of Bloomfield Road on 19 Apr (MJM). Less expected was a late **Ross's Goose** in closed salt ponds at Alviso on 29 Apr (MMR, MJM). Two male **Eurasian Wigeon** remained in the Palo Alto estuary through 2 Apr (DWe) and one was last seen there on 14 Apr (MDo). Spring **Blue-winged Teal** included two males and a female at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 21 Apr (WGB) and a male in a flooded area off Disk Drive in Alviso on 29 Apr (JMD, LH). A male **Redhead** at Crittenden Marsh on 12 May (MMR) is very late for a wintering bird and may be oversummering. Although we had no **Common Loons** last winter, we had a number of birds touch down on spring migration. Most were 1st-summer birds. The first one found was at Almaden Lake on 29 Apr (KHo et al. *fide* AV) and it was seen through 2 May. Another bird was found at Stevens Creek Reservoir on 4 May (MMR) and remained through the end of the month. Five **Common Loons** were counted on Lexington Reservoir on 15 May (MMR) and at least two remained on 24 May (RWR, FV). Two birds showed up at Shoreline Lake on 22 May (FV), one of which was in alternate plumage. These birds remained towards the end of the month. **Brown Pelicans** normally show up at the end of May so one on the Alviso salt ponds on 23 Apr (SCR) was early. An **American Bittern** was calling in a SCRWA marsh in Gilroy 21-24 Apr (WGB, MJM). They have nested in this vicinity in the past. A **Cattle Egret** in breeding plumage was a brief spectator at the Duck Pond heronry on 10-11 May (HH, WGB). An **Osprey** nest site in the upper Los Gatos Creek drainage is again being used this year, with one or more adults at a nest on 28 Apr (WGB) and 31

May (SCR). A dark-morph **Swainson's Hawk** was over Hwy 152 near Llagas Creek on 21 May (SCR) and is likely a migrant. Typically, the last **Merlins** are seen in the last two weeks of April and the latest record I have is of a bird on 29 Apr 1990. This spring, single birds were seen near Santa Teresa Boulevard and Bailey Road on 1 May (MJM) and over Hwy 152 at Llagas Creek on 24 May (SCR). A **Peregrine Falcon** nest was found on Salt Pond AB1 (previously B1) this spring (SFBBO) and three nestings were seen there on 29 Apr (MMR, MJM). This is the first known nest at the edge of the South Bay in a century.

*Nesting season records:
breeding Virginia Rails,
first Peregrine Falcon nest in
the South Bay in a century*

Virginia Rails

Five pairs of **Virginia Rails** were found on 6 May (MMR) in a marshy meadow in Halls Valley and, after some patience, a single precocial young was observed. This is the first breeding record for Santa Clara County. Over the years we have had calling birds in a number of areas during June and July, but breeding birds are likely to have young by early May. This year other birds have been heard or seen at the Mountain View Forebay on 22 Apr (MMR et al.), near the Digger Pine Ranch in San Antonio Valley on 7 Apr (WGB) and 21 May (MMR, MJM), and along Del Puerto Road on 7 May (DBr et al.) and 21 May (MMR, MJM). It is suspected that this species has bred in Santa Clara County in shallow freshwater marshes for over a century, but we have lacked proof until now.

