

THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May - June 2008

A Creek Runs Through It

By Bill Bousman

(Editor's Note: This is the 2nd of a multi-part series highlighting the connection between stream restoration and the restoration of bird populations. This is part of a collaborative effort by SCVAS, the Creeks Coalition, and other interested parties.)

In his short story "A River Runs Through It," Norman Maclean recounts a tale of his youth, filtered through his lifetime. It is a story that ends in tragedy, and his family's loss is somehow inextricably intertwined with the great trout streams of western Montana. Maclean evokes an era on the Montana frontier that is long past and in his writing we obtain both a sense of that beautiful country and the wildness that has been diminished. Wallace Stegner, in his essay on Maclean's story, concludes "Fisherman or not, who is not haunted by waters?" And that is where we are left, with water at the center, as it always has been in our dry country.

The creeks that run through the Santa Clara Valley are nothing like the iconic Big Blackfoot River of Montana. Most of our streams are small ones that once dried up in the summer and only showed their power in winter floods. There are fish that have learned to survive in this water feast or famine in our Mediterranean climate, and steelhead still swim upstream on Coyote Creek and the Guadalupe River each year. Intertwined in our history, we have used our creeks for water and we have used them as trash heaps. We have

dammed them, degraded them, and now, having seen what we have done, we are beginning to understand what our abuse of these marvelous creeks and streams that pass through our heartland and our history means.

Neither the fish, nor the dry periods dominate our history. It is the floods that are remembered. The Spanish settled near the Guadalupe River, since it was one of our few local creeks that had water through the summer dry period. Initially, the Santa Clara Mission was placed too close to the Guadalupe River at Santa Clara and in a wet winter it was flooded. The mission was moved to higher ground and later the Pueblo of San Jose, which had also been located too close to the river, was shifted as well.

In heavy rains in March 1861, Alfred Doten wrote in his diary that Coyote Creek, "very fast and furious," had overflowed its banks. He rode out to see the sight along with dozens of others, "men, women & children." The creek was full of timber, fencing, and dead animals. All the adjacent fields and farms were flooded or surrounded by water. The stage roads that crossed the creek at fords were closed and commerce was stopped for weeks. In the floods that came in the next winter, 1861-62, Coyote Creek and the Guadalupe River again overflowed their banks, scouring the foundations of the few bridges present at that time in the City of San Jose.

Doten describes how heavy ropes were tied to these bridges to keep them from washing away in the floods.

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General Membership Meeting "Laguna Seca And The Historical Ecology Of Santa Clara Valley: Understanding The Past To Design The Future"

**with Robin Grossinger
Palo Alto Arts Center,
Newell & Embarcadero Rds
Wednesday, May 21
Doors open 7:30; program 8:00**

Robin Grossinger is a scientist at the San Francisco Estuary Institute, where he directs the Historical Ecology Program. For the past 15 years, he has studied how landscapes of the Bay area and California coast have changed since European contact. Most recently he has contributed to a

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**Summer
Bird Count is
Coming - sign
up now!**
see Page 4

◆ *Mojave, Death Valley & Kern River
Preserve Weekend Field Trip*

— Page 2

◆ *Annual Potluck Dinner at McClellan
Ranch*

— Page 6

◆ *A Crested Caracara is a rare treat!*

— *Field Notes, Page 7*

◆ *Summer Young Audubon Adventures -
start planning now!*

— Page 10

May to June '08 Field Trips

(Full details for all of our fieldtrips 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 May 3, 8:30 AM

Mines Rd., Del Puerto Canyon & vicinity

Full day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. We'll start this trip in Del Puerto Canyon, working our way west to San Antonio Valley. From I-580 go east over Altamont Pass, to I-5, south on I-5, west at the Patterson exit (Diablo Grande Pkwy) and then right on Del Puerto Canyon Rd. Meet at the first pullout. Highlights include possible Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch and liquids.

