



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

March - April 2007

Sign Up NOW for The 2007 SCVAS Spring Birdathon

by Dotty Calabrese

Everyone, from beginner to expert birder, can participate in the 2007 SCVAS Spring Birdathon, a major fundraising event for SCVAS conservation efforts and youth environmental education, raising over \$26,000 in 2006. Your participation will help raise even more in 2007.

•Anyone can win fabulous prizes by raising money and being a top fundraiser! Top fundraisers get their choice of prizes from optics and birding trips, to entertainment tickets, exotic resort getaways, excellent wines, and much more. Anyone can join in by self-donating at least \$30.

•Anyone can sponsor a team. See page 11 to pick a Birdathon team to sponsor. Call the office to make a tax-deductible donation to that team. Receive a report about that team's Birdathon Day.

Here are the basics of how to join in the Birdathon fun, raise money, and compete for a prize.

1. **Check www.scvas.org** for the Birdathon rules, information, and prize list. Check back, as the prize list will be updated often.

2. **Talk to your birding friends** about forming a **Self-Guided Team** together for the 2007 SCVAS Spring Birdathon, pick a day to bird between March 30 and April 22. **Register** your team by calling Susan at the SCVAS Office, 408-252-3747. Or, call

to join a **Guided Team** led by one of our many expert birders. (See Page 11 for list of teams.)

3. **Plan** your birding day with your Self-Guided teammates. Create a 4-Hour or 24-hour Birdathon that fits your team. You can design a relaxed and restful Birdathon or one that is creative and energetic. For example:

A. Spend four hours on a Saturday snacking in lounge chairs on your patio counting species at your feeders

(**4-Hour Birdathon Category**). OR

B. Race around Santa Clara County from before dawn until after dark, birding in as many habitats and locations as is humanly possible in a 24-hour period

(**24-hour Birdathon Category**).

4. **Raise money - at least \$30 per team member.** It's so much easier than you think. Most people you know will be delighted to support your efforts towards environmental education and conservation with a small or large tax-deductible donation. Call, e-mail, or write all your friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, acquaintances, to ask for pledges or donations. Sound too hard? It's not! In recent years, our top fundraisers each raised from \$350 to over \$3700. You can, too - we'll teach you how! **Read the fundraising tips** in your Birdathon packet and/or **attend the**

free fundraising workshop at the SCVAS office on **Monday, March 12 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

You'll find out how easy it can be!

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General Membership Meeting "Burrowing Owls in California - an abundant endangered species?"

with Jack Barclay

Palo Alto Arts Center

Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Wednesday, Mar. 21

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

This program is something very exciting amidst all the dismal news about Burrowing Owl populations in Santa Clara County. It is presented by a professional biologist who is doing miracles with the Burrowing Owls at the San Jose Airport. Jack Barclay will present some very interesting Burrowing Owl biology, their natural history, range and distribution, conservation status, abundance, distribution and habitat associations in California. By the end of this program, you will understand aviation safety and bird strikes and the issue of managing a Burrowing Owl colony on a major airport.

◆ *Burrowing Owl Update*
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◆ *Black-and-white Warbler!*
— Field Notes, Page 6

◆ *Complete 2006 CBC Results*
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◆ *Spring Birdathon Teams*
— Page 10

◆ *Mitigation monitoring*
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Mar. - Apr. '07 Field Trips

(all of our Field Trips are also available online at www.scvas.org)

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

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

NF = No facilities available

Saturday Mar 3, 7:30 A.M.

Santa Cruz Coastal Hot Spots

Half Day (optional plus). Leader: Todd Newberry, Santa Cruz Bird Club (831) 426-8741. Meet 7:30 AM Santa Cruz lighthouse W. Cliff Drive. 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. A chance to visit local birding hotspots and chase recently reported goodies. For those running late, at 8 A.M. we will be on West Cliff Drive, checking inter-tidal shelves. Trip goes rain or shine!

Sunday Mar. 4, 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 (University Ave. becomes Palm Dr). Meet at the end of Palm Dr at entrance to Main Quad. Local breeding birds and early returning migrants should be active. Recommended for beginning birders. **RC.**

Wednesday Mar. 7, 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 Mar. 10, 8:00 AM

Windy Hill OSP

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

Sunday Mar. 11, 8:00 AM

Uvas Creek Park Preserve.

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go West on Tenth Street for about a mile where it bears right and becomes Uvas Parkway. Turn left at the first stop sign (Miller Ave.), drive over Uvas Creek and turn left into Christmas Hill Park and park in the first isles on the right. Easy but long walk. Don't forget to Spring Forward! **LO, RC**

Wednesday, March 14. 9:00 A.M.

Ed Levin Park

Half day. Leaders: Doug & Gail Cheeseman, (408) 741-5330. Note: Late start! Traveling on either 680 or 880, exit Rt. 237 and go east towards the foothills. Rt. 237 becomes Calaveras Rd. and passes through the southern part of the park. Meet in the Ranger Station/Visitors Center/Spring Valley Pond parking lot on right (just past the Spring Valley Golf Club.) \$5.00 parking fee. **LO, RC.**

Saturday & Sunday Mar. 17 & 18

Honey Lake, Eagle Lake & vicinity

Leader: Bob Hirt (408) 821-2732. A weekend trip to a remote corner of northeast California to see Sage Grouse on their booming grounds. Many other mountain species of interest expected too, such as eagles, Townsend's Solitaire, Cassin's Finch, Mountain Bluebird, and Pinyon Jay. Trip limited to 20 participants, please call leader for further details and to reserve a space.

Saturday Mar. 24, 8:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Pat Kenny (408) 725-0468. From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south 2.1 miles (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd) turn left into first park entrance and meet in first, Chestnut Picnic Area parking lot. One of the best spots for riparian birding in the South Bay for migrants and early returning, breeding birds. Entrance fee required. **LO, RC**

Sunday Mar. 25, 8:00 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 on unnamed road toward the Model Airplane Park where power towers cross Hwy. Follow road for 1/2 mile and park where it bends to the right. **RC**

Saturday Mar. 31, 8:30 AM

Gilroy Hot Springs Rd

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Trip limited to 16 participants; call Bob to reserve a space. We will use a maximum of six cars so be prepared to carpool. Meet at intersection of Gilroy Hot Springs Rd. and Cañada Rd. From Hwy 101 take Leavesley Rd. east through the shopping center, turn left on New Ave. and then right on Roop Rd. Once in the foothills bear left at the fork in the road [Roop Rd.] and continue about four miles to Cañada Rd. Highlights: migrating and breeding birds of south Santa Clara County. **RC.**

Sunday Apr. 1, 8:30 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Al Eisner (650) 364-3686 evenings, (650) 926-2018 days and voice-mail. From Hwy 101 or I-680: McKee Rd. northeast toward the hills; left on Toyon Ave.; right on Penitencia Creek Rd.; continue on into the park. Meet in the "Rustic Lands" parking area, on the right just before reaching the "T" intersection and underpass. Moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk, looking for resident breeding birds (possible Rufous-Crowned Sparrow, and American Dipper if we are lucky), early migrants, and lingering winter birds. Be prepared for mud! Possible entrance fee. **LO, RC.**

Wednesday, April 4, 7:00 A.M.

Rancho San Antonio O.S.P.

Half day. Leader: Jim Liskovec (650) 969-5542. Rise and shine - This trip begins at 7 a.m.! Emphasis on bird song. Some strenuous walking on hilly trails. From Hwy 280 take Foothill Expwy-Grant Rd. exit south onto Foothill Blvd. Turn right on Cristo Rey Dr; left into park; continue on to large parking area. Bring lunch and water. Meet by restrooms. **RC.**

Wednesday Apr. 4, 12 noon

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

See details/contact information under March 7th listing.



Field Trips *continued*

Saturday Apr. 7, 8:00 AM

Ed Levin County Park (South)

Half day. Al Dieckmann (408) 379-5641. See directions in March 14th listing. Hoped for birds include migrants and local breeding birds. Entrance fee. *LO, RC.*

Sunday Apr. 8, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. Birding and discussions will be geared toward the beginning birder. *RC*

Saturday Apr. 14, 8:00 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. See directions from March 25th. *RC*

Sunday Apr. 15, 8:30 AM

Ed Levin County Park (North)

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Take Hwy. 237 east, crossing I-880 and I-680 (becomes Calaveras Rd.), turn left on Downing Rd. to the park entrance. Meet in parking lot on the far, northeast side of Sandy Wool Lake (near the dog exercise pens). Looking for migrants and local breeding birds in this prime birding hotspot. Trail is steep in places. Entrance fee. *LO, RC.*

Saturday Apr. 21, 8:00 A.M.

