



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

November - December 2006

Creek & watershed maps highlight local habitat, history

by Nancy R. Teater

In the old days, every Bay Area resident knew their neighborhood creek. Have you visited your local creek lately? Do you know where your creek's water has been, or where it's going? Do you know your watershed address?

As an *Avocet* reader, chances are you know more about the creeks in your neighborhood than most of your neighbors, who only think about them during the winter when there is a chance of flooding. Like other readers, you understand the importance of riparian habitat located on and near waterways. Such habitat is a haven and a lifeline for birds and other wildlife in our increasingly urban environment.

You can learn more about Bay Area creeks from the remarkable new "Creek & Watershed Maps" series, a project of the Oakland Museum of California, William Lettis & Associates, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, and The Bay Institute. All six maps in the Santa Clara Valley series are currently available, and the companion map for South County featuring the Pajaro River watershed will be published next year.

Each map shows the historic creeks and willow groves of the area as well as modern watersheds. (A watershed is the area that is drained by a river or stream.) Water-related points of interest and historic vignettes make the maps a treasure-trove of information deserving close inspection by teachers, birders, history buffs and anyone else interested in creek environments.

For example: Stevens Creek, which runs along the west boundary of McClellan Ranch, is included on the map of West Santa Clara Valley. McClellan Ranch is described as a "wonderful place for birding" where visitors can look for Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Oak Titmice and Acorn Woodpeckers. The description also notes that in 1776, "Don Juan Bautista De Anza named the creek Arroyo de San Joseph de Cupertino. It was later renamed after Captain Elisha Stephens, who settled along the bank of the creek in 1859."

It continues, "The Fremont Avenue Bridge is a wonderful place to appreciate a relatively undisturbed section of Stevens Creek. From the bridge, look closely for fish in the creek. Stevens Creek is one of the few in the South Bay that supports steelhead trout. The lush vegetation and large trees that line the creek provide shade that keeps water temperatures cool."

continued on Page 9

General Membership Meeting

"Batting About Belize"

with Dave Johnston

Wednesday, Nov. 15

Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Join Santa Clara Valley Audubon for a lecture slide show about the natural history of Belize. Dave will share stories of his recent work with a PBS film crew in Belize about the strange form and function of "ugly-looking" bats. He will discuss how different bats have adapted to swim differently, how the Mayan ruins provide habitat for several species of bats, and other fascinating bat behaviors. A natural history of selected birds, reptiles and amphibians of Belize will also be presented.

Dave is a very popular, entertaining wildlife guide and speaker. After completing his Ph.D in bat biology at York University (Toronto) in 1997, he worked on many bat-related projects in the southwestern USA, especially in Central California, and also in Central America and sub-Saharan Africa. His

continued on Page 5

Christmas Bird Counts coming – sign up now!

see Page 8

◆ 80th anniversary celebration
— Page 5

◆ White-winged Dove
— Field Notes, Page 6

◆ Nestbox monitoring report
— Page 10

◆ Thanks to our donors!
— Page 11

Nov. - Dec. '06 Field Trips

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

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

NF = No facilities available

Wednesday Nov. 1, 12 noon

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Elaine Gould. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. Donald M. Somers Water Pollution Control Plant, junction of Borregas and Caribbean. Meet at trailhead at north end. Birding geared toward beginners. Bring binoculars; loaners also available. **RC**

Saturday Nov. 4, 8 AM

Grant Ranch County Park

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd; go approximately 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot located on left after main park entrance. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2-mile walk. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 5, 8 AM

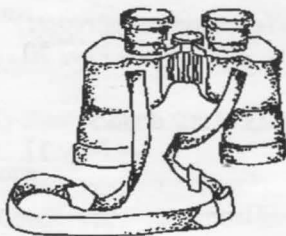
Gilroy Water Treatment Facility

Half day. Leader: Mark Paxton (831) 637-3039. Access by special permit; limited to 15 people in four vehicles by reservation only — carpooling required. Meet at McDonald's, Chestnut St and East 10th St in Gilroy between Hwy 82 (Monterey Hwy) and Hwy 101. Wide variety of birds at this man-made water-fowl habitat; anything's possible. Bring lunch and liquids. **RC, NF**

Wednesday Nov. 8, 8:30 AM

Grant Ranch

Half day. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. (See write-up for Nov. 4)



Saturday Nov. 11, 8:30 AM

Uvas Creek Park Preserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go west on 10th St. about a mile where it turns right and becomes Uvas Parkway. Turn left at Miller Ave, drive over Uvas Creek and turn left into Christmas Hill Park; park in first aisle to right. Fairly easy but long walk. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 12, 9 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Dick Stovel (650) 856-6105. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mtn. View. Trip geared toward beginners but all are encouraged to attend.