Sunday May 4, 8:30 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south 2.1 miles (it becomes Stevens Canyon Rd.) turn left into first park entrance and meet in first, Chestnut Picnic Area, parking lot. A top riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. Entrance fee required. **LO**.

Wednesday May 7, 12:00 PM

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Elaine Gould or Bobbie Handen. 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 May 10, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. A trip designed for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. A good trip to checkout your spotting scope.

Sunday May 11, 8:00 AM

South-coastal San Mateo County (Gazos Creek and Pescadero Marsh)

Half day plus. Leader: Al Eisner (650) 926-2018 days and voice mail, (650) 364-3686 evenings. Gazos Creek usually has a good variety of breeding (and singing) songbirds (possible MacGillivray's Warbler), while Pescadero Marsh and vicinity should add some migrant shorebirds and resident marsh birds. Meet at the Gazos Creek Coastal Access parking lot, on the west side of Highway 1 midway between Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz (about 25 miles from each). **LO**.

Wednesday May 14, 8:00 AM

Anderson Reservoir/Upper Coyote Creek

Half day. Leader: Jean Myers, (408) 846-4655. Exit Hwy 101 south at Cochrane Rd. in Morgan Hill. Head east on Cochrane Rd. Cochrane Rd. veers right at Coyote Creek. Follow road past picnic area on the left. Continue under oak trees. When Cochrane Rd. takes a sharp right, turn left into Anderson Lake County Park and left again into parking lot. Park near end of parking lot. Meet at base of reservoir. Bring water and wear good hiking shoes. Possible entry fee. Group may visit Anderson Dam area as well as lower areas of Coyote Creek. Up to 4 miles on flat or downhill terrain. **LO**.

Wednesday thru Sunday May 14-May 18

Mojave, Death Valley & Kern River Preserve

Leader: Rick Fournier (831) 632-2473, E-mail Rimbirding@aol.com. This four night, five day trip will begin in Mojave Desert and finishing up at the Kern River Preserve. Day one we'll drive to Mojave birding local hot spots. Day two we will head to Butterbret Springs Wildlife Sanctuary, California City, and Silver Springs Resort before we overnight at Furnace Creek/Death Valley. Day three departs Furnace Creek, birding Mesquite Springs, Scotty's Castle spending the night camping at Oasis Campground,

Day four will find us birding Deep Springs, Westgard Pass, Kern River Preserve and overnighing at Lake Isabella. The following morning we will bird Chimney Peak before heading home. Expect a variety of breeding birds and hopefully, some exciting vagrants, bird diversity and habitats will be memorable. This is a joint trip with Monterey Audubon Society and will require a minimum of five and a maximum of ten participants. Contact Rick as soon as possible to secure your participation.

Saturday May 24, 8:00 AM

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From I-280 in Palo Alto take Page Mill Rd. west, toward Skyline Blvd. (Hwy. 35), for approx. 7 miles and meet at the Monte Bello OSP parking area on the left. Possible Lazuli Bunting, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Chipping and Grasshopper Sparrows. Be prepared, it can be cold, wet and foggy. **LO**.

Sunday May 25, 8:00 AM

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Meet at the northeast corner of Skyline Blvd. (Hwy. 35) and Page Mill Rd. (the corner nearest San Francisco and the bay). (Note: Do not park in the Russian Ridge Parking Lot!) This is a moderately strenuous walk with some elevation change. Highlights: possible Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager. Bring extra layers of clothing as temperatures can vary wildly even at this time of year. **LO**.



Saturday May 31, 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 (it becomes Stevens Canyon Rd.) turn left into first park entrance and meet in first,

Field Trips *continued*

Chestnut Picnic Area parking lot. A top riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. \$4.00 entrance fee. **LO.**

Sunday June 1, 7:30 AM Smith Creek/Twin Gates

Birding by ear

Half day. Leader: TBD (Questions, call Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527). From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on Mt Hamilton Rd. go past main entrance to Grant Ranch County Park (approx. 9 miles). Continue uphill another two miles to Twin Gates parking lot on the left. Probable birds include Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, woodland and riparian breeding birds. This is a moderately strenuous hike over rolling hills.