Shorebirds through Hummingbirds

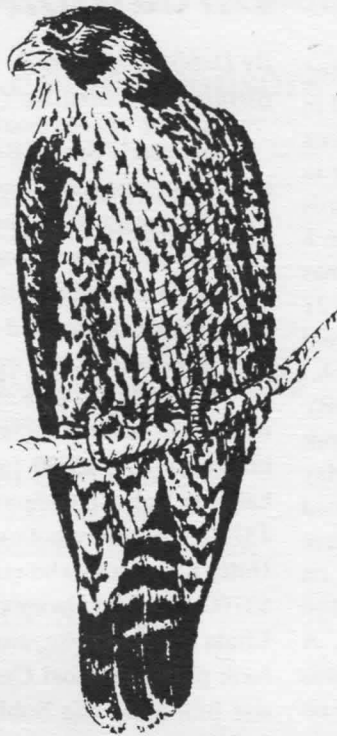
Snowy Plovers can occasionally be scoped from the levee near the Alviso Marina CP in Salt Pond A8 (closed) across Alviso Slough. The high count using that technique was of three birds on 21 Apr (MMR). However, a plover survey found 12 birds there on 29 Apr (MMR, MJM), and then a nest study on 26 May (LTu, MJM) found at least seven females on nests and a number of males nearby. Most springs we have a few **Lesser Yellowlegs** moving through. This year, two were on closed salt ponds in Alviso (SCR *fide* MMR) and one was along Artesian Slough (BHi et al.); both records on 23 Apr. A spring **Solitary Sandpiper** was found in New Chicago Marsh in Alviso on 29 Apr (JMD, LH). Two **Ruddy Turnstones** in alternate plumage were seen at New Chicago Marsh on 2 May (RWR, FV). These turnstones are less often found in spring. Also a good find for spring, single **Wilson's Phalaropes** were seen at the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 24 Apr (MJM) and in closed salt ponds at Alviso on 29 Apr (MMR, MJM). However, **Red-necked Phalarope** are more often found in spring. About 500 in the Alviso on 5 May (AJ) was a high count and matched the reports of large numbers of birds from the coast this spring. A **Least Tern** seen flying north by the Palo Alto Baylands on 22 Apr (ADeM *fide* BirdBox) was very early. Normally, we don't see this rare tern until it stages locally in the late summer. I have two previous May records, but none from April. Two alternate plumaged **Black Terns** were seen at Grant Lake on 30 Apr by different observers (BJ, BHi *fide* BirdBox.). A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was seen along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 16 May (MJM). This sighting is away from the introduced birds near Morgan Hill. Good numbers of **Greater Roadrunners** were found in May with a single bird north of the San Antonio Junction on 17 May (RWR, FV), another singing bird along Del Puerto Road the

Field Notes *cont'd*

same day (also RWR, FV), and one on Metcalf Road about 0.6 mi. from Hwy 101 on 22 May (MJM). **Long-eared Owls** were found at Ed Levin CP 31 Mar–22 Apr (v.ob.) including two birds on 22 Apr (MMR et al.). Nine **Black Swifts** were seen over Loma Prieta on 28 May (KA). The first arriving **Vaux's Swift** was one over Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 13 Apr (JPa). The highest count was of six birds at the SCRWA ponds in Gilroy on 24 Apr (MJM). Although migrants continued to be seen through the end of May, most observations by then appeared to be of local birds, including one of a pair breaking off small twigs at Rancho San Antonio OSP on 30 May (WGB). The first **Black-chinned Hummingbird** of the season was a male along Guadalupe River below Curtner on 23 Apr (WGB), with at least four birds there by 28 Apr (MMR). The only other location with Black-chinneds was Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 where a male and female were first seen on 26 Apr (MJM). At least 12 male **Rufous Hummingbirds** were reported with the latest east of Black Mountain on 14 May (MMR).

Woodpeckers through Goldfinches

Lewis's Woodpeckers returned to San Antonio Valley and three were found there on 25 Apr (GHa), with mostly ones and twos in May. A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** in Hall's Valley on 14 Apr (MJM) was quite late; few remain into April. **Pileated Woodpeckers** were heard or seen in a number of Santa Cruz Mountain locations where they are known to breed. One away from the mountains in Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 27 Apr (JPa) was less expected. Single **Hammond's Flycatchers** were found at Ed Levin CP on 17 Apr (MJM) and along Smith Creek on 18 Apr (MMR), and two birds were along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 26 Apr (MJM). Two **Say's Phoebes** were in San Antonio Valley on 7 Apr near the bridge over Beauregard Creek where they've nested in the past (WGB). A male **Purple Martin** was seen southwest of Calero Reservoir on 6