Wednesday Nov. 15, 9 AM

Pescadero Marsh & State Beach

Half day. Leader: Sue James (650) 348-0315. *Note: this is the third, not fourth, Wednesday.* Meet at first parking lot south of bridge over Pescadero Creek on Hwy 1. We should have exposed rocks visible on the coast, sandy beach in the estuary. Bring your spotting scope and several layers of warm clothes. **LO, HRC**

Saturday Nov. 18, 8:30 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd northeast toward hills, then left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd. Continue into park under bridge, meet at far end of upper parking lot. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk; be prepared for some mud! Possible entrance fee; **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 19, 8 AM

Oka Ponds

Half day. Leader: TBD, questions call (408) 253-7527. 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**

Friday - Saturday Nov. 24 / 25, 9 AM

Sac'to Valley Wildlife Refuges, Gray Lodge, Sutter Buttes

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

Sunday Nov. 26, 9:30 AM

Butterfly watching, Ardenwood Park

Half day. Leader: Moe Magoski (408) 410-7567. From I-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; other sites visited and species looked for as time and conditions permit. Bring your Butterfly guides; close focusing binoculars and your enthusiasm. Children welcome. **LO, RC**

Saturday Dec. 2, 8 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Dave Cook (408) 275-1492. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd north off Hwy 101 in Mtn. View. Birding geared toward beginners; all are welcome. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

Sunday Dec. 3, 8 AM

Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility

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

Field Trips *continued*

Wednesday Dec. 6, 12 noon

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Elaine Gould. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. See details under Nov. 1 listing. **RC**

Wednesday Dec. 13, 8 AM

Sunnyvale Baylands Park

Half Day. Leader: Pat Kenny (408) 725-0468. From Hwy 237 take Lawrence Expwy/Caribbean Dr exit toward Caribbean Dr, turn right into park at first stoplight on Caribbean north of 237. Turn right at entrance kiosk, follow road to Bay Breeze Picnic Area. **LO, RC**

Saturday Jan. 6, 8:30 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right toward Model Airplane Park (street is unnamed). Follow road for 1/4 mile and park in gravel lot at first bend in road (meet at gate if entrance is locked). **RC**

Sunday Jan. 7, 7:30 AM

County Chase

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch, and field guides as we attempt to track down some of the unusual birds seen on the Christmas Bird Counts in Santa Clara County. Meet in Alviso Marina parking lot. From Hwy 237 in San Jose take Gold St north to the end, bear left on Elizabeth St, then right on Hope St to Marina parking lot. Be prepared to carpool. **RC**

Saturday Jan. 13, 8 AM

Panoche Valley

Full day. Leader: Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260. Meet at Paicines Store on Hwy 25 approx. 11 miles south of Hollister. Oak woodland and open grassland via back roads into a unique habitat. Target species: Phainopepla, Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle; possible Mountain Plover, Bald Eagle, Vesper Sparrow, Greater Roadrunner and Chukar. Bring lunch, full tank of gas; carpooling strongly recommended due to limited parking on narrow roads. FRS radios set to channel 11; sub code 22 will be very useful on this trip.

Support SCVAS birding education, advocacy, and outreach programs— at no cost to you!

“eScrip” is an odd name. It should be called the “Make good things happen” program. Or, in the case of Santa Clara Valley Audubon, it should be called the “Support wonderful birding education” program. Did you know it doesn’t cost you anything?

eScrip was set up as a simple way for consumers to direct the giving programs of local retailers. When your credit card is registered with eScrip, and coded with Santa Clara Valley Audubon as the recipient, every time you use it at Andronico’s, Whole Foods, Safeway, or a host of other retailers, a percentage of your purchase is sent to our chapter to support birding, education, advocacy, and other chapter activities. How neat is that? And at no cost to you!

Many of you may already be registered with eScrip, supporting local schools or other organizations. But I suspect many of you are not registered. It’s so easy! We can sign you up over the phone (408-252-3747), you can mail in a form, or you can sign yourself up at www.escrip.com. All that it takes is 3 minutes of your time and your credit card number, and you can do our chapter and the programs we administer a world of good.

eScrip is the largest electronic fundraising program where there are no hassles for you and every purchase counts. It might have been called the “Support your local Audubon Chapter activities at no cost to you” program. But it’s not.

It’s called eScrip.

Events Calendar

Wednesday 11/1, 7:30 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents Mike Danzenbaker’s slides from a 5-week voyage in southern latitudes, including Antarctica, South Georgia, and Cape Verde, from ice and snow to sweltering tropical climates. Lucy Stern Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd. Palo Alto.

Tues. 11/7 — Election Day

Please vote!

Tues. 11/14, 9:30 AM

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

Sat. 11/18, 9-12 AM

Fundraiser Mailing Party

McClellan Ranch Park (see Page 4)

Wed. 11/15, 7:30 PM

General Meeting, Palo Alto Art Center (see Pg. 1)

Wed. 11/22, 7:30 PM

Environmental Action Committee mtg. McClellan Ranch Park

Thurs./Fri. 11-23/34

Office closed for Thanksgiving holiday

Tues. 12/12, 9:30 AM

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

Sat. Dec. 9, Holiday Open House

McClellan Ranch Park (see Page 4)

Sun. 12/17

San Jose Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

Mon. 12/18

Palo Alto CBC

Sat. 12/30

Calero-Morgan Hill CBC

Tues. 1/2

Mt. Hamilton CBC

Volunteer Ventures

By Toby Goldberg
SCVAS Programs Coordinator

The weather is starting to get a little chilly, travel planning has begun, and thoughts are starting to turn to the multitude of Holidays being celebrated over the next few months. From Rosh Hashanah to Ramadan, Diwali to Thanksgiving, Christmas to Kwanzaa, this is the time of year when we typically start reflecting on the bounty of friends, family and loved ones who touch our lives. Here at Audubon, the staff is very thankful for the many phenomenal individuals who continue to give their time and energy so generously throughout the year. Your contributions and enthusiasm make this not just a job, but a delight, and we feel fortunate indeed that you have chosen to make SCVAS a part of your life. To all of you who do so much - Thank You!