Wednesday June 4, 12:00 PM City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Elaine Gould or Bobbie Handen. 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 June 7, No trip - Palo Alto Summer Bird Count

See *Volunteer Ventures* (page 4) for more details.

Sunday June 8, 8:30 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. For directions see write-up for May 10th.

Wednesday June 11, 8:30 AM Stevens Creek County Park, Cupertino.

Half day. Leader: Pat Brennan, (408) 266-7572. From Hwy 280 take Foothill Blvd. south about 2 miles. Turn left into park and left again into the Chestnut parking area. Possible entry fee. Riparian habitat; breeding birds. **LO, RC.**

Saturday June 14, 8:00 AM

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve
Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. Meet at the Vista Point Pullout located a little over a mile northwest of Page Mill Rd. on the Bay side of Skyline Blvd. (Hwy. 35). Bring extra layers of clothing in case it's foggy and cold. Possible Grasshopper Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting. **NF.**

Sunday June 15, 8:00 AM Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward the hills then left on Toyon Ave. right on Penitencia Creek Rd. and continue on into the park. Pass under the bridge and meet at the far end of the upper parking lot. This is a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk. **LO.**

Saturday June 21, 8:30 AM Mt Madonna County Park

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527). From Hwy 101 in Gilroy take Hwy 152 West (Hecker Pass Hwy). After approximately 6.4 miles turn right into the Sprig Lake parking lot. This half-day birding walk, climbing on the way out and descending on the return trip, begins in mixed oak woodlands but in short order passes through grasslands, chaparral and, finally, coastal forest where Redwood and Douglas Fir dominate the landscape. Birding is as varied as the terrain, and offers insights into how habitat shapes bird populations. **LO (be sure to bring liquids!).**

Sunday June 22, 8:00 AM Rancho del Oso (coastal Big Basin State Park)

Half day plus. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. Take Highway 17 to Santa Cruz, and then go north on Highway 1. Meet at the beach parking area alongside Highway 1 just north of the Waddell Creek Bridge (at MP 36.30; which is 2 miles south of Ano Nuevo State Reserve and seven miles north of Davenport). This is a long but fairly level hike (app. 5 miles) along the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail looking for Swainson's Thrush, Winter Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and woodpeckers. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids (in a backpack if possible) and dress in layers.

Events Calendar:

Thurs. 5/1 & 5/8; 7-9PM

Beginning Birding by Ear with Ron Arps

Adult Education Classes at McClellan Ranch

(see page 5 for details)

Wed. 5/7; 7:30-9PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents "US Travels and Great Birds" with Yamil Saenz

Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

(see www.scvas.org for more details)

Tue. 5/13; 9:30AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group

- meets at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264.

Topic: Black-headed Grosbeak

Wed. 6/4; 7:30-9PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers.

Topic TBA.

(see www.scvas.org for details)

Tue. 6/10; 9:30AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group

- meets at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264.

Picnic Lunch – bring a sandwich! On the agenda – planning the discussion agenda for 2008-2009 (10-11AM), followed by lunch at 11AM.

Thurs. 6/5, 6/12 & 6/19; 7:30-9PM

Beginning Birding with Lisa Myers

Adult Education Classes at McClellan Ranch

(see page 5 for details)

Tue. 6/10; 6PM

Birdathon Awards Dinner

McClellan Ranch Park

Wed. 6/18; 6 PM

Annual Potluck Dinner

McClellan Ranch Park

(see page 6 for details)

Volunteer Ventures

Educational and Outreach Programs Take Off!

By Toby Goldberg
SCVAS Programs Coordinator

Spring is always a busy time – the earth is waking up from its winter slumbers, flowers are blooming, birds are busy raising their young, and everything feels energized, exciting and alive! As the seasons turned once more to the warmth of spring, SCVAS found itself an increasingly popular participant in Community events, such as Earth Day festivals, and school programs, and requests for our educational presentations quadrupled! It has been extremely gratifying for me to realize what a strong reputation SCVAS has in the community as a whole, and with local school groups in particular.