Arastradero OSP

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd west; turn right on Arastradero Rd and meet in parking lot about 1/2-mile on right. Moderately strenuous hiking. *RC.*

Sunday Apr. 22, 8:00 AM

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University

Half day. Leader: Marion Smith. Trip limited to sixteen people; call Marion at (650) 493-7210 to reserve a space. There is a fee of \$5 per person. From I-280 the main gate is on the left about 2 miles west on Sand Hill Rd. Meet in the parking lot on the *right* side of Sand Hill Rd (near the freeway) as you head toward the Preserve. Participants must carpool from the parking lot to the Preserve Gate (*required!*). Entrance Gate will be open from 7:50 until 8AM ONLY (DO NOT arrive earlier than 7:50AM; parking outside the gate is

not allowed as it poses an unacceptable traffic hazard!). Trip involves 2-3 miles of moderately strenuous walking. Trip goes rain or shine.

Wednesday Apr. 25, 8:30AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half Day. Leader: Roxie Handler (408)730-1745. See directions in March 24th listing. Great chance to see local breeding birds & their nests. *LO, RC*

Saturday Apr. 28, 8:00 AM

Almaden Lake Park and Alamos Creek

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. Meet in the west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. From Highway 85 take Almaden Expressway south. Park is on east (left) side of Almaden Expressway. Continue just past Coleman Road (and park) and return northbound on Almaden Expressway to park entrance on right. About 3 miles of easy walking. We will bird the lake and the trail upstream looking for waterfowl, raptors, and a wide variety of riparian birds. *LO, RC.*

Sunday Apr. 29, 8:30 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. See Directions on March 24th. Migrants and local breeding birds. Entrance fee required. *LO.*

Saturday May 5, 8:30 AM

Mines Rd. and vicinity

Full day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Trips starts in Del Puerto Canyon, heading west to San Antonio Valley. From I-580: East over Altamont Pass, to I-5 south, west at the Patterson exit (Diablo Grande Pky), then right on Del Puerto Canyon Rd. Meet at first pullout. Highlights may include Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Bring full tank of gas, lunch and liquids.

Sunday May 6, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. See April 8th for details.

A Plan Ahead trip:

Saturday & Sunday, June 16 - 17

Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

Leader: Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260. Details at www.scvas.org. 20 people limit; call Clay to reserve space.

Events Calendar

Sat. 3/3, 9-Noon & 1-5 PM

Nest Box Training (session 1 and 2)

Meet at the Arastradero Preserve parking lot, and bring water. We'll clean out and repair nest boxes in preparation for this spring's residents. *RSVP* to David 'Tex' Houston at 650-303-2777 or tex009@sbcglobal.net

Sun. 3/4, 9-noon & 1-5 PM

Nest Box Training (session 3 and 4)

See information above

Wednesday 3/7, 7:30 - 9 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents "An Antarctic Adventure" with Eleanor Briccetti. Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd. Palo Alto.

Mon. 3/12, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Free Birdathon Fundraising Workshop

Major winners from previous Spring Birdathons will reveal their fundraising secrets, and help you tailor a fundraising plan to maximize your pledges with the least effort, raise lots of money for SCVAS programs, and win a great prize. You won't be disappointed! SCVAS Office Conference Room. Call the SCVAS office to register, 408-252-3747

Tues. 3/13, 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: Swallows

Tues. 3/20 & 27, 7-9PM

Adult Education Class: Silent Hunters

Instructor: Karen Hoyt (*See page 5*)

Wed. 3/21, 7:30 PM

General Meeting, Palo Alto Art Center (*see Page 1*)

Wed. 3/28, 7:30PM

EAC @ McClellan Ranch Park

Thurs. 3/29 & 4/5, 7-9PM; Sat. 3/31 & 4/7, 8-11AM

Adult Education Class: Beginning Birding-by-Ear

Instructor: Ron Arps (*See page 5*)

Calendar continued on Page 14

Volunteer Ventures

By Toby Goldberg
SCVAS Programs Coordinator

At last count, there are 140 volunteers who give freely of their time, energy, talents, and passion to help SCVAS achieve its mission. From our passionate Armchair Activists, to our tireless Wildlife Education Day set-up crew (and everything in between!), this cadre of amazing volunteers is what keeps our valuable programs running and growing, what makes our conservation efforts effective, and what allows us to do all of those things our members feel are important. All of the contributions our volunteers provide, whether large or small, regular or one-time-only, are truly the heart and soul behind this organization, and we are thrilled to honor them!

The theme of the **2007 National Volunteer Week (April 15th – 21st)** is "Inspire by Example." I can't think of a more appropriate and fitting theme; the example of your dedication never ceases to inspire! Veteran volunteers: please stop in the office to say "hi" and let us show our appreciation. Potential new volunteers: now is a great time to explore our many opportunities and see what might be a good fit for you. Any current or new volunteers who stop in the office during National Volunteer Week are likely to get a little token of our appreciation. And on Tuesday, April 24 at 6:30pm, please join us for a **Volunteer Appreciation Italian Dinner**; we'll transport you to the Italian countryside with good food, music, and good friends! This will be a wonderful – and delicious – opportunity to meet other SCVAS members and find out what they love most about volunteering. Our dinner will take place at McClellan Ranch Park. We will also have a pre-dinner bird walk lead by our fearless Executive Director himself at the Stevens Creek Park off of Foothill. More details available on our website, www.scvas.org. **Space is limited**, so please RSVP no later than April 17 to (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org. We look forward to seeing you in April!

Here are two (of many) volunteer positions available:

Nature Shop Assistant - The SCVAS nature shop helps to supply members of SCVAS and of the community with all of their birding and gift needs. We need someone to help us cover the shop one Saturday a month for a few hours. Practice your sales skills and meet interesting people, too!

Diversity Committee – Do you think it's important to reach out to communities and populations not widely engaged in birding, conservation, and environmental education? Our Diversity Committee, dedicated to inviting and engaging minority and other populations in our chapter's programs, has projects in the works that could use your help!

If you are interested in helping us reach out to all of the culturally diverse members of our community, or for information about any of our volunteer opportunities, call (408) 252-3740 or email programs@scvas.org.

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Precipitous Disappearance of Local Burrowing Owls - How We Got Here

by Ruth Troetschler

Through the 1970s our open fields supported large populations of BUOWs and their California ground squirrel hosts. As urbanization continued they were "displaced"—killed. We can pinpoint the first efforts to do something about the slaughter to about 1980, when Joan Priest of the Humane Society (HUS) and her BUOW team arranged to rescue baby owls as their parents fled the bulldozers. The HUS raised these young to maturity and released them near other owls. They assumed that the displaced adults would take care of themselves even though their holes were gone.

In 1988 Mission College (MC)—short of money but home to 16 BUOW pairs, implemented a plan to lease 60 acres for commercial development. They did not take into account the inevitable owl slaughter, similar to that which had already occurred during the construction of the Santa Clara Convention Center and of Great America nearby. Save B.O.T.H (Save Burrowing Owls and their Habitat)—spearheaded by Janis Taylor, an instructor at Mission College, challenged the developer's 1984 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which stated that there was no wildlife at the College. Intervention from Tom Esperson, a Sierra Club member and an attorney, letters from SCVAS's Lynn Teneffoss and Dr. Richard Mewaldt of San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO), a petition drive by Save B.O.T.H, and testimony from Priest and Taylor eventually forced the College to prepare a supplemental EIR and a revised master plan under theegis of California's Department of Fish and Game.

In the following year, in pioneering but separate efforts to manage properties for BUOW, Dr Lynne Trulio and Jack Barclay were hired to protect and enhance BUOW habitat, respectively, at Mountain View's (MV) Shoreline Park and the San Jose (SJ) Airport. Among their bag of management tricks was mowing to keep the grass low, and use of artificial burrows for owls that needed to be moved—the owls readily colonized close-by new holes when the old ones were blocked.

In 1990 Jack Barclay and other scientists, government officials, and interested citizens initiated the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (CBOC). In 1993 the Consortium's Mitigation Committee developed Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines— to "meet the need for uniform standards when surveying burrowing owl populations and evaluating impacts from development projects..." These guidelines are now widely used to mitigate development projects.