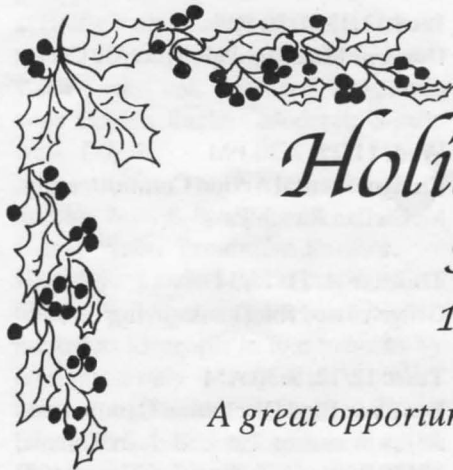
For those of you feeling the holiday spirit and looking for volunteer opportunities, read about the Christmas Bird Counts (Page 8), check out the opportunities below or contact me to discuss your interests!

Fundraiser Mailing Party – Who says volunteering can't be a blast! Every autumn we hand-address, stuff, stamp, and seal more than 3,000 envelopes to send to SCVAS members

for our Annual Fundraiser. This is quite an undertaking, so we need YOUR support! On Saturday, Nov. 18, we will host an envelope stuffing party here at McClellan Ranch Park. This is a fun opportunity to help the chapter and meet other members. This fast-paced yet relaxed event lasts approximately 3 hours during the morning and will include snacks and raffle prizes. Call (408) 252-3740 to sign up!

Bird Sanctuary Program Support – We are so excited that this revitalized program has received a lot of interest from local community members. However, in order for it to achieve its potential, we need more willing hands, heads, and feet to help us keep it going. In particular, we need: people with gardening know-how and experience who can help us with the certification process; those of the journalistic sort to help research and write our bi-monthly articles; folks interested in general research to help us keep up-to-date on gardening techniques, materials, methods, and alerts.

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



Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 9th
10:00 AM until 2:00 PM

A great opportunity to finish (or begin!) your holiday shopping!

Enjoy Holiday refreshments and a special one day discount!

Browse through our books, jewelry, ornaments, and other bird related gift items.

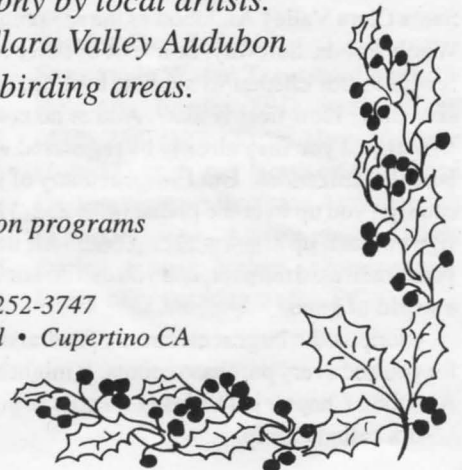
Enjoy a special display of paintings and photography by local artists.

Visit with our staff and learn about current Santa Clara Valley Audubon conservation projects and discuss important birding areas.

Gift Certificates Available

All proceeds go to our education and conservation programs

*For more details, please contact Susan at (408) 252-3747
SCVAS Office and Nature Shop • 22221 McClellan Road • Cupertino CA*



Rain or shine, SCVAS members know how to have a good time!

By Toby Goldberg

It started off so auspiciously: our gracious hosts, Patti and Bill Hughes, had allowed us the use of their magnificent property in the Santa Cruz Mountains, including tables and chairs already set up from a wedding party the night before. The donated centerpieces matched the SCVAS logo colors perfectly, and everything looked beautiful and professionally polished. Then, just a short while before all the attendees were expected to arrive, the skies opened and baptized our event with the first rain shower of the season. Lucky us! As we scrambled to move everything under cover, we ruefully reflected that Nature doesn't always pay attention to mere human plans...

Despite the dousing, the party went forward smoothly and a good time was had by all! We'd like to share some of the event's highlights:

- We had the opportunity to get up-close-and-personal with a delightfully coquettish young Barn Owl and a magnificent Red-tailed Hawk, thanks to Karen Hoyt, SCVAS Education Committee member and founder of Sky Hunters Environmental Education.
- J. Lohr wineries generously gave SCVAS a significant discount on some of their premiere signature vintages, treating partakers to quality indeed.
- Milton Barber, the next-door neighbor to the Hughes, acted as our knowledgeable tour guide for a lovely amble across both properties.
- We were treated to an evening of Celtic folk music with the San Francisco area band Cullen's Hounds (www.sfhounds.com). We all were properly restrained, but I could see many feet a-tapping, just itching to jump into the music. Okay, okay, some of us actually did...

- A banquet of scrumptious cuisine was presented by Ed Salah of Salah's Grill in Los Gatos, our local master of the grill. I can guarantee that no one went away hungry!
- SCVAS Board President Bob Hirt regaled us with tales from SCVAS' past. Who knew we had done so much? A lot happens (and a lot changes) in 80 years, but SCVAS is still standing strong!
- Our chapter was honored to hear from featured speaker Todd Newberry - author, scholar, professor and scientist - who reminded us of the many reasons why we are so enchanted by our avian friends.
- The evening's program rounded out with a perspective by Doug and Gail Cheeseman - always a pleasure! As they noted, it is all the many wonderful members that have made SCVAS what it is today.

The SCVAS staff would like to thank everyone who helped make this a fun-filled evening for all. Your support is what makes special events like this possible, and always worthwhile.



Left to right, Laurie West Roberts, Patti Hughes and Bob Power. Patti received a Western Bluebird nest box, one of several that will create a trail at Maison du Lac.