Peregrine Falcon by Emélie Curtis

Apr (AV) and was likely a migrant. Another male over Bald Mountain on 29 Apr (KP, CMacI) was in an area where local birds foraged in the past. Always rare, a **Bank Swallow** was over the Arastradero Preserve on 22 Apr (ADeM *vide* BirdBox). Lingered **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were seen in a Los Altos yard 1-2 Apr (BR) and at a Stanford feeder 2 Apr (DL). Two in yellow pines at Henry Coe SP on 24 Apr (GHa) are likely birds that wintered there, since they rarely nest in the Diablo Range. A singing **Canyon Wren** was found on an outcrop above Grizzly Gulch in Henry Coe SP on 7 May (MMR, RGJ) and remained at least through 18 May (v.ob.). Three **American Dippers** were seen along Los Gatos Creek above Los Gatos on 9 Apr (LMY) and one to two birds were along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road 10-22 Apr (RWR, FV, B&G, MMR et al.).

A small number of migrant **Nashville Warblers** were seen, with single birds at Ed Levin CP on 17 Apr (MJM), Stevens Creek CP on 18 Apr (KPa), Hellyer CP on 20 Apr (MJM), and Smith Creek on 27 Apr (MMR, RGJ). Two birds were seen at Henry Coe SP on 24 Apr (GHa). **Hermit Warblers**, both migrants and possibly

returning breeders, were seen in late April and May. Migrants included two at Hidden Villa on 19 Apr (GHa), two in Henry Coe SP on 24 Apr (GHa), three at Smith Creek on 27 Apr (MMR, RGJ), and three to four there the next day (MJM). The **Northern Waterthrush** that wintered in the Charleston Road Marsh was singing there 12-14 Apr (WGB, MDo). Only one passage **MacGillivray's Warbler** was found this spring, a bird at Smith Creek on 24 Apr (GHa). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was singing along Llagas Creek above Bloomfield on 3 May (MJM) and remained at least through 19 May (v.ob.). Another was seen in urban Cupertino on 11 May (RK, PK). The immature **Summer Tanager** found in a Palo Alto yard in March remained through 12 Apr (CO). A **Black-chinned Sparrow** was found singing in the chaparral on 24 May (GHa) and stayed through the end of the month (v.ob.). It appears to be on territory. None were found in the county in 2003 and 2005. **Grasshopper Sparrows** returned to Ed Levin CP and nearby locations on 22 Apr (MMR et al.). Birds have also been found along the Sierra Road summit and in Joseph

Birdathon tops \$26K!

Grant CP (v.ob.). **White-throated Sparrows** at feeders included a bird in Saratoga on 8 Apr (SM), one in Los Altos on 16 Apr (RCo), and another in Los Altos on 17 Apr (GHt). Other birds seen included one in Morgan Hill on 8 Apr (SCR), one along the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail in Santa Clara on 21 Apr (ChW), a wintering bird at the old cannery in Alviso through 25 Apr (v.ob.) and one in Los Gatos on 24 Apr (DB). Two males and a female **Blue Grosbeak** were found at Ed Levin CP on 2 May (RL) and at least one male has remained through the end of the month. They have nested here in the past. A male on Skyline Boulevards at Charcoal Road on 18 May (PBr) was clearly a migrant. A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was seen at the SCRWA marsh in Gilroy on 21 Apr (WGB). A male and female **Great-tailed Grackle** were also at the SCRWA marsh the same day (WGB) and a male was there on 4 May as well (RWR, FV). A male and female were seen at the Coyote Creek GC on 24 Apr (MJM, RWR, FV). On 6 May, a second female was seen here (AME). One or two nests were noted on 19 May (WGB) with one female carrying food. **Lawrence's Goldfinches** became more regular in the Diablo Range in April. The first record from a valley floor location was of two males and a female at the marsh near Coyote Ranch on 13 Apr (MJM). The first record in the Santa Cruz Mountains was of four at the Arastradero Preserve on 18 May (GHa).