In spring 1990, Save B.O.T.H, SCVAS, HUS, MV Shoreline, and PG&E joined together in the Burrowing Owl Alliance (BOA). Its goal: "to publicize the plight of local BUOW and search for suitable local public sites where owls could be released." First year funding of \$10,000 and technical support was supplied by PG&E. SCVAS acted as banker, Lynn Trulio was Project Coordinator; Janis Taylor, Assistant Coordinator. By the end of the first season (1991), habitat sites of at least 50 acres had been pledged at Shoreline and Sunnyvale (SV) Baylands Parks. In 1991 Trulio joined the faculty at San Jose

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Adult Education Classes

The following classes are sponsored by the SCVAS Education Committee. To register, please call the office at (408) 252-3747. All cancellations require 72-hour prior notification for refunds. More information can be found on our website, www.scvas.org.

Silent Hunters: An Introduction to Local Owls with Karen Hoyt

Come join us for two nights of exploring the mystery of the silent hunters of the night. Focus will be on identification and natural history of our 8 common species with a power point introduction and a feathered guest each class. Learn about what makes an owl so different from the hawks and falcons.

Dates: Tuesdays, 3/20 and 3/27, 7-9pm

Location: Conference Room, McClellan Ranch, Cupertino

Fee: \$25 members, \$30 non-members

Minimum: 15 students, Maximum: 24 students

Beginning Birding by Ear with Ron Arps

Learn to bird by ear and hone your skills at identification. Class discussions will focus on methods used to remember and identify bird sounds, such as descriptive terms or sketches of their sound patterns, then applied to bird recordings and learning the sounds of local species. On weekends, the class will practice live identification. This class is primarily designed for the beginner; a follow-up class will be for the more experienced birder.

Dates: Class: Thursdays, 3/29 & 4/5, 7-9pm; Field Trips: Saturdays, 3/31 & 4/7, 8-11am

Location: Class: Conference Room, McClellan Ranch, Cupertino; Field: McClellan Ranch Park; Stevens Creek Park

Fee: \$35 members, \$40 non-members

Minimum: 6 students, Maximum: 14 students

Songbirds with Lisa Myers

Songbirds, also known as Passerines, are some of the most colorful birds we can observe. Many songbirds return to our area each spring specifically to breed and raise their young, then migrate away to spend the winter in Mexico, Central and South America. During this course you'll learn about the beautiful songbirds that we can see only during the breeding season. You'll also listen for their songs as they try and attract a mate and learn to identify many of the birds coming into your yard. Also included is a field trip where we will go out and find songbirds including grosbeaks, orioles....

Dates: Class: Mondays, 4/9 and 4/16, 7:30-9 PM; Field Trip: Saturday 4/14 8:30-11:30 AM

Location: Conference Room, McClellan Ranch in Cupertino

Fee: \$40 members, \$45 non-members

Minimum: 8 students, Maximum: 24 students

Everything You Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Ask with Lisa Myers

Lisa will cover all those topics many birders are too shy to discuss. How do the different birds continue their species? Do birds have sex? Some males have many females,

but did you know that some females have many males? Who helps with the child rearing and who leaves town!? There are all kinds of fancy words to describe the details behind avian seduction and reproduction; spring is the time of year when birds return to our area specifically to reproduce. Don't be shy; sign up now and learn something new!

Dates: Class: Mondays, 4/23, 4/30 & 5/7, 7:30-9 PM;

Field Trip: Saturday 5/5 8 AM-12:30 PM

Location: Classes: Conference Room, McClellan Ranch in Cupertino; Field Trip: Picchetti Winery Open Space

Fee: \$55 members, \$60 non-members

Minimum: 8 students, Maximum: 24 students

General Membership Meeting "Santa Cruz County Forest Bird Monitoring Program"

with David Suddjian

Wednesday, Apr. 18

Palo Alto Arts Center,

Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Doors open 7:30: program 8:00

What's going on with our forest bird populations? Which species are most numerous and widespread, and which are the rarest? Forests are a primary feature of the Santa Cruz Mountains, but little attention has been given to long term changes in populations of breeding birds in our varied forest habitats. The Santa Cruz County Forest Bird Monitoring Program (FBMP) is a grassroots study developed in 2002 by the Santa Cruz Bird Club to track bird populations in the county's forest lands. Project coordinator David Suddjian will share highlights of the project's first five years, looking at preliminary population trends and sharing insights on habitat associations and bird distribution. The FBMP was supported by grants from SCVAS from 2003-2005, and the study included several routes along the Santa Clara County border.



Left: Two Scholarship winners get ready to embark on their Whale Watching Adventure in Monterey Bay in January. Thanks to funds raised by last year's Birdathon, the Young Audubon program was able to award scholarships to 10 participants this year.

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl through Egrets

In the Palo Alto area, goose flocks moving from the Muni GC down to Shoreline Park often included the rarer geese. Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** there in November remained through the end of January (m.ob.) and were joined by two additional birds on 9 Jan (MJM) through the end of the period. An immature was at the Coyote Creek GC 6-11 Dec (MJM, SCR). Another immature, reported in Upper Penitencia Creek Park on 23 Dec (MJM), remained at least through 7 Jan (m.ob.). Five birds were seen at the San Pedro Recharge Ponds in Morgan Hill on 25 Dec (JPa), a seldom birded spot. An immature was irregular at Calero Reservoir CP 28 and 31 Dec (AV, MMR). Another bird was at the Parkway Lakes on 30 Dec (JAC *vide* AV). An immature **Snow Goose** was seen at the Gates of Heaven Cemetery, Cupertino, 2 Dec (LSu). Two birds were at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCWRA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 7 Dec and one was seen there again on 16 Jan (RWR, FV). An adult and immature joined the Palo Alto flock (noted above) on 13 Dec (MMR), first seen at Shoreline and recorded through the period (m.ob.). Two birds were along Zanker Road in Alviso on 2 Jan (DWe). A **Ross's Goose** was found at the SCWRA ponds on 7 Dec (RWR, FV). One to two birds were at the Coyote Creek GC 9-11 Dec (SCR, MJM) and one wonders if the single bird at Calero Reservoir on 15 Dec (AV) was one of these birds. Two birds showed up at the New Chicago Marsh on 4 Jan (MMR) and remained through at least 13 Jan (m.ob.). The adult **Brant**, found in November in the Palo Alto area, remained through 9 Jan (m.ob.). A single **Tundra Swan**, seen at Grant Lake on 6 Jan (JT), stayed only until 8 Jan (v.ob.). The male **Eurasian Wigeon**, found at the Palo Alto estuary in November, remained only to 16 Dec (m.ob.). Another male was found in Salt Pond A1 on 11 Dec (MJM) and one to two

birds were there at least through 3 Jan (v.ob.). A male was found on Salt Pond A16 on 17 Dec (MJM) and was seen irregularly through 13 Jan (AJ et al.), when it was accompanied by a female. Six males were seen on Salt Pond A2W on 18 Dec (WGB) and a few have remained there through the period (v.ob.). One bird was seen at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) on 6 and 9 Jan (LMY et al., RKe, PKe). Across Artesian Slough, one to two males were seen 20-27 Jan (MDo, WGB, MJM). A single male was seen at the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 29 Jan (RWR, FV).