Nov. General Meeting *from Page 1*

work on the diet of bats, and in particular the Pallid Bat, has contributed to a better understanding of bats' foraging ecology. Dating back to the 80's before he did his Ph.D on bats, Dave was well known in Santa Clara Valley as an environmental educator/leader and birder and won awards from several groups for his outstanding service. Dave has taught courses in biological science at both San Jose State and Santa Clara University. In addition to being a birder, educator, researcher, and wildlife guide, Dave is a consulting wildlife ecologist with H.T. Harvey & Associates and holds handling permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Fish and Game Department for several special-status species of amphibians and mammals in California. Dave has spent many months in Belize and will be leading a superb Belize tour in the spring to benefit SCVAS, March 22 - April 3, 2007. Call the SCVAS office for more information.

Heads Up!

The 2007 Spring Birdathon is coming— YOU are invited to participate!

The Spring Birdathon Committee wants YOU to join in the fun of the SCVAS 2007 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 and conservation or just pay the entry fee. Compete for fabulous prizes or just bird for the fun of it. Then, come to the Awards Dinner in June and participate in raffles, bird quizzes, contests, and the chance to win more great prizes. The Spring Birdathon will be your best birding experience this year! Can't participate? Join in the fun by sponsoring an individual or a team. Look for all the details in the next issue of *The Avocet*.

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl through Cranes

Four male **Blue-winged Teal** were seen at the Gilroy treatment ponds on 25 Sep (RWR, FV) and were the first of the fall period. An eclipse male **Redhead** found on a closed salt pond on 23 Sep (MMR, MJM) may have been an early fall arrival, but is more likely a bird that oversummered. A late breeder, **Lesser Scaup** females and young are generally found in August, but the single female and young found at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) on 15 Aug (PJM) were the only ones reported. A female/immature **Bufflehead** was seen on Guadalupe Slough on 27 Aug (MMR, MJM, RGJ) and may have been the same bird that was seen on Salt Pond A2W in June. Good numbers of **Brown Pelicans** were in the South Bay this summer with a peak count of 135 roosting on the Salt Pond A9/A10 levee in Alviso on 27 Aug (PJM). A **Cattle Egret** was found at the Arzino Ranch in Alviso on 30 Sep (MMR et al.). The first fall **Merlin** was a female at the McClellan Ranch on 21 Sep (BP, PB). A very dark bird at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 30 Sep (MMR et al.) was likely of the race *suckleyi*. A number of **Prairie Falcons** winter along the valley floor, so single birds at the Gilroy treatment ponds on 25 Sep (RWR, FV), along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 the same day (DK, PK), and at the Alviso EEC on 27 Sep (RWR, FV) were expected. **Sandhill Cranes** were once common in the northern Santa Clara Valley, where they would feed on waste grain, but that era is long gone. Twenty birds flying over Stanford housing on 6 Sep (KCS) were likely misoriented birds from the Central Valley.

Shorebirds through Murres

An adult **Pacific Golden-Plover** in partial alternate plumage was found at the Gilroy treatment ponds on 9 Aug and seen again on 11 Aug (RWR, FV). **Snowy Plovers** have continued to be found in the

early fall with 1-8 birds seen more or less regularly either in the impoundment north of the Alviso Marina CP or in New Chicago Marsh (m.ob.). Nesting birds appear to have fledged at least two young in these areas. Surveys on closed refuge ponds in Alviso tallied 6 birds on 27 Aug and 9 on 23 Sep (MMR, MJM, RGJ). New Chicago Marsh was the **Lesser Yellowlegs** metropolis this season with high counts of 16 on 14 Aug and 14 on 20 Aug (both MJM). The only Lessers found away from New Chicago were 6 at the Gilroy treatment ponds on 22 Aug (RWR, FV, PKe, RKe, JPa) and one at Calero

Vagrant season treasures found:

White-winged Dove, Tennessee

Warbler, Northern Parula, and

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Reservoir on 2 Sep (JPa et al.). The only turnstone found in the period was a **Ruddy Turnstone** on Salt Pond A16 in Alviso on 18 Sep (BP). **Red Knots** have become more or less regular at the Stevens Creek mouth in the fall. The first birds found there were 6 on 18 Aug (WGB) with similar numbers seen through the end of the month (v.ob.). However, at least 49 birds were tallied there on 1 Sep (MMR). A **Sanderling** was found at the New Chicago Marsh on 22 Sep (LSu). This coastal bird is often found in the salt ponds in small numbers after the storms start, but birds are sometimes seen earlier. A juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was on the Sunnyvale WPCP oxidation ponds on 11 Aug (MMR) and was the only one found this fall. The first **Baird's Sandpiper** this season was found at the Gilroy treatment ponds on 24 Aug (RWR, FV, PKe, RKe, JPa). The first bird along the Bay was at New Chicago Marsh on 26 Aug (MDo). Numbers there peaked the next day at four birds (v.ob.) and the last of this small group was seen on 29 Aug (AP). A late passage bird was found in the same location on 29 Sep (AJ). The