For those interested in such things, here are some Spring numbers: Wetlands Discovery Program participants – 8 schools, 24 classrooms, 800 students; Bird/Nature Walks – 8 field trips (and counting!), 300 participants; Classroom and other Community presentations – 13 presentations, 200-400 participants; Festivals, Fairs, and other Outreach Events – 13 events (so far - more to come, I'm sure) for thousands of contacts with Santa Clara County members! All of this represents more than 250 volunteer hours, donated by more than two dozen volunteers (and that's just a conservative estimate)! Not to mention the many field trip offerings, Adult Education Classes, Conservation Programs and so much more that brings SCVAS into local communities and helps us to share our message.

Of course, all of these programs, presentations, events, and activities are only possible with the help of dynamic and dedicated volunteers, and the support of our many SCVAS members. Thank you for helping to make this Spring such a busy and successful season for all of our many programs!



For those interested in more (or new) ways to help out, check out the following opportunities:

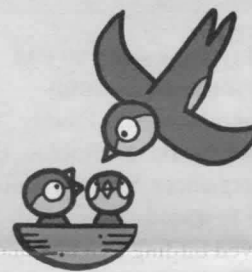
Summer Bird Count: Palo Alto Bird Counts Coordinators - The Palo Alto Breeding Bird Count in June and the Christmas Bird Count in December are in need of two people to assist with the logistics of the counts. The position description would be Region Coordinator, and it is intended to be an ongoing responsibility. **NO BIRDING EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED.** The task involves the distribution, collection and verification of completeness of various forms. Some familiarity of the regions involved is necessary, but is easy to acquire. **RECRUITING OF COUNTERS IS NOT REQUIRED** (although it is not discouraged), but assigning participants to areas within the region would be necessary. The areas would be the same for both counts. The continued success of the Palo Alto Bird Counts depends on filling these positions. For additional information, contact Jack Cole at 408-996-0434 or snoyowl@yahoo.com.

Educational Presenters - As the numbers given above reflect, we are pretty much in constant demand throughout the school year! We need more volunteers ready to fill requests for educational presentations in classrooms K-12 throughout Santa Clara County during the months of May and June, as well as for the following school year. You can use slideshows, stuffed birds, and real nests to teach youth about local birds and their habitat. These presentations are engaging and come fully scripted. No experience is necessary, though teaching and birding experience are helpful. Time commitment is flexible, and scheduling is based on classroom and volunteer availability.

Audubon at Home: SCVAS' Bird Sanctuary Program

Late Spring Updates
By Toby Goldberg (with help)
SCVAS Programs Coordinator

This is a great time of year to work in your gardens, dive into those landscaping projects that have been looming, and make your backyard and open spaces a beautiful place to be! But, as you look at things from an aesthetic perspective and think about what to prune, what to plant, and what to leave alone, we just want to remind you that May and June are still an active part of the breeding season!



This means that there may still be active nests in your hedges, trees, bushes, and brushpiles; and where there are active nests, there will soon be fledglings! So, here's just a little reminder to avoid trimming those tree branches until the breeding season is well and truly finished (and did you know that some birds start building nests as early as January?). Nests can be hard to see, and you may inadvertently destroy the homes that your neighborhood birds worked so hard to build, not to mention eggs and babies. Hummingbird nests are particularly vulnerable, as they are smaller than a walnut shell and can look like a small knot on a branch. Please protect our birds by waiting until autumn to do your tree trimming, and help spread the word by reminding your friends and neighbors.

Other volunteer opportunities are available on the SCVAS website, under the "Get Involved" link. Check them out online, or contact me at programs@scvas.org or (408) 252-3740.

Spring Adult Education Classes

The following classes are sponsored by the SCVAS Education Committee. To register please call the office at (408) 252-3740. All cancellations require 72-hour prior notification for refunds.