Winter brought a number of interesting species, including a Pelagic Cormorant, Rough-legged Hawk, Solitary Sandpiper, Plumbeous Vireo, and a Black-and-White Warbler

Blue-winged Teal, have continued in Adobe Creek in the Palo Alto FCB with a peak count of six birds on 7 Jan (LMY et al.). Two males were at the SCWRA ponds in Gilroy on 7 Dec and one was seen there on 29 Jan (RWR, FV). A single male was found on Crittenden Marsh on 15 Dec (DBr, KPr) and 3 Jan (MMR). One to 10 birds were at a stormwater pond at Moffett Field 18 Dec-24 Jan (MMR, WGB). A female at the Coyote Creek GC on 30 Dec (MJM) is the first for the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC. On 6 Jan (RP, AV et al.), a male was seen at the Ogier Avenue ponds, where seldom found. A male was found on the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 15 Jan (JT). A '**Eurasian' Green-winged Teal** was reported on Stevens Creek adjacent to Shoreline Park on 30 Dec (DBr, KPr). The 303 **Redhead** found on the Alviso salt ponds on 17 Dec (MMR) is probably a record count. Prodigious numbers remained here into January. Away from the Bay, 5 were a good count on Coyote Reservoir on 1 Jan (LA). An apparent male **Common X Barrow's Golden-eye** was seen at the Santa Clara Valley

Water District (SCVWD) ponds on 4 Jan (JRy). The **Barrow's Goldeneyes** continued at Shoreline Lake during the period with a peak count of 4 males and a female on 28 Dec (GL). An immature **Red-throated Loon**, the first found this winter, was a one-day wonder at the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 6 Jan (LMY et al.). An immature **Common Loon**, at a percolation pond near Almaden Expressway and Hwy 85, found on 17 Jan (SCR), was also the first of the winter but remained through 21 Jan (v.ob.). Two **Pelagic Cormorants** were seen on Salt Pond A2W on 18 Dec (WGB) and at least one of these birds remained through 16 Jan (v.ob.). Single **American Bitterns** included one at the SCVWD ponds on 7 Dec (AV), another at the Calabazas ponds on 13 Dec (FV et al.), a third at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 20 Dec (MJM), and a fourth at the Charleston Road marsh on 14 Jan (RWR). A **Cattle Egret** was seen again near the Palo Alto Duck Pond on 14 Jan (KS), but has not been refound.

Hawks through Goatsuckers

An **Osprey** found in San Antonio Valley on 2 Jan (WGB, CJC) is a first for the Mt. Hamilton CBC. An adult **Bald Eagle**, apparently wintering again at Calero Reservoir, was first seen on 2 Dec (AV) and has been found irregularly through the period. One found over San Bruno Avenue in the Coyote Valley on 30 Dec (BB-W et al.) may have been the Calero bird. One seen at the north end of Anderson Reservoir the same day was different (SCR, RHe, JMy). **Ferruginous Hawks** were found widely during the period. An immature near San Martin on 9 Dec (SCR) was the southernmost bird found in the Santa Clara Valley. A single bird was found in the Coyote Valley on 11 Dec (RWR, FV) and were found irregularly through 22 Jan (v.ob.) including two birds on 22 Jan (RWR, FV). Eastside birds include one on the Mt. Hamilton Road on 17 Dec (BB-W), another on Coyote Ridge on 30 Dec (SCR, RHe), and 3-4 birds along Metcalf Road and the San Felipe Valley 30 Dec-23 Jan (MMR, MJM), including 2 dark-morph birds. In the interior of the

Field Notes *cont'd*

Diablo Range, two adults and an immature were seen in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM). Less expected was a single bird over the ITT towers in Palo Alto on 6 Jan (DSt). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen near the Coyote Creek GC on 9 Dec (SCR). It seems we see this species every third year or so. A **Prairie Falcon** on the west side of the valley at Calero Reservoir on 1 Dec (AV) and 1 Jan (KPa) is a location where wintering birds are occasionally found. One or two **Snowy Plovers** have been found along the eastern side of the Alviso Slough Trail on 13-19 Jan (MMR, MJM, RGJ). Surveys in closed Alviso salt ponds tallied 20 birds on 13 Jan (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was found northwest of the Coyote Creek GC in a small borrow pit on 30 Dec (MJM) and was seen there through 1 Jan (m.ob). This is the first winter record for county. Previously, this sandpiper has been found only from late April to early May in the spring and late July to September in the fall. **Lesser Yellowlegs**, continuing in the New Chicago Marsh, were seen on 14-17 Dec (v.ob.) with at least 5 there on 14 Dec (MJM). Two **Ruddy Turnstones** were found 18 Dec (MMR) on the San Francisquito Creek delta, just over the county line in San Mateo County. One to three **Sanderling** were seen in the eastern side of Salt Pond A8 on 1 Jan (MMR), in Salt Pond A16 on 9-24 Jan (RKe, PKe, m.ob.), and along the eastern Alviso Slough Trail on 13-30 Jan (MMR, MJM, RGJ, v.ob.). These birds may occasionally visit from closed salt ponds to the west, where 10 were counted on 14 Dec (MJM) and 36 were tallied on 13 Jan (MMR, MJM, RGJ). A male **Ruff** has been in the New Chicago Marsh during the period, although hard to find (m.ob.). This is likely a male first found during the fall period. A variety of immature **Glaucous Gulls** have been seen in Salt Pond A16 and the New Chicago Marsh. An immature, possibly 2nd- or 3rd- winter was first seen on 7 Jan (RWR et al.). A 2nd-winter bird found the next day (MMR) appeared different. Through the end of the month, at least 2 1st-winter birds were found (v.ob.). Thirty-four **Black**

Skimmers were found on an island in the northwest corner of Salt Pond A1 on 18 Dec (WGB). Some of these birds were seen in Charleston Slough on 6-10 Jan (v.ob.). A **Greater Road-runner** was alongside the foothills on Hellyer Avenue on 30 Dec (HH *fide* AV). A **Short-eared Owl** was found in the general vicinity of Byxbee Park on 6 Dec (RWR, FV, RP). A second owl was found here on 24 Dec (DWe, CMacI, JE) and one or both have been seen here through the end of the period. Additionally, 2-3 birds were seen on 19 Jan (MMR) on the south side of Coyote Slough near Salt Ponds A9 and A15. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard from Las Animas Road on 30 Dec (MMR, HH). This location, well away from where birds breed in the Santa Cruz Mountains, supports occasional wintering birds, but our knowledge of this species' true status in the Diablo Range is vague. A **Common Poorwill** seen on the Mt. Hamilton Road on 30 Jan was probably an overwintering bird (ELG).

Woodpeckers through Solitaires

Lewis's Woodpeckers have been reported in San Antonio Valley with observations from 29 Dec to 7 Jan (DBr et al., WGB, RTr), and a high count of 58 on the Mt. Hamilton CBC on 2 Jan (WGB). The same day, 49 were tallied in the Isabel Valley (MMR, MJM). This is an exceptional winter for this woodpecker in the interior of the Diablo Range. One bird was seen in the Santa Cruz Mountains on 1 Jan (DLSu), on private land not far from Atherton Peak. The immature male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** found in November at Ed Levin CP has remained through the period (m.ob.). A **Pileated Woodpecker** was calling near Hunting Hollow in Henry Coe SP on 28 Dec (JY, AL). Although we have occasionally encountered birds transiting the Diablo Range, none have remained. Another bird, heard in Hatfield Canyon in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains on 1 Jan (DLSu), is farther south in this range than all previous records, and suggests that this woodpecker is successfully extending its range. A **Plumbeous Vireo** seen along the Guadalupe River Trail on 7

Dec (JPa) is just the 5th county record. Previous records have been between 13 Oct and 29 Nov. There have been more swallows found this winter than in the past. **Tree Swallows** have been found widely and through the period with a high count of 180 birds over Salt Pond A16 on 15 Jan (MJM). Records of **Violet-green Swallows** include 2-3 at Lake Cunningham on 11 Dec (MJM), 3 at Coyote Reservoir on 25 Dec (LA), one at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 6 Jan (RP, AV et al.), one at the Alviso EEC on 13 Jan (AJ et al.), and one at Moffett Field on 17 Jan (MMR). The only **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were four seen over the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 17 Dec (WGB, JT). Records of **Barn Swallows** include 2 at the Palo Alto Baylands on 15 Dec (MDo), 6 over the San Jose Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 17 Dec (WGB, JT), 2 over the Palo Alto FCB on 1 Jan (MMR, MJM), 1-2 at the Alviso EEC on 11-12 Jan (MJM), and one at the Palo Alto