Observers: Kumaran Arul (KA), Dusty Bleher (DB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Phil Brown (PBr), Debbi Brusco (DBr), Rita Colwell (RCo), Mike Danzenbaker (JMD), Al DeMartini (ADeM), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Al Eisner (AME), Garth Harwood (GHa), Bob Hirt (BHi), Hazel Holby (HH), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Lee Hung (LH), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Bob Juhl (BJ), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Barry & Ginger

*By Debbie Thompson
Birdathon Committee Chair*

This year's Spring Birdathon was a smashing success — we raised over \$26,500, breaking all our past records! Fifty-two people participated on 14 teams (four more teams than last year) and over 375 individuals donated money to our hard-working birders.

I would like to give special recognition to our two top money raisers each bringing in over \$3000. In first place by a hair was **Bob Hirt** who raised just over \$3700. Following hot on his heels was **Dotty Calabrese** who raised just under \$3700! The third place money raiser was **Linda Swanson** who raised over \$2500, fourth place was **Lori Cuesta** at \$1600, and fifth place was **Bobbie Handen** at \$1300. Debbie Thompson, Katy Obringer, Laurie West-Roberts, Matthew Dodder and Debi Jamison all raised over \$1000.

Special thanks goes to the team who raised the most money — the Wild Women Birders with Lori Cuesta (team leader), Dotty Calabrese, Linda Swanson and Jennifer Thompson. This busy team raised an impressive \$8800, almost double the

second place team! The Rock Wrens led by Bob Hirt took second place, raising over \$4800, and the Wrong Terns led by Bobbie Handen took third place, raising just under \$2800.

The Varied Twitchers were the team to beat for most species, spotting 165! Team leader Mike Rogers continued his streak for "most-species" for the fourth consecutive year. Be sure to join him next year if you want a big day of birding that you can really boast about.

Best bird honors went to the Jack Sparrows, led by Barry Langdon-Lassagne, for their Long-eared Owl (the Varied Twitchers also saw this bird some days later). The second best bird, Lesser Yellowlegs, was found by the Rock Wrens.

I would like to thank our Birdathon Sponsors who donated great prizes to whet the appetite of our participants. Our Golden Eagle sponsors (donating prizes worth over \$600) were Bob and Deb Hirt, who donated their Mexican vacation time-share; Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, who donated four pelagic trips plus a nice sum of money; and Southwest Airlines, who donated 2 round-trip tickets.

Most of all we would like to thank all of you who participated on or donated to Birdathon teams. The Birdathon is our second largest fundraiser and crucial to the support of our education and conservation programs. There are many teams, both beginner and advanced, that participate year after year, proving that the Birdathon really is a lot of fun. We hope to see many new faces next year, so keep an eye out for the Birdathon kick-off article early in the year.

As Birdathon Chairperson, I would like to personally thank the members of the Birdathon Committee: Dotty Calabrese, Lori Cuesta, and Bob Hirt, who spent many enjoyable hours coordinating this big event. Please contact me or the SCVAS office if you would like to help us next year.

Langdon-Lassagne (B&GLL), David Lewis (DL), Randy Little (RL), Chris MacIntosh (CMaI), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Sandy Moore (SM), Lisa Myers (LMY), Carlin Otto (CO), Kathy Parker (KPa), Kay Partelow (KP), Janna Pauser (JPa), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Byron Ryono (BR), San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO), Leslie Tucci (LTu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), and Chris Wolfe (ChW).