This spring, we welcome back two of our most popular instructors, with classes that you, our members have requested time and time again. We've listened, we've scheduled, and now (drum-roll please)....

Beginning Birding by Ear with Ron Arps

Learn to bird "by ear" to expand your skills in bird identification. Class discussions will focus on methods used to remember and identify bird sounds, such as descriptive terms, and sketches of sonograms (or sound patterns). These techniques will then be applied to bird recordings, learning the sounds of some local songbirds. On weekends, the class will take to the field, practicing live identification of the bird sounds recently learned. Also, bird sound resources (books and CDs) and sound recording (equipment and software) will be introduced along the way. This class is primarily designed for the beginner (although all skill levels are, of course, welcome).

Dates: Class: Thursdays, 5/1 & 5/8, 7-9pm;

Field Study: Sundays, 5/4 & 5/11, 8-11am

Location: Classes: Conference Room at McClellan Ranch, Cupertino; Field Study: McClellan Ranch Park

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

Minimum: 6 students, Maximum: 14 students

Ron enjoyed birding as a boy and began bird sound recording soon after college. This eventually led to giving workshops on bird song identification for Nature Explorations Tuolumne and helping to start the Nature Sounds Society. Invited to teach bird sounds to docents at Stanford's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, he stayed on afterwards as a volunteer. At Jasper he has used sound and sight for bird identification during monthly surveys, taught bird sound classes, and continued his hobby of bird sound recording. For beginners, in addition to introducing them to local bird sounds, his goal is to teach how best to learn new bird sounds on their own. He loves to share the joy of knowing birds by their sounds, not only as a birding skill but as an everyday pleasure.

Beginning Birding with Lisa Myers

This beginning birding class is designed for people who have always wanted to learn about birdwatching. No experience necessary! We'll go over all the things you'll need to know to get started. Field guides, optics, clothing, ethics, habitats, how to find the bird and even a little taxonomy will be reviewed. Through lecture and handouts you'll learn the tricks on how you can tell one bird species from another. We have roughly 250 different species of birds right here in Santa Clara County. This class includes one weekend morning bird walk so we can put our new knowledge into action.

Dates: Class: Thursdays, 6/5, 6/12, and 6/19, 7:30-9 PM; Field Trip: Saturday 6/14, 8:30-11:30 AM

Location: Conference Room, McClellan Ranch in Cupertino

Fee: \$45 members, \$55 non-members

Minimum: 8 students, Maximum: 20 students

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



Bullock's Oriole
by Tom Grey

General Membership Meeting *continued from page 1*

special issue on historical ecology for the journal *Landscape Ecology* and a segment on these topics for the KQED TV science program QUEST.

Before Euro-American modification, Santa Clara Valley supported a remarkable array of riparian, wetland, and woodland habitats. This presentation will present recent research synthesizing hundreds of historical maps, photographs, and other documents to document the historical ecology of Santa Clara Valley. Topics will range from the wetland mosaics of places like Laguna Seca (the historical seasonal lake at the north end of Coyote Valley, in South San Jose), substantial elements of which could be restored, to the "stately sycamores" formerly celebrated on our streams. Initial findings and implications for restoration and stewardship will be explored.

More information on SFEI's historical ecology program can be found at: www.sfei.org/HEP

Coyote Valley Victory!!! ... for now.....

In mid-March, the Coyote Valley Housing Group withdrew their funding for the Coyote Valley Specific Plan, having already spent 17.2 million dollars on the plan. On the brink of spending an additional 2.5 million dollars on the plan, the housing group backed off citing the plan as no longer being economically viable.