Pectoral Sandpipers found so far this season have all been at New Chicago Marsh. Two or more birds were found there 18-31 Aug (EDeB, v.ob.) and a juvenile was found there again 27-28 Sep (RWR, FV, v.ob.). At least three **Ruffs** have shown up at New Chicago Marsh this season. The first two were juveniles, likely female by size, and were found on 7 Sep (RWR, FV, MJM, PD). One has a limp so it has been possible to distinguish both birds. A third bird was found on 20 Sep (AP, DD, DMa) and was an adult, again a female. These three birds have remained through the end of September, although they are all now in basic plumage. A 1st-winter **Franklin's Gull** was found on the Sunnyvale WPCP oxidation ponds on 19 Sep (PD) and has remained through the end of the month. Nearby, the same day, a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** was also seen (PD), but did not stay. **Black Terns** have been found again at the Sunnyvale WPCP oxidation ponds. Eleven were seen there on 4 Aug (JMD, LH) and at least one of this flock remained through 8 Aug. While looking for the Sabine's Gull, another Black Tern was seen on 19 Sep (MJM et al.) and was seen through 21 Sep. A basic **Common Tern** was found on the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 7 Aug (MJM, RWR, FV) and remained at least through 10 Aug (v.ob.). A second Common Tern was found there again on 16 Sep (MMR) and stayed at least through 21 Sep. Two Commons were on closed refuge ponds on 23 Sep (MMR, MJM). The first **Elegant Tern** of the season was at New Chicago Marsh on 6 Aug (R&JL). Twelve were seen at the Stevens Creek mouth on 31 Aug (PD) and six were again at the New Chicago Marsh on 22 Sep (JBH). After a half dozen years of local nesting, **Black Skimmers** were mostly absent this season with only two birds found at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 27 Aug (PJM, SCR). An adult **Common Murre** was photographed on Coyote Slough on 26 Sep (KH *fide* CM). Misoriented murre occasionally become trapped in the South Bay.

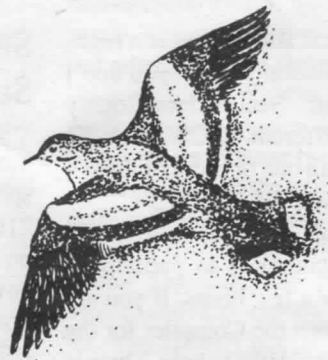
Field Notes *cont'd*

Doves through Phainopepla

A rare fall invader to the coast, two **White-winged Doves** were found this fall. The first was seen near the San Jose airport on 14 Aug (BGE) and the second was apparently attracted to feral Eurasian Collared-Doves in San Martin on 19-20 Sep (SCR et al.). These are the fourth and fifth county records, respectively. There was a substantial fall passage of **Vaux's Swifts** this year with peak numbers in early September. Some representative high counts include 100+ birds over the Alviso Marina CP on 10 Sep (MDo) and, inland, 50+ birds over the Alamos Creek Trail in the Almaden Valley on 14 Sep (JPa). A migrant female/immature **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was at a Morgan Hill feeder on 19 Aug (SCR) and one or more late birds were at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park 3-19 Sep (SCR, v.ob.). The fall passage of **Willow Flycatchers** appeared typical with the first fall bird near the Calabazas ponds on 22 Aug (PKe, RKe) and possibly the last at the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) ponds on 28 September (JPa). Peak numbers were in the first two weeks of September. A female **Purple Martin** over Monte Bello OSP on 4 Sep (BP) was a rare fall passage bird in our area. In recent years we have noticed a concentration of migrating or staging swallows that rest on power lines in Alviso near the old cannery during the fall migration. These large numbers often include a few **Bank Swallows**. This fall, these swallows were found from 8 Sep (MJM) to 23 Sep (MMR, MJM) with a peak count of three birds on 18 Sep (MMR). Nearby, 7 birds were seen next to New Chicago Marsh on 14 Sep (RCi). A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was found in a Los Altos neighborhood 4 Aug-7 Oct (GHt), well away from known breeding areas. Another bird was in a Morgan Hill yard on 13 Aug (SCR). A **Rock Wren** found at Stanford on 25 Sep (DSt) is a passage or dispersing bird. Few **Phainopepla** are found in early fall, so a female along the Coyote Creek Trail south of Cottonwood Lake on 13 Sep (BJ) was a surprise.

Warblers through Bishops

This fall has been one of the best in recent years for finding rare migrants. An adult female **Tennessee Warbler** was found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 11 Sep (MJM) and was seen again on 12 Sep (DWe), 13 Sep (MMR), and 19 Sep (KPa). This is the ninth county record and the first since 1998. A **Nashville Warbler** was found at the park on 14 Sep (JR) while searching for the Tennessee. Although it may seem surprising, some of our western warblers are rarely encountered in fall migration and are less common than eastern vagrants. A **Northern Parula** was seen along Stevens Creek just above La Avenida on 16 Sep (MMR) and has remained to be enjoyed by many through the end of the month. This is the sixth county record. An immature **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 14 Sep (PKe, RKe) and was found later in the day (PD et al.). This is also a sixth county record. A **Hermit Warbler** was found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 16 Sep (PKe, RKe, et al.) and an immature was seen at Monte Bello OSP on 24 Sep (MJM et al.). An immature **Blackpoll Warbler** was seen at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 11 Sep (WGB) and was seen daily after that at least through 16 Sep (m.ob.). Another immature was found along the Alamos Creek Trail south of Camden on 14 Sep (JPa). An immature male **American Redstart** was seen at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 4 Sep (RKe, PKe), which started off the vagrant season. A quasi-vagrant, a **Northern Waterthrush** was found at the Charleston Road marsh on 10 Sep (MDo), apparently returning for its fourth winter. A few **MacGillivray's Warblers** have been found in all the vagrant excitement. The first was at the SCVWD ponds on 19 Aug (JPa et al.). On the Northern Parula day, 16 Sep, a second was seen along Stevens Creek below La Avenida (MMR) and remained through 18 Sep. The third was found along Coyote