*Black-and-white
Warbler
Bonnie Bedford-
White*

Duck Pond on 13 Jan (AJ et al.). A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** has continued in a Los Altos neighborhood through the period (KHt). Other records away from breeding areas include one at the Palo Alto Hills Golf & Country Club on 18 Dec (AME, HMCD) and one in a Los Gatos yard on 1 Jan (KPa). A bird at Page Mill and Skyline on 18 Dec (GHa) may be part of a resident population as is the case of 4 found near Loma Prieta on 30 Dec (JD *fide* AV). A Canyon Wren was found in Grizzly Gulch, Henry Coe SP on 28 Dec (JY, AL). One to two **House Wrens** have wintered along Stevens Creek below La Avenida with observations 6 Dec 06-17 Jan 07 (v.ob.) extending the fall records there. One at the Alviso EEC on 14 Jan (MMR, MJM) also is a continuation of fall records. Another wren was found

continued on Page 10

2006 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Species	SJ 12/17/06	PA 12/18/06	MtH 1/02/07	Cal-MH 12/30/06
Greater White-fronted Goose	-	3	-	1
Tundra Swan	-	-	-	-
Snow Goose	-	2	-	-
Ross's Goose	-	-	-	-
Brant	-	1	-	-
Cackling Goose	1	7	-	16
Canada Goose	1388	1223	8	808
Wood Duck	14	4	134	87
Gadwall	89	362	37	73
Eurasian Wigeon	1	8	-	-
American Wigeon	436	3242	163	31
Mallard	1122	1124	109	651
Blue-winged Teal	-	9	-	1
Cinnamon Teal	99	159	-	3
Northern Shoveler	4148	3674	3	20
Northern Pintail	122	382	-	-
Green-winged Teal (American)	620	899	4	14
(Eurasian)	-	-	-	-
Canvasback	399	2353	-	14
Redhead	149	21	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	35	63	22	136
Greater Scaup	31	69	-	48
Lesser Scaup	392	1137	-	28
aythya, sp	128	6655	-	-
Surf Scoter	6	79	-	-
Bufflehead	350	347	111	176
Common Goldeneye	54	119	2	79
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	3	-	-
Hooded Merganser	16	41	-	12
Common Merganser	23	30	2	142
Red-breasted Merganser	49	8	-	-
Ruddy Duck	7268	6445	38	130
duck, sp	221	2200	7	-
Ring-necked Pheasant	19	15	-	2
Wild Turkey	158	9	-	277
California Quail	42	155	486	388
Common Loon	-	1	-	-
Pied-billed Grebe	207	294	28	74
Horned Grebe	6	11	-	1
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	-
Eared Grebe	1548	559	-	85
Western Grebe	57	9	-	1
Clark's Grebe	22	9	-	4
aechmophorus, sp	35	12	-	-
American White Pelican	97	425	-	50
Brown Pelican	-	22	-	-
Pelagic Cormorant	-	2	-	-
Double-crested Cormorant	901	529	1	276
American Bittern	-	-	-	-
Great Blue Heron	42	28	8	20
Great Egret	105	129	2	26
Snowy Egret	195	85	-	17
Green Heron	4	4	-	7
Black-crowned Night-Heron	317	74	-	14
Turkey Vulture	208	22	4	175
Osprey	1	1	-	7
White-tailed Kite	36	40	-	88
Bald Eagle	3	-	1	2
Northern Harrier	40	46	3	24
Sharp-shinned Hawk	11	7	9	12
Cooper's Hawk	14	14	-	15
accipiter, sp	-	1	3	-
Red-shouldered Hawk	34	23	5	65
Red-tailed Hawk	147	126	48	159

Species	SJ 12/17/06	PA 12/18/06	MtH 1/02/07	Cal-MH 12/30/06
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	-	-	-	-
Ferruginous Hawk	2	-	6	5
buteo, sp	-	1	-	-
Golden Eagle	16	1	7	9
American Kestrel	74	27	19	85
Merlin	6	6	1	4
Peregrine Falcon	7	8	-	4
Prairie Falcon	1	-	3	3
Clapper Rail	-	4	-	-
Virginia Rail	35	8	-	5
Sora	45	15	-	3
Common Moorhen	33	6	-	9
American Coot	11,204	11,016	733	1724
Black-bellied Plover	38	1165	-	-
Pacific Golden Plover	-	-	-	-
Snowy Plover	9	-	-	-
Semipalmated Plover	7	284	-	-
Killdeer	239	133	10	172
Black-necked Stilt	912	237	-	7
American Avocet	3848	1912	-	1
Greater Yellowlegs	36	47	8	5
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	1	-	-
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	-	1
Willet	313	2236	-	-
Spotted Sandpiper	3	4	-	9
Whimbrel	2	1	-	-
Long-billed Curlew	180	85	-	-
Marbled Godwit	233	2610	-	-
Ruddy Turnstone	-	2	-	-
Red Knot	-	-	-	-
Sanderling	21	1	-	-
Western Sandpiper	3903	11,958	-	-
Least Sandpiper	869	521	-	15
Dunlin	264	1511	-	-
calidrid, sp	97	9850	-	3
Ruff	1	-	-	-
Short-billed Dowitcher	23	22	-	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	329	169	-	21
dowitcher, sp	886	1835	-	-
Wilson's Snipe	33	18	3	41
Red Phalarope	-	-	-	-
Bonaparte's Gull	211	25	-	-
Mew Gull	661	7	-	23
Ring-billed Gull	1483	457	-	132
California Gull	7642	68	-	711
Herring Gull	3426	92	-	546
Thayer's Gull	23	6	-	17
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	-	-	-
Western Gull	27	67	-	-
Glaucous-winged Gull	147	79	-	4
Western x Glaucous-w Gull	-	4	-	-
Herring x Glaucous-w Gull	-	-	-	1
gull, sp	5246	975	-	384
Forster's Tern	66	119	-	-
Black Skimmer	-	34	-	-
Rock Pigeon	2359	1057	-	1098
Band-tailed Pigeon	30	204	50	240
Mourning Dove	386	165	96	560
Greater Roadrunner	-	-	-	1
Barn Owl	4	4	-	4
Western Screech-Owl	13	4	9	25
Great Horned Owl	12	3	-	16
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	-	3	2
Burrowing Owl	12	6	-	3

Species	SJ 12/17/06	PA 12/18/06	MtH 1/02/07	Cal-MH 12/30/06	Species	SJ 12/17/06	PA 12/18/06	MtH 1/02/07	Cal-MH 12/30/06
Short-eared Owl	-	1	-	-	Yellow Warbler	2	-	-	-
Long-eared Owl	-	-	-	-	Yellow-rumped Warbler (form ?)	1052	464	3	1598
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	1	(Audubon's)	360	509	5	137
White-throated Swift	48	1	-	7	(Myrtle)	15	24	4	29
Anna's Hummingbird	291	269	31	353	Townsend's Warbler	35	116	-	11
Belted Kingfisher	22	7	-	29	Black and White Warbler	1	-	-	-
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	152	-	Hermit Warbler	-	1	-	-
Acorn Woodpecker	84	106	220	229	Black-throated Gray Warbler	-	2	-	-
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	-	-	-	Hermit Warbler	-	-	-	-
Red-breasted Sapsucker	11	9	11	7	Northern Waterthrush	-	2	-	-
Nuttall's Woodpecker	76	63	20	119	Common Yellowthroat	82	61	-	2
Downy Woodpecker	9	8	2	14	Western Tanager	1	4	-	2
Hairy Woodpecker	2	18	14	19	Spotted Towhee	61	121	119	136
Northern (Red-Shafted) Flicker	170	109	81	163	California Towhee	229	249	87	242
(Yellow-Shafted) Flicker	-	-	-	-	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	15	-	-	48
(intergrade)	1	1	1	2	Lark Sparrow	3	-	56	24
Pileated Woodpecker	-	CW	-	-	Savannah Sparrow	306	80	134	170
Black Phoebe	395	220	26	219	Fox Sparrow	62	66	90	30
Say's Phoebe	36	12	5	36	(Slate Colored)	-	-	5	-
Loggerhead Shrike	33	7	3	13	(form?)	-	-	1	-
Hutton's Vireo	4	37	2	23	Song Sparrow	364	169	2	119
Steller's Jay	122	214	16	195	Lincoln's Sparrow	92	41	1	31
Western Scrub-Jay	290	377	375	576	White-throated Sparrow	2	2	-	3
Yellow-billed Magpie	138	-	210	155	Golden-crowned Sparrow	981	1223	393	998
American Crow	548	366	91	889	White-crowned Sparrow	2510	876	327	1405
Common Raven	133	134	38	46	sparrow, sp	21	12	28	70
Horned Lark	110	-	-	196	Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	-
Tree Swallow	36	-	-	7	Sage Sparrow	-	-	3	-
Violet-green Swallow	15	-	-	-	Grasshopper Sparrow	-	-	-	4
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	4	-	-	-	Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	505	842	1134	547
Barn Swallow	7	1	-	-	Slate-colored)	-	1	-	2
swallow sp	4	1	-	3	Black-headed Grosbeak	-	-	-	1
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	206	464	6	309	Red-winged Blackbird	768	419	158	1608
Oak Titmouse	46	163	152	222	Tricolored Blackbird	23	-	73	12
Bushtit	821	736	69	651	Western Meadowlark	533	710	66	404
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	3	-	4	Brewer's Blackbird	406	96	317	1081
White-breasted Nuthatch	33	24	71	86	Great-tailed Grackle	-	-	-	CW
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	10	2	-	Brown-headed Cowbird	26	1	-	202
Brown Creeper	1	12	4	7	blackbird, sp	167	23	288	478
Rock Wren	2	1	1	35	Purple Finch	1	15	12	46
Bewick's Wren	41	141	16	85	House Finch	657	608	62	709
Canyon Wren	2	-	-	-	Red Crossbill	-	-	-	-
House Wren	1	1	-	-	Pine Siskin	-	-	4	-
Marsh Wren	95	34	-	4	Lesser Goldfinch	125	222	91	353
Winter Wren	-	-	-	-	Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	18	103	-
American Dipper	1	-	-	-	American Goldfinch	121	50	2	211
Golden-crowned Kinglet	27	6	7	CW	goldfinch sp.	-	-	4	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	438	447	42	340	House Sparrow	214	61	10	59
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	1	-	-	Nutmeg Mannikin	-	-	-	16
Western Bluebird	124	80	288	182	Total Species	172	171	95	149
Townsend's Solitaire	-	-	-	1	Total	85,317	97,671	8,297	33,855
Hermit Thrush	92	122	13	113	Key: sp = species undetermined				
American Robin	1393	1946	106	3118	CW = Count Week				
Varied Thrush	124	147	82	668	SJ = San Jose: compiled by Kirsten Holmquist				
Wrentit	18	88	45	77	PA = Palo Alto: compiled by Al Eisner				
Northern Mockingbird	92	26	-	76	MtH = Mount Hamilton: compiled by Bob Hirt				
Sage Trasher	-	-	-	-	Cal-MH = Calero-Morgan Hill: compiled by Ann Verdi				
California Thrasher	7	20	17	20	Data entry and chart format by Bonnie Bedford-White.				
European Starling	1987	1175	304	2880					
American Pipit	197	159	-	39					
Cedar Waxwing	405	422	-	712					
Phainopepla	-	-	3	-					
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	4	-	1					
Nashville Warbler	-	-	-	-					