This decision follows a five-year planning effort that resulted in a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that received hundreds of pages of critical comments from the environmental community. Based on flaws pointed out in these comments, the draft report was withdrawn for rework and possible resubmittal to San Jose's City Council for approval. With the withdrawal of funding for this planning process, the future of Coyote Valley, a fabulous 7,000-acre agricultural landscape, should be folded into San Jose's 2010 general plan planning process.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon played our part in this battle, by hiring Craig Breon as a consultant to craft our responses to the draft EIR, and collaborating with the Michael Lee Environmental Foundation. Foundation support allowed us to work closely with our conservation partners to craft comments that covered all aspects of negative environmental impacts or flawed analysis of impacts as represented in the EIR.

Pressure to develop Coyote Valley won't go away. Our vigilance is still needed...

2008 Spring Birdathon Golden Eagle Sponsors

SCVAS is pleased to promote our generous prize sponsors who help make our Spring Birdathon so successful in raising money for our youth environmental education and conservation programs. We have over 20 prize sponsors for the Spring Birdathon - please visit our website for complete information. The following are our Golden Eagle Sponsors who donated more than \$600 in prizes.

Bob and Deb Hirt, SCVAS members

Week time-share lodging in Mexico, Spain, or Colorado.

Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Cheesemans' Ecology

Safaris Financial support, four Monterey Bay pelagic trips.

Southwest Airlines

Two airline tickets to anywhere without restrictions.

Nancy Teater

Week vacation home stay in Sea Ranch, CA.

Annual Meeting and Potluck Wednesday, June 18, 6 PM McClellan Ranch Park

It's that time of year again! Join your fellow SCVAS members for the annual potluck dinner and volunteer recognition awards. Meet the Audubon staff, Board members and officers, and do some birding while you dine. Bring a main dish, casserole, salad or hors d'oeuvres to share - SCVAS provides beverages and desserts.

Bringing your own plates and cups helps reduce use of wasteful plastic and paperware.



Are you an employee or retiree from one of these (or similar) organizations?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • 3M Corporation | • Packard Corporation | • Pfizer |
| • Adobe Systems, Inc. | • IBM Corporation | • Roche Diagnostics |
| • Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) | • Intuit | • Rosendin Electric |
| • Applied Materials | • Johnson & Johnson | • Schwab Corporation |
| • AT&T | • Lehman Brothers | • Sephora |
| • Bank of America | • Merck Company | • Sony Electronics Inc. |
| • Cadence Design System, Inc. | • Microsoft Corporation | • Sprint |
| • EBay | • Oracle Corporation | • Starbucks |
| • The Gap | • David & Lucille Packard Foundation | • Sun Microsystems |
| • General Mills | • Pepsi Co (PBG) | • Symantec Corp |
| • Google | | • UPS |
| • Hewlett | | • Yahoo! |

If so, your current or former employer may match your SCVAS contribution!

These are just a handful of companies that match Employee/Retiree gifts. Please call the office of SCVAS for additional information (408) 252-3747

Thank you for your support!!!

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Waterfowl through Herons

Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** at Byxbee Park 3-9 Mar (DCa, BP) and two lingering in Coyote Valley to 7 Mar (RWR, FV, v.ob.) were the last of our local wintering birds. A **Snow Goose** was hanging around at Lake Cunningham 2-13 Feb (JT, ViT, m.ob.). An adult **Ross's Goose** was seen at the Coyote Creek GC on 16 Feb (MJM). Nine **Tundra Swans** were along Bloomfield Road on 15 Feb (LA) and a single adult was in a Campbell percolation pond on 25 Feb (RR). As is typical, these birds did not remain. Three **Eurasian Wigeon** were seen in the Alviso ponds on 6 Feb and again on 17 Feb (MMR). One was at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 7 Feb (RWR, FV, RKe) and five were there on 26 Mar (MJM, WGB). One was at the Guadalupe Slough mouth on 1 Mar (MMR, MJM). A male **Blue-winged Teal** was near the Alviso EEC on 12 Feb (AV) and a pair were seen there on 26 Feb (GHa). A male and two females were in Adobe Creek on 8 Mar (WGB) and a male was seen nearby on 29 Mar (BP et al.). A male Blue-winged showed up in the ponds at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 17 Mar (RWR, FV) and was seen there through 22 Mar (AV et al.). A pair were at the SCRWA (Gilroy) treatment ponds on 20 Mar (RWR, FV) and at least nine birds were there on 26 Mar (MJM, WGB). Large numbers of **Redheads** remained in Alviso with 131 on closed refuge ponds there on 1 Mar (MMR, MJM). A single male turned up at the Sunnyvale Baylands on 1 Feb (RS) and two males were there through 13 Feb (v.ob.). A male on Calero Reservoir on 1-2 Mar (AV) was unusual at this inland location. A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was more or less regular through 12 Mar (DWe, m.ob.). A male and two females were seen there on 15 Feb (KO) and three males were there on 18 Feb (CVR). One to two immature **Red-throated Loons** continued at Shoreline Lake in February with the last bird seen on 15 Feb (KO).