*White-winged Dove
sketch by Bonnie Bedford-White*

Creek below Hwy 237 on 26 Sep (MJM) and the fourth was along the Guadalupe River across from the SCVWD (AV). Not all the excitement was with warblers. On a field trip to the Arastradero Preserve, a **Green-tailed Towhee** was seen on 17 Sep (RP, SP, et al.). Two **Clay-colored Sparrows** have been found this fall. The first was found on 16 Sep (MMR) on Stevens Creek at La Avenida. The second was along the Guadalupe River near the SCVWD ponds on 23 Sep (JPa). Our other rare *Spizella* sparrow, the **Brewer's Sparrow**, has also been found twice this fall. The first was found along the Guadalupe River at the SCVWD ponds on 10 Sep (JPa, AV) and was seen again on 11 Sep (RWR). The second was in the fennel patch at the Palo Alto Baylands on 16 Sep (RCa). Continuing the pattern of twos, an adult **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was found at a feeder in Rinconada Hills on 17 Aug (LSu), but did not stay. A female or immature was seen along the Guadalupe River at the SCVWD ponds on 21 Aug (AV). It was a good fall for **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** with a female at the Gilroy treatment ponds on 7 Aug (JMy, JPa), another female at the Calero stables on 1 Sep (AV), and an immature male at the Arzino Ranch on 30 Sep (MMR et al.). Fall **Lawrence's Goldfinch** records include a pair at Monte Bello OSP on 29 Aug (GHa) and an immature at the New Chicago Marsh on

continued on Page 8

2006 CBC's: Sign up and join the fun!

The Christmas Bird Count is a highlight of the Audubon year — you don't want to miss it! Santa Clara County features four different CBC's, so make plans now to join one or more of them — you'll be glad you did.

Birders of all ages and abilities are invited and encouraged to participate, even if only for a few hours. If you are interested, contact the Compiler for the area(s) where you'd like to help. There is a \$5 charge to cover the cost of the national CBC results publication.

Field Notes *cont'd.*

3 Sep (SCR). A female **Orange Bishop** was seen building a nest along Stevens Creek just above Crittenden Lane on 21 Sep (SP). This fall, birds have been seen along Stevens Creek, along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 (SCR), and in San Jose (JT), but there is no evidence that they are nesting successfully.

Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), Patty Brown (PB), Richard Carlson (RCa), Rich Cimino (RCi), Mike Danzenbaker (JMD), Ed DeBellevue (EDeB), David Diller (DD), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PD), Bruce Elliott (BGE), Garth Harwood (GHa), Kathleen Henderson (KH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Lee Hung (LH), John Hutz (JBH), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Bob Juhl (BJ), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Dave Kiehl (DK), Penny Kiehl (PK), Randy & Janet Little (R&JL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Dean Manley (DMa), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Clyde Morris (CM), Jean Myers (JMy), Rich Page (RP), Kathy Parker (KPa), Janna Pauser (JPa), Andy Pedler (AP), Susan Peterson (SP), Bob Power (BP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jennifer Rycenga (JR), Kendric Smith (KCS), Dick Stovel (DSt), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Jim Thomas (JT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), and Dave Weber (DWe).

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

San Jose

Sunday, December 17th

Bird identification skills are great but other skills are important too, such as: 1) spotter, able to point and say "Bird!" and 2) tally-person, able to make small marks on increasingly grubby bits of paper. We have such a diversity of habitats that there is something for everyone's pleasure. So, come have fun and contribute to an important ongoing biological census.

—Kirsten Holmquist, Compiler
kirrose@earthlink.net
408-747-0988

Palo Alto

Monday, December 18th

It will be here before we know it. Christmas, shopping and counting birds. The Palo Alto Count is set for Monday, December 18. For those of you new to birding and this count, our count circle is centered near the Stanford campus, and encompasses parts of Santa Clara And San Mateo Counties. We have a wide array of habitats, from the bayfront, through urban areas, and up into the hills along Skyline Blvd. If you are new to the count, let me know, and I will find a spot that best fits your birding experience level.

We are looking for anyone who is willing to participate, regardless of your birding skills or expertise. It's a great way to learn new birds and meet new friends, and know that you have made a contribution to the National Audubon Society, which has sponsored these counts for over 100 years.

If you have participated in the past, contact your previous region coordinator from the list below. Or, if you aren't sure or are new to the count, drop me a line and I'll put you in touch with someone. With your help, we'll have a great count! Save the date!!

—Jack Cole
snoyowl@yahoo.com
408-996-0434

- Region 1 Jack Cole
Region 2 Mike Rogers
m.m.rogers@comcast.net
Region 3 Dave Fichtner
coastman@earthlink.net

- Region 4 Ruth Troetschler
rebugging@batnet.com
Region 5 Trevor Hebert
thebert@stanford.edu
Region 6 Nancy Teater
nrt@hamilton.com
Region 7 (Open)
Region 8 Garth Harwood
gharwood@hiddenvilla.org

Calero-Morgan Hill

Saturday, December 30th

This is an inland count encompassing the southern part of Santa Clara County from the Santa Cruz Mountains in the west to the Diablo foothills in the east, with valleys, reservoirs, riparian corridors and urban areas in between. Some areas of interest where help may be needed include Quicksilver and Santa Teresa County Parks, Coyote Creek riparian corridors, Ogier Ponds, Coyote Valley, and Almaden Lake. An early indication of your interest would be helpful as I will not be able to take last minute sign-ups.