Field Notes *cont'd.*

in Upper Penitencia Creek Park 19-22 Dec (MMR, KO). An **American Dipper** was found at Alum Rock Park on 5 Jan (AV). One to two birds were seen along Stevens Creek above the Mt. Eden Road turnoff 15-28 Jan (MJM, v.ob.). There were continuing records of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** in scattered locations, including: one at Rancho San Antonio OSP on 8 Dec (BC), 1 along Stevens Creek by the Deep Cliff GC on 15 Dec (DJ, CT), 3 along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 17 Dec (WGB, JT), 2 in Los Trancos OSP on 18 Dec (ViT, JB), and 8 at Canada del Oro OSP on 29 Dec (G&MH). January records included: 2 at Monte Bello OSP on 1 Jan (MMR), 4 in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM), 1 near Table Mountain above Stevens Creek (GHa), and 4 in Henry Coe SP on 13 Jan (JY, AL). Wintering **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** included one along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 seen on 17 Dec (WGB, JT) and another found at the ITT lands near the Renzel Marsh in Palo Alto 18 Dec 06-30 Jan 07 (RGJ, v.ob.). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was found near the Stiles Ranch Trailhead on 30 Dec (GHa) for a first record for the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC.

Phainopepla through Goldfinches

Two male **Phainopepla** were seen in the San Antonio Valley on 2 Jan (WGB) and another male was found in the Isabel Valley the same day (MMR, MJM). **Yellow Warblers** attempted to winter near the Alviso EEC: 2 were at the butterfly garden on 14 Dec and one was at the bend of the entrance road (MMR, MJM, RWR, FV). Two birds remained at least through 5 Jan (MJM) and one bird has been seen through 13 Jan (v.ob.). An immature female **Black-throated Gray Warbler** found along Stevens Creek below La Avenida in the fall has remained through the early winter having been seen through 18 Jan (v.ob.). An immature male **Black-and-White Warbler** was found in Upper Penitencia Creek Park on 17 Dec (MA, AV, RP) and was seen there through 7 Jan (m.ob.). One to three **Northern Waterthrushes** have been

found in this period. A secretive bird in the Charleston Road marsh, perhaps here for its fifth winter, was seen on 18 Dec (RGJ) and 3 Jan (MJM). In nearby Stevens Creek below La Avenida, two slightly different birds were seen on 18 Dec (MMR) and one or perhaps both have been seen through 18 Jan. It is possible that these are all different birds or there may be some duplication. They ought to wear name tags. It has been an exceptional winter for **Western Tanagers**, at least 10 birds have been found. Most winters we encounter fewer than 5 or so birds. Four **Grasshopper Sparrows** were found on Coyote Ridge on 30 Dec (SCR, RHe). These birds may be wintering regularly in these extensive grasslands. Two **Swamp Sparrows** were found this winter: one at the Palo Alto Baylands on 4 Dec (MMR, MJM) and the other along the Alviso Slough on 30-31 Jan (RKe, PKe, v.ob.). Eleven **White-throated Sparrows** were found over the period, which is slightly higher than in recent winters. A surprising female or immature **Black-headed Grosbeak** was found in the Coyote Valley on 30 Dec (BB-W et al.) and is the first record for the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC. **Great-tailed Grackles** have shown up occasionally at the Coyote Creek GC during this period, including a pair on 9-10 Dec (SCR, MJM, ViT), again on 1 Jan (KPa), and the male on 22 Jan (MJM). Where are they the rest of the time? Just outside the county, an adult male **Hooded Oriole** has remained at a Menlo Park feeder this winter, just as it did last winter (PB). The first sign this winter of **Pine Siskins** were two near Atherton Peak in the southwestern county on 1 Jan (DLSu). Twenty or so birds have arrived at a yard on Black Road 9-12 Jan (*fide* KPa). It seems to be a good winter for **Lawrence's Goldfinches** in the interior of the Diablo Range. On 2 Jan, 49 were tallied in the Isabel Valley (MMR, MJM) and another 13 in the San Antonio Valley (WGB). The major surprise, however, has been observations of roosting birds at Monte Bello OSP (GHa). Small numbers have been seen here since August. The roost seemed to develop in November and it has increased in size through the winter. A peak count

occurred on 9 Jan, when 42 birds were tallied as they left the roost. This behavior is probably typical of the species, but is unprecedented for the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Observers: Linda Adams (LA), Mike Azevedo (MA), Bonnie Bedford-White (BB-W), Josh Bennett (JB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Penelope Bowen (PB), Debbi Brusco (DBr), Brent Campos (BC), Jack Cole (JAC), Charles Coston (CJC), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Judy Donaldson (JD), Al Eisner (AME), John Estrell (JE), Elinor Gates (ELG), Garth Harwood (GHa), Rick Herder (RHe), Howard Higley (HH), Karen Hoyt (KHt), Cait & Mike Hutnik (C&MH), Debi Jamison (DJ), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Garrett Lau (GL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Chris MacIntosh (CMacI), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Hugh McDevitt (HMCD), Jean Myers (JMy), Lisa Myers (LMy), Kris Olson (KO), Richard Page (RP), Kathy Parker (KPa), Kay Partelow (KPr), Janna Pauser (JPa), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jennifer Rycenga (JRY), Ken Schneider (KS), Dick Stovel (DSt), David Suddjian (DLSu), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Jim Thomas (JT), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Ruth Troetschler (RTr), Cheryl Turner (CT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), and James Yurchenco (JY).

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

Special Notice

**Cheesemans Ecology Safaris:
Painting with Watercolors in
Trinidad and Tobago
April 21st - May 6th 2007**

Wildlife artist and naturalist Edward Rooks invites you to join him on a painting tour of tropical Trinidad and Tobago. Day trips led by local nature guides. No previous painting experience needed. Contact (408) 741-5330 or info@Cheesemans.com for details.

"Go Guided" - The EASIEST Way to join the 2007 Spring Birdathon & Fundraiser

We are looking for folks of all birding abilities to join one of our four-hour or 24-hour Guided Birdathon teams below. All you have to do is raise the minimum requirement of \$30 (but we hope you will raise more!), grab your binoculars and go birding! You are eligible to compete for all prizes. Beginners can out-compete experts for prizes in this Birdathon by raising more money. Space on Guided Birdathon teams is limited, so call the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747 early to register. For youth under 17, check out our special Youth Birdathon (see page). The registration deadline is one week before the trip date. Each leader will contact you with complete trip details.