A single bird was seen on closed refuge ponds in Alviso on 1 Mar (MMR, MJM). The **Pelagic Cormorant** found at Shoreline Lake in January reappeared there on 4 Feb (MMR) and was seen through 10 Feb (v.ob.). An **American Bittern** was seen at the Santa Clara Valley Water District ponds on 28 Feb (JPa). One had been there in the fall, into November, but there have been no reports since. Another bird was along Coyote Creek near the Coyote Creek GC on 3 Mar (RPh). A **Cattle Egret** at Lake Cunningham on 10 Feb (SAG) was a surprise, no others have been seen this winter.

Hawks through Gulls

The adult **Bald Eagle** wintering at Calero Reservoir was seen again

*A Crested Caracara
was the prince of the
Coyote Valley raptors
this period.*

on 1 Feb (AV) and 10 Feb (MJM). Similarly, the birds wintering at Coyote Reservoir were seen on 16 Feb (RWR et al.) and 24 Feb (LMy et al.). The pair resident in Calaveras Valley were seen through the period (m.ob.). They were photographed copulating on 5 Mar (SRo) and apparently incubating at last year's nest on 23 Mar (MJM, CVR). Other birds included an adult over the Almaden Valley on 9 Feb (H&DMcD), perhaps the Calero bird, an immature at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 28 Feb (RPh, RF, MJM), and another immature over Halls Valley on 19 Mar (MJM). The **'Harlan's' Red-tailed Hawk** in the Coyote Valley was last seen on 28 Feb (RPh). Two adults and an immature **Ferruginous Hawk** were seen regularly in the Coyote Valley in February (m.ob.). The last record of an adult was on 2 Mar and the last immature was on 14 Mar (both RPh). A single bird was seen again in Calaveras Valley again on 17 Feb (CW). Other Ferruginous included an adult south of San Martin on 11 Feb (JMy), a sub-adult in Halls Valley on 15 Feb (MO'B), and immature there on 9 Mar (RPh). The big excitement in the

Coyote Valley was a **Crested Caracara** that showed up on 7 Mar (RPh et al.). Photos were obtained of this distinctive bird, but it could not be refound the next day. This is the second record for Santa Clara County. The **Prairie Falcon** wintering in the Coyote Valley was last seen on 7 Feb (RWR, FV, RKe). A survey of closed refuge ponds in Alviso found nine **Snowy Plovers** on 1 Mar (MMR, MJM), the first in the county since last October. Late winter **Sanderlings** were limited to four on Pond A9 in Alviso on 17 Feb (MMR) and a single bird on closed refuge ponds on 1 Mar (MMR, MJM). **Glaucous Gulls**, centered on our South Bay dumps, were found throughout the period on Pond A16 in Alviso (v.ob.) as well as on Pond A13 on 17 Feb (MMR) and 2 Mar (MMR, MJM), and also at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) waterbird pond 20 Feb-15 Mar (SCR, CW). Also at the latter location, an adult was seen on 27 Feb (SCR), perhaps the same bird seen nearby in January. An adult was also seen over the Ogier Avenue ponds on 29 Feb and a 1st-winter bird was on the ponds on 22 Mar (both MJM). These latter birds are probably attracted to the Kirby Canyon landfill or other south county dumps.