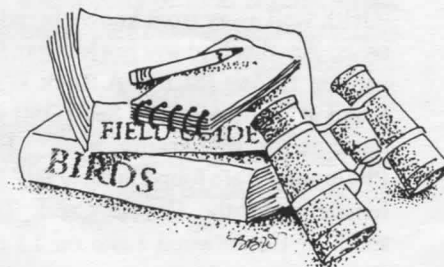
—Ann Verdi, Compiler
wodu10@aol.com
408-266-5108

Mt. Hamilton

Tuesday, January 2nd

Mark your calendars for this spectacular count circle including Mt. Hamilton and the San Antonio Valley. Count leaders should contact me as soon as possible with your availability.

—Bob Hirt, Compiler
10325 Dempster Avenue
Cupertino, Ca 95014
408-821-2732 (cell)



Get out and vote!!

Study hard and get to the polls on November 7th. There are critical measures, both locally and state-wide, where our membership can make a difference. SCVAS does not endorse candidates.

Vote Yes on Measure "A"

Santa Clara County voters will have the opportunity to help protect more than 400,000 acres of open space by voting "Yes" on the Santa Clara County Land Conservation Initiative, Measure A.

Coordinated by People for Land and Nature (PLAN) — a coalition including SCVAS, Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance and Committee for Green Foothills — the Initiative will amend the County General Plan to help protect hillsides, ranchlands

and farms by reducing the number of developable parcels permitted in rural areas. It places additional safeguards on scenic views, streamside corridors and sensitive wildlife habitat.

The Initiative has received widespread support, including endorsements from conservation organizations, transportation advocates, labor unions, the Democratic Party, the Santa Clara County Medical Association, and more than 90 elected officials. Polling shows more than 70% of likely voters approve of the measure.

Yes on Proposition 84

Prop 84 is a \$5.4 billion conservation and water quality bond on the ballot. It is critical to renew funding for the Wildlife

Conservation Board, the Coastal Conservancy, numerous regional conservancies, and other important restoration and acquisition programs. Without Prop 84, many of the State's conservation dollars will dry up within the next one to two years.

In addition to the general funding categories, Prop 84 includes specific amounts for many Audubon priorities, including the Salton Sea area; San Francisco, Santa Monica and Monterey Bays; the Los Angeles, San Gabriel and Santa Ana Rivers; Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada; the Delta and San Joaquin River; and farmland and working landscapes.

Yes on Proposition 87

Would establish a \$4 billion program to reduce oil and gasoline usage by 25% by 2017, with research and production incentives for alternative energy, alternative energy vehicles, energy efficient technologies, and for education and training. The program would be funded by a tax of 1.5% to 6%, depending on oil price per barrel, on producers of oil extracted in California. The proposition would prohibit producers from passing tax on to consumers.

- Would collect as much as \$400 million from oil producers. Supporters include: Sierra Club, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Friends of the Earth, National Wildlife Federation, California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, California League of Conservation Voters, California Farmers Union.

Vote No on Proposition 90!

The most extreme threat to California's environment in decades, Prop 90 is a full frontal assault on environmental protection in California. Hidden behind language to stop abuses of eminent domain, Prop 90 includes several very dangerous provisions that would drastically cut back on the State's, local governments' and even voters' ability to protect the environment, local communities, and farmland. The most damaging provisions would make it nearly impossible to implement many resource protection laws or to acquire private property to protect wildlife habitat.

The official opposition form, fact sheets and other materials related to Prop 90 are on California Audubon's website, www.ca.audubon.org. For more information, please contact Julia Levin, State Policy Director, at jlevin@audubon.org or 510-601-1866.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Statement of Income & Balance Sheets, year ending May 31, 2006

<u>Statement of Income</u>	<u>5/31/05</u>	<u>5/31/06</u>
TOTAL REVENUE (includes net Nature Shop sales, Investment Income, Memberships and Program Revenues):	\$ 80,768	\$ 77,652
SUPPORT (includes Gifts and Memorials, Birdathon, contributions to Restricted Funds, Easrthshare of California distributions, misc. Program Support):	<u>\$173,698</u>	<u>\$166,539</u>
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT	\$254,465	\$244,191
EXPENSES:		
Total Program Expenses	\$174,184	\$160,812
Total Fundraising Expenses	\$15,620	\$ 25,262
Total General & Administrative Expenses	<u>\$ 57,965</u>	<u>\$ 63,784</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$247,770	\$249,858
EXCESS OF OPERATING (EXPENSES) OVER REVENUE	\$ 6,695	\$(5,667)
<u>Asset, Liabilities, and Surplus</u>		
TOTAL ASSETS (includes Cash, Deposits, Prepaid Expenses, Accounts Receivable, Fixed Assets, Inventory, and Investments, At market value):	\$632,032	\$624,920
LIABILITIES (includes Accounts Payable, Salaries and Payroll Taxes Payable, Sales Taxes Payable, and Deferred Income):	\$ 2,077	\$ 632
SURPLUS (includes Funds Designated to meet Long-term Needs, Restricted Funds, and Undesignated Surplus):	\$629,955	\$624,288
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SURPLUS:</u>	<u>\$632,032</u>	<u>\$624,920</u>
STATEMENT OF SURPLUS:		
Surplus, Beginning of Year	\$629,955	\$624,287
Surplus, End of Year	\$ 6,695	(5,667)
	\$629,955	\$624,288

Triumphs and frustrations: closing out the 2005-2006 nestbox season

by Toby Goldberg

On September 14th, nestbox monitors from around the county came together at McClellan Ranch to submit data, compare results, share stories and get to know their fellow monitors. We had a great turnout, and were pleased to see so many of our dedicated monitors willing to take time out of their busy schedules to join us.