The Shrikes

Dave Cook
4-hour Birdathon
Sunday, April 8

For birders of all levels, this team gives you a chance to make your mark by raising money for SCVAS's education programs. Join Dave, an experienced and enthusiastic field trip leader, on an exciting tour of several spots known for their abundance of bird species. This four-hour birdathon will take less time out of your busy weekend, plus it starts at 1 PM for those that like to sleep in (you will still see plenty of great birds)! Expect to see about 50 species, not too bad for an afternoon's work!

The Snipe Hunters

with Laurie West-Roberts
24-hour Birdathon
Saturday, April 7

Ever been on a Snipe hunt? With this team, you may just see one (they really do exist!), along with Burrowing Owls and Golden Eagles too. Beginners are welcome and binoculars will be supplied, if needed. Laurie (with some help from Bob Power, SCVAS Executive Director) will guide the team through a variety of habitats throughout Santa Clara County to find all the likely suspects. Starting early, they will share a potluck lunch and most likely continue birding until dusk. Expect to see about 80 species.

The Bob-O-Links

with Bob Power
24-hour Birdathon
Saturday, April 14

No bush will be left unsearched with Bob Power leading this hunt for bird species. Not only is he the Executive Director of SCVAS, but he is also an experienced trip leader and birding instructor known to crack a few jokes to keep birders on their toes. Bob's patient and easy-going style will please birders of all levels. You are sure to count this among your favorite big-days of birding. Bob expects to see over 100 species while birding pre-dawn to dusk.

The Wacky-Capped Chickadees

with Debbie Thompson
4-hour Birdathon
Sunday, April 15

Pleasant birding is the order of the day with the SCVAS Board Member, Debbie Thompson. Debbie will go to a few nearby "birdy" sites to find as many species as possible. This is a great short Birdathon for birders of all levels that are too darn busy to spend the entire day birding and running around, but still want to join in the competition. We will start early and bird until lunchtime. Expect to see over 50 species.

The Varied Twitchers

with Mike Rogers
24-hour Birdathon
Saturday, April 21

This is our high intensity 24-Hour Birdathon for intermediate and advanced birders. It's a great opportunity to join one of the Bay Area's premier birders, Mike Rogers, for a full big-day of birding that everyone only dreams about. Start with owling in the early morning and then bird all day until sunset. This team won the 24-hour most species award several years running. Finding 165 bird species last year provided these team members with well-earned bragging rights!



The De-duck-tions
with Matthew Dodder
24-hour Birdathon
Saturday, April 21

Matthew has been teaching birding classes for many years at the Palo Alto Adult School (check them out) and is sure to deliver an exciting big-day! He will visit some favorite birding spots to locate great birds. All levels of birders are encouraged to join this team. Expect to see over 100 species on a tour of the county. Visit Matthew's web site at www.birdguy.net for a list of his other upcoming field trips (and more!).

The Rock Wrens

with Bob Hirt
24-hour Birdathon
Sunday, April 22

Join long-time expert birder and SCVAS President, Bob Hirt, for an active day in the field. They'll get an early start for owls in the western foothills, zigzag their way down to the Bay for ducks and shorebirds, and then up the eastern slope for greatest habitat diversity, ending after dusk. This team usually gets a lot of pledge dollars per species so will try to maximize the species count. Expect to see over 110 species.

Birdathon

from Page 1

5. ***Bird with your team*** on your Birdathon Day and have fun!
6. ***Collect your pledges***, and be sure to turn in the money you've raised, pledge sheets, and results form to the SCVAS office by May 12, to be eligible for prizes.
7. ***Attend the free Birdathon Awards Dinner on Tuesday, June 4***, and find out if you've won a prize. Participate in bird contests and games and maybe win another prize. Honors also go to the "best bird" found and the "most species" seen. Share Birdathon stories with other participants over a relaxed, informal dinner. Feel great that you have helped fund SCVAS conservation efforts and youth environmental education, and had such a good time birding!

SCVAS mitigation monitoring: Tracking the Promises - Craig Breon

The year was 2000—if memory serves. I stood on the Silicon Valley Boulevard Bridge in southeast San Jose, looking downstream along Coyote Creek. Large stands of *Arundo Donax*—a nasty invasive species in our creeks—crowded out the native riparian plants that so much of our wildlife depend upon. Then, it struck me, “Wasn’t that *Arundo* supposed to have been removed as part of the mitigation for this bridge construction?”

So I wrote to the San Jose Planning Department, asking for documents showing that Shea Homes had fulfilled their mitigation requirements for the nearby development known as Basking Ridge, of which the bridge was a part. No response. So I contacted the Fish and Game Department, and they wrote to the City. Next, I was copied on a letter from the City to Shea Homes asking for their mitigation documents. Obviously, the City did not have them. The response from Shea Homes was amusing—stating that they would now begin their mitigation monitoring (that’s about five years after they should have started). They also acknowledged that they had not done some wetlands mitigation required on the site.

The happy ending to this little story is that the riparian and wetland restorations were completed. However, that incident got me thinking about how often we might be losing resources as a result of unfulfilled promises by cities and developers. Unfortunately, I believe the answer to that question is “quite often.” Without slandering the entire development community, it is fair to say that environmental protection is generally not high on their list of priorities, except as they are forced to consider it in order to proceed with their project. So it should come as no surprise that often promises made in order to get their permits go unfulfilled, or are done poorly.

This forms the basis of my current project with SCVAS. How can a small conservation organization find the broken promises, and, if possible, recover some of the resources lost? Let me relate a few of the lessons learned in my first couple

months of working on this.

Lesson One: If someone does not respond to your emails or phone calls, they probably have something to hide.

I’m not expecting a quick response to every call—none of us do that. However, when you make five calls over the course of a week, each time leaving your phone number and email address, and the person is not out sick or on vacation—something’s afoot.

This is happening in Morgan Hill with the Institute Golf Course. Send an email question—no response. Leave a voicemail asking to meet with a planner—no response. You can just imagine that after the first call, some planner was saying to himself, “Oh crap...he’s back...and we’re in trouble...let’s not respond while we try to figure out how to look like we’ve been doing our jobs.”

In the case of the Institute—which many of you will remember as the golf course illegally built by John Fry and

others in southern Morgan Hill—it turns out that, by my calculations, they are out of compliance with at least 28 of the 39 mitigation measures required of them when their project was approved in 1994 (and that’s giving them the benefit of the doubt on some issues). Further, it appears that either or both the Institute folks and the City staff are trying to undermine some of those required mitigation measures.

Lesson Two: The answers are going to be murky.

I claimed in a letter to the San Jose City Council that 12.6 acres of required riparian habitat was missing in the area of the Evergreen Specific Plan. I had some documentation for our past efforts at SCVAS to support that claim. Staff at first did not respond, saying that they needed to research the issue. Months later came an answer saying that some or all of the mitigation was done, and they had aerial photos and other documentation to prove it. After more document research and a field trip with a planner to the area, it seems we know the answer. The mitigation project was never done, but two creek trails were built, and some of

continued on Page 14



South County Earth Day Festival!

Saturday, April 21

10am-2pm



* Live Animals * Fun for All Ages * Free Food * Free Activities *
Nature Organizations * Compost & Woodchip Giveaway



Christmas Hill Park in Gilroy

Call (408) 252-3740 or

visit www.scvas.org for details



Sponsored by SCVAS and the City of Gilroy



Burrowing Owls *continued from page 4*

State University, where she continued BUOW research and leadership.

Total Progress was not always possible

•By 1994 Mission College had adopted a BUOW Management Plan. Clysta Seney of SCVAS's Environmental Action Committee (EAC) reported that of 42 BUOWS translocated to IBM in south SJ, only 16 remained (some returned to Mission College)—providing evidence that the owls do not respond well to long-distant transport.

•SJ's BUOW Conservation Strategy Plan—three years in the making—was shot down by the City Council in 2000.—The People for Open Space in Alviso greatly improved their Master Plan (1994-8), but were not able to set aside any land for BUOWs.

•People for Open Space (1999-2000) prepared an Open Space (OS) Alternative plan for the Agnew development: the Council supported the developer.