Roadrunners through Goldfinches

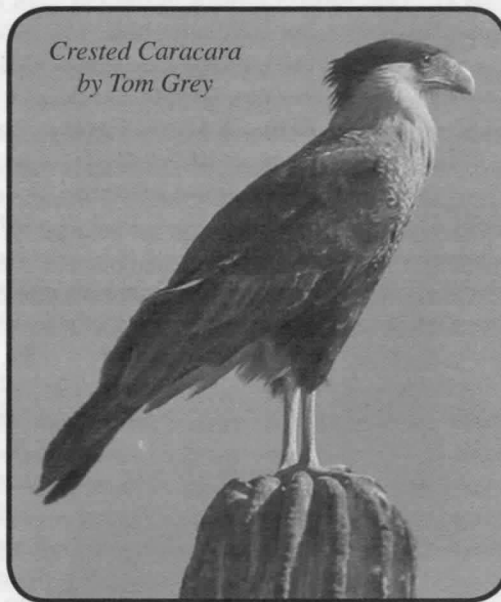
A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen near the Silver Creek Valley Country Club on 16 Feb (JMy). Two birds were heard singing in different locations in San Antonio Valley on 12 Mar (WGB) and one bird was singing in Morgan Hill near Anderson Reservoir on 22 Mar (SCR). The **Short-eared Owls** found foraging in fallow fields in the Coyote Valley in January became a major attraction in February and March (m.ob.). Up to four birds have been seen on some evenings. At least two birds remained on 28 Mar (RPh). The spring migration of **Rufous Hummingbirds** started with a male at a Gilroy feeder on 1 Mar (BB-W). As in recent years, flowering eucalyptus at Ed Levin CP attracted the most birders, if not the hummingbirds; as many as eight were seen there on 28 Mar (MMR). Other sites included the Ogier Avenue ponds on 2 Mar (RPh), two different feeders in the Almaden Valley: one on

continued on next page

Field Notes *cont'd*

19 Mar (BH) and the other on 27 Mar (JPa), and Santa Teresa CP where two were seen on 25 Mar (JPa). **Allen's Hummingbird**, on the other hand, was less often encountered. Single males were seen at Ed Levin CP on 22 Feb (KO), 25 Mar (RWR, FV), and 28 Mar (MMR). It appears that our resident *Selasphorus* is becoming decidedly uncommon or rare in the county. Any observation of this species should be reported. The **Lewis's Woodpecker** wintering at the Arastradero Preserve was found throughout the period. Other wandering Lewis's included one at Joseph Grant CP on 9 Feb (GM), and one at the Stanford dish on both 17 Feb (ViT) and 29 Mar (DB et al.). Three in San Antonio Valley on 12 Mar (WGB) are resident. An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** in San Martin on 3 Mar (LA) likely wintered somewhere in central California. Birds normally arrive about 10 Apr with a range of arrival dates from 2 to 17 April. A **Cassin's Kingbird** seen along Coyote Creek near the model airplane park on 15 Mar (RPh et al.) was also unusual. Although this bird nests as close as San Benito County and a few birds winter there as well, it is always rare this far to the north. At least one pair of **American Dippers** has been seen along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road in March (FV, WGB, AME). Two were also found along Los Gatos Creek above Los Gatos on 8 Mar (LMy et al.). A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was seen along Coyote Creek above Dixon Landing Road on 10 Feb (CW) and likely wintered nearby. The first spring arrival was not noted until 17 Mar (MJM). The only **Phainopepla** seen during the period was a male in the San Antonio Valley on 12 Mar (WGB). A **Black-and-White Warbler** was found at Lake Cunningham on 1 Feb (JPa). This is likely the same bird there in early November. It was seen at Lake Cunningham through 26 Feb (m.ob.). Another Black-and-White was found in Cupertino on 21 Feb (MB), giving us two birds for this winter. The **Northern