As we discovered over the course of the evening, and in examining the body of data submitted, this was a difficult year for our cavity nesting species. Mother Nature didn't pull any punches — the prolonged spring rains followed by the intense heat waves of summer caused many nests to fail. However, lest we get too discouraged, even with the crazy weather, we still saw a large number of successful nests. Which just tells us that this Recovery Program is more important than ever!

Our monitors had their fair share of good news and humor as well. For example, two monitors, initially convinced that they were about to become

turkey fodder, had the rare opportunity to witness a silent "battle" between two large toms. Fortunately the turkeys were more interested in each other than their startled spectators. Another monitor was treated to a brief communion with an inquisitive fawn just waking from a nap. Our monitors have also learned that initial appearances can be very deceiving. We've all heard of opossums playing dead, but apparently nestlings can too! One monitor, removing what appeared to be two dead nestlings, was startled to later notice two adult chickadees excitedly buzzing in the garbage can. When she opened the lid, out jumped a baby chickadee, which promptly ran under her woodpile. When the babies were returned to the nest, the parents immediately resumed feeding. Whew!

Finally, we all discovered what determined fighters these birds can be, whether refusing to leave their nests for eggs to be counted, returning time and time again to a promising (though failed) nestbox, or persevering through

conditions that seem impossible. Cavity nesting species, if given a little help by dedicated nestbox monitors, can surprise us all in how well they succeed.

We currently have 93 reported Nest Box Monitors throughout Santa Clara County and 30+ more in Mountain View alone; 890 nest boxes were monitored this season. Here are the successful fledgling numbers for this year (not all data has been reported):

Western Bluebird	413
Violet-green Swallow	233
Oak Titmouse	275
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	246
Ash-throated Flycatcher	131
Bewick's Wren	63
House Wren	31
White-breasted Nuthatch	31
Tree Swallow	274
House Sparrow	4
Barn Owl	<u>16</u>
TOTAL	1717

We'd like to acknowledge the efforts of Jack Perkins, our unofficial Mountain View Nestbox Crusader, for bringing so much positive attention (and so many new monitors!) to this important program. His efforts and those of SCVAS in general were highlighted in May on the CBS Early Show "The Birdman of Mountain View"!

And, of course, many many thanks are due to all of the volunteers who dedicate so much time and energy to making these recovery efforts a success (and they are that!) — from those who monitor nest boxes to our nest box builders to our behind-the-scenes program developers to those who coordinate these wonderful volunteers.

If you would like to be a part of this exciting effort to bring back cavity-nesters or just want to learn more about the program, please contact me at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org or visit the Conservation pages of our website: www.scvas.org.

Creek & watershed maps *from Page 1*

The backs of the maps in the Santa Clara Valley series highlight the San Francisquito Creek, Coyote Creek and Guadalupe River Watersheds as well as the historic and modern waterscapes of the Santa Clara Basin. A special South Bay Creeks & Baylands map features the original, historic U.S. Coast Survey wetlands maps from the mid-1800s and a change-through-time graphic showing the sequence of salt pond diking.

SCVAS member Trish Mulvey has worked on the creek-mapping effort from its inception. According to Mulvey, in 1993 California Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi secured a Federal appropriation for demonstration project grants for the San Francisco Estuary Project. Funding from this project and the Alameda County Flood Control Clean Water Project enabled Christopher Richard, Curator of Aquatic Biology at the Oakland Museum, and Janet Sowers, Project Geolo-

gist at William Lettis & Associates, to produce the first map, covering Oakland and Berkeley.

Compiling and cross-checking storm water agency records as well as inconsistencies on the ground provide an immediate advantage to water agencies as well as technical and research users of the data sets. Far from being an academic exercise, the maps give users valuable data on storm water runoff and historic insights about areas of high groundwater and potential flooding. The key objective, though, is to reveal hidden creeks in the urban environment to local residents, engendering interest, pride and stewardship of their natural resources and neighborhood heritage.

Make a small investment to learn more about your local creek. Buy the maps at the SCVAS Nature Shop and enjoy! You can preview the maps at www.museumca.org/creeks.

We thank these members for their generous contributions Jan.-Aug. 2006:

• Organizational Grant Support

A programs and activities grant was made possible through the generous support of Derry and Charlene Kabcenell.

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Keith Anderson, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Bob and Deb Hirt, Derry and Charlene Kabcenell, David McIntyre and Antoinette Konski, Robert Stephens and Julie Packard, J. Holley Taylor, Steve and Debbie Thompson, Steven Patt and Debi Jamison;

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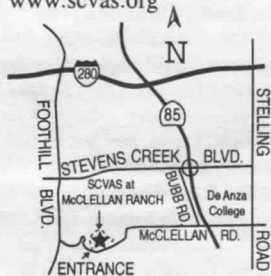
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Pete LaTourrette

Programs

Doug & Gail Cheeseman

Webmaster

Mondy Lariz

GENERAL MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month except July, August and December and are open to the public.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (408) 252-3747 for times and directions.

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.

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The Avocet 12