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

Thank you, 2006 Spring Birdathon Sponsors

Golden Eagle Sponsors

(valued at over \$600)

Cheeseman's Ecology
Safaris
cheesemans.com

Bob and Deb Hirt,
SCVAS members

Southwest Airlines
southwest.com



Great Egret Sponsors

(valued between \$250 - \$599)

Hawaii Forest and Trail
hawaii-forest.com

Wild Bird Center,
Los Gatos
wildbirdcenter.com/stores/los

Birding excursion with
Rich Stallcup

Photocapture by Jameson
photojameson.com

REI, Saratoga
rei.com

Swift Instruments
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Western Bluebird Sponsors

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These major donors of \$1,000 or more in the past fiscal year have made an extraordinary commitment to save local wildlife and educate our community on how to be better stewards.

We are pleased to recognize **Steve and Debbie Thompson** as members of the Avocet Circle.

Individual Donors

Gifts of all sizes help ensure the conservation of local and migratory wildlife, as well as precious habitats in Santa Clara County. We'd like to thank the following donors for their recent gifts of \$1- \$249.

Marilyn Gallaway, Thom Gough, Catherine Jagelski, Brian Mellea, Gail Richardson

A few poems...

Belted Kingfisher

Over the stream with his rattling cry,
You'll see the bold Kingfisher fly;
Now watch — he's stopped right in the air,
And for a moment he hovers there;
Now zoom! He drops with a swooping swish
And comes up carrying a wriggling fish!

Red-winged Blackbird

Down in the marshes on the cat-tails high,
Sways the Red-winged Blackbird against the sky.
His black, black body and bright red wings
Make you quite indiff'rent to the note he sings;
He's bathed in beauty as he swings and sways
On the long green rushes all the summer days.

The Bluebird

There by the road on the old fence post
You hear the father Bluebird boast,
"I'm going to build you the finest nest,
In all the world, the very best!"
And then, if you sit, oh, very still,
You'll hear her say, "I know you will!"



The Flicker

You'd think, when you see the stout old Flicker,
That no bird could tear a tree down quicker;
He grips the bark and he braces his back,
And he pecks at the tree with a whack-whack-whack,
Till the forest rings with his rousing blows,
Will he ever stop? Ah, well, who knows?

House Wren

There on the bird house with bill lifted high,
The House Wren is pouring her song to the sky;
Never come songs any gayer than these
That this sweet little singer sends out on the breeze;
With joy in her heart and this song in her throat,
The Wren gives the woodland its happiest note.

Song Sparrow

With a little brown spot on his little brown vest,
The Song Sparrow pleases most people the best;
With a myriad songs in his musical throat,
He never is forced to repeat the same note;
He's a flutist of skill, and he pours out his song
On the wandering breezes the whole summer long.

Nancy Teater received Birds, Book 1 from a friend who found it in an antique store. Written by Julius King, it was published by National Association of Audubon Societies in 1934. It is a field guide for children, with bird pictures, short descriptions, and a poem for each bird.

Could I possibly miss that commute?

Bonnie Bedford-White

In the winter of 1994, my husband and I moved from San Jose to Gilroy. We wanted more land so that he could build his dream woodworking shop, but also, well, we just wanted more space around the house. We found the perfect place, just under 2.5 acres, but my office was still in Santa Clara. This meant a 70 mile round trip commute.

As birders know, it is a fine skill to see and identify birds while hurdling through typical "over the speed limit" traffic of Silicon Valley.

And predictably, the traffic will stop suddenly and often for a long time, allowing plenty of time to gaze, and not necessarily at the stationary car in front of you.

As I left my house, I always glanced through the yard and took my time along New Avenue.

Yellow-billed Magpies were always a favorite but there were the usual feathered friends: California Towhees, Northern Mockingbirds, Scrub Jays, American Robins, Northern Flickers in the winter time and the Ferruginous Hawk that always arrived by Thanksgiving. Western Bluebirds would often dart across the road as I headed north.