•Jim Cuneen's bill to provide money for the DFG to develop a recovery strategy for a "species of concern", was vetoed by Governor.

•A Listing Petition to include the BUOW as an endangered species in California filed in 2002 was rejected by the DFG.

There were successes too.

•PG&Es Nortech Substation in Alviso—a "Primary Owl Area"—followed CBOC Mitigation Guidelines.

•Trulio's students—funded by a SCVAS court suit—monitored Santa Clara valley developments, allowing Craig Breon to challenge several negative declarations and require developers to purchase mitigation lands, but all out of county;

•Craig Breon convinced Cisco Systems to set aside 22%-30% of their Alviso acreage for BUOW;

•US Dataports (2001) promised to set aside 55 acres for BUOW in Alviso—the project has never gone forward and its prognosis is uncertain.

•NASA/Ames, after a 5-year fight to mitigate residential and industrial development, announced they had "preserved 81 acres for BUOW."

•Morgan Hill took 4 years to complete its developer-funded BUOW plan with incentives, (Compliance has not been determined.)

•San Jose passed a dinking ordinance in 2005 after 9 years.

•DFG required the BUOW Working Group to give more protection to the 13 remaining owls on the Mission College campus.

Where do we go from here?

Santa Clara County in partnership with SCVWD, DFG, and USFWS, is preparing a Habitat Conservation Plan designed to protect certain threatened and endangered species by determining in advance where development can go forward. Conservation measures specific to the Burrowing Owl will be addressed in this plan. Audubon member, Jan Hintermeister, and Audubon Executive Director, Bob Power, are representatives on this committee.

Assisted by a grant from California Audubon, our chapter is compiling a list of "best practices" for Burrowing Owl conservation and will share those best practices with land managers and agencies controlling Burrowing Owl habitat in Santa Clara County.

To aid in our Burrowing Owl conservation efforts, or to join the EAC, please contact Bob Power.

Member Nominations to the Board

Help shape your Chapter by applying to serve on the Board of Directors! The SCVAS Board welcomes nominations by petition from our members for our next Board election on June 20, 2007. 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 11 months of the election. Petitions are due in our office by **March 20, 2007.**

If elected, members will serve for 3-year terms beginning July 1, 2007. 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 a SCVAS committee or to devote time to an activity supportive of the Chapter. Contact the SCVAS office or any Board member with questions.



Calling all youth ages 7-17!

Help SCVAS raise money for all its education and conservation programs by participating in the

Youth Birdathon

For all youth that:

- ☞ Are between the ages of 7 and 17 ☞ Are passionate about the environment ☞
- ☞ Love birds ☞ Want to support environmental education ☞



Details about entry rules, prizes, and teams available on our website (www.scvas.org) or by calling the SCVAS office at 408-252-3747.



Events Calendar

cont'd from Page 3

Wednesday 4/4, 7:30 - 9 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers. Topic TBA. See website for details.

Mon. 4/9 & 4/16, 7:30-9M; Sat. 4/14, 8:30-11:30AM

Adult Education Class: Songbirds
Instructor: Lisa Myers (See page 5)

Tues. 4/10, 9:30 AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group.
Topic: American Kestrel

Sun. 4/15, 8-11AM

Bird Hike at Hidden Villa.

Explore the bird life of the oak woodlands at a time of year when bird song is at its peak. Contact Marc Sidel at (650) 949-9704, or communityprograms@hiddenvilla.org for more details

Wed. 4/18 7:30PM

General Meeting, Palo Alto Art Center (see Page 4)

Sat. 4/21; Earth Day Celebration in Gilroy (see Page 12)

Tues. 4/24, 6:30PM

Volunteer Appreciation Italian Dinner (pre-dinner bird walk at 4:30)
(See Volunteer Ventures on page 4)

Mon. 4/23, 4/30 & 5/7, 7:30-9M; Sat. 5/5, 8AM-12:30PM

Adult Education Class: Everything You Wanted to Know About Sex
Instructor: Lisa Myers (See page 5)

Wed. 4/25, 7:30pm

EAC @ McClellan Ranch Park.



Come check out all the New Books in the Nature Shop! If you can't find the book you are looking for, we will do our best to order it for you.

Mitigation Monitoring

continued from Page 12

the landscaping for those trails qualifies as riparian habitat. Nothing near 12.6 acres, but it still gives the staff an opportunity to say to their bosses that the mitigation was "partially successful." Time after time, I am finding partial compliance, or possible compliance, or arguable compliance, or delayed compliance accompanied by excuses.

Lesson Three: This is kind of fun.

As Kim Yuan-Farrell noted when she was working as an intern with SCVAS on mitigation monitoring three years ago, there's a distinctly detective element to this work. Find a clue and follow it. Look through documents for those few pieces of information that you might need, follow that up with phone calls, and things start to fall together.

Based on just the beginning, I think we will find many intriguing issues, make some substantial progress, and recover some valuable natural resources. Hopefully, we will also encourage others to do some of this same work in their communities.

Online News and Noteworthy:

We'd like to encourage you to check out our website, www.scvas.org, for more information on the following:

•**Local Audubon Chapters Win Greater Protection for Birds from Altamont Wind Turbines** - read about the recent settlement over this crucial issue.

•**Christmas Bird Count Summaries** - want more than just the numbers? Find out the details from each of the four SC County bird counts.

•**Spring Birdathon and Youth Birdathon** - get details on how to participate, register and teams to join.

And much more!

Audubon-at-Home: SCVAS' Bird Sanctuary Program

Spring Update: Making Bird-Friendly Landscaping Choices

Spring is almost upon us, and the time to think about new plantings is here! We would like to encourage you to use native California plants, especially those which are drought tolerant, whenever and wherever possible. Some hardy, safe, yet beautiful ideas are:

•**Madrone** - A beautiful, red-barked, drought-tolerant evergreen tree, providing food, shelter and nesting sites for birds and other wildlife.

•**Live, Blue or California Black Oaks** - Tolerant of dry conditions, these trees attract a wide variety of birds who eat insects or the acorns.

•**Manzanita** - A good dry climate evergreen, this shrub is a year-round source of food for birds. Its blossoms attract hummingbirds.

•**Toyon, or Christmas Berry** - Grows quickly and produces beautiful red berries that are a food source for many birds.

•**California Lilac** - Good drought tolerant shrub that produces lovely purple flowers.

•**Island Bush (or Showy Island) Snapdragon** - The bright red flowers are a favorite with hummingbirds.

•**Salvia (sage)** - There are many native species of sage that are drought tolerant and resistant to pests, take full sun, and are a good source of nectar.

These are just a few of the examples of the native California plants that make good landscaping options. However, if natives aren't an option, there are still a wide variety of non-natives that represent safe, bird-friendly alternatives. The most important things to consider (and watch out for) are toxicity and the likelihood of "escape" into natural areas. Some good options include Strawberry Tree, Lindheimer's Muhly Grass, Forsythia, and Brazilian Flame Bush.

There are many nurseries in our area that cater specifically to native plants. All of this information, as well as much much more, is available from the SCVAS office.

We thank these members for their generous contributions, December 2006 through January 2007:

Organizational Support:

All of us at Santa Clara Valley Audubon are deeply appreciative of the following members for their very generous support of our Mitigation Monitoring Project: Albion Environmental, Inc., California Native Plant Society, Carryl Breon, Mr. Keith Breon, Maryann Moise and Douglas Derwin, Jon Silver, Geoff and Colleen Tate, Alex and Leah Zaffaroni.

And a very special thank you to Doug and Gail Cheeseman, of Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, who donated their entire earnings from their 2007 Belize safari towards the Environmental Advocate fund.

Corporate Support:

We are honored to receive major funding from: Ebay Foundation for Program Support; Pacific Gas and Electric Company for our Diversity Initiative through their local community grants program.

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Everyone here at SCVAS would also like to extend a heartfelt "Thank You!" to the following people:

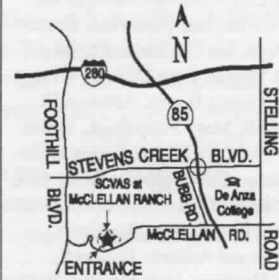
- **Grant Hoyt** for his many years as *The Avocet* editor
- Our Fall 2006 Education Intern, **Nancy Scarborough**

We wish you both the best of luck with whatever the future brings!

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RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422

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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.

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2007 Volume 54, Number 2

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