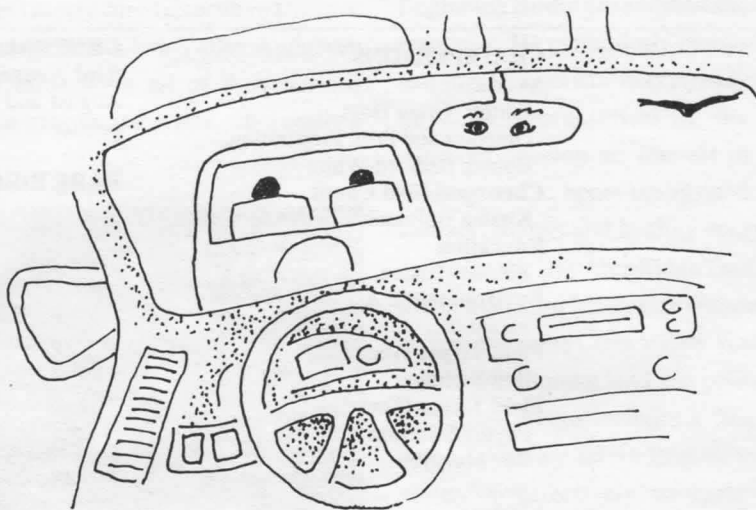
Nearing 101, I always looked for the Red-shouldered Hawk that perched on the telephone wires. Fields of Brewers Blackbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds were always around, seeming to form their larger flocks just after the summer solstice.

Along 101, parallel to the freeway in Morgan Hill, was a flooded culvert providing a gathering place for surprising numbers of Great and Snowy Egrets. In the spring, the Redwing Blackbirds would sit on the fences, posturing with their red epaulets puffing and boasting and overhead one or two Belted Kingfishers sat squat and square.

The next favorite part of the drive was the old Schallenberger Road, now Coyote Creek Golf Drive. Many days I could boast that I saw one and sometimes two Golden Eagles perched on the tall power towers. Occasionally there would be Red-tailed Hawks, looking small in comparison to the eagles. Swallows and swifts would dart about in the spring, especially under the bridges.

Coyote Creek meanders to the left of 101 and in the winter I loved to spot the large groupings of Turkey Vultures clustered in bare tree tops. Often they would be drying their wings, looking like imagined totem poles. The snag trees at Parkway Lakes often boasted an Osprey. Red-tailed and Red-Shouldered Hawks, especially in winter time, would stand tall on the light poles, traffic whizzing below.

The remainder of the drive into San Jose yielded less birds and more stop and go traffic. But there was still the drive home to anticipate.



After Hwy 85 was completed, I would sometimes head south on this road. One time I was astonished to see a group of Black-crowned Night Herons fly overhead and I often saw amazing groups of flapping Canada Geese. As Hwy. 85 merged into 101, I loved being in the slow lane so I could view the Wild Turkeys in the field just to the north of Rockway Lake.

Of course, I always looked for the Osprey again and for how many White Pelicans would be wintering on the lake. I wondered if their timing, as well as that of the Ospreys, coincided with when the lake was stocked for fishermen. White-tailed Kites would be working the fields of the Coyote Valley searching for their last morsels of the day.

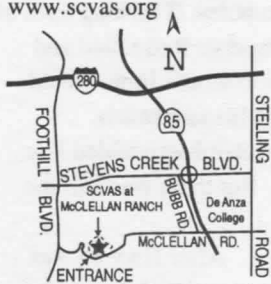
If it was winter, dusk settling in early, I would conclude my drive home taking Cochrane to the east past Anderson Reservoir. This was always a good place to glimpse a Great-horned or Barn Owl. If my timing was right, Barn Owls would also show themselves along New Avenue, favoring several palm trees along the road.

This past summer I relocated my office to my home. I have a 24-step commute from my garage door to my work space. And though I certainly don't miss the driving and paying for gas these days, I do miss the daily "field-trips" Yes, I was the driver with the smug look on my face knowing full well that every car around me had missed one spectacle after another. Unless that driver was you. Then we would have been grinning together.

After reading Kim's farewell message, I realized there are a lot of us doing the same thing! -BBW

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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 4

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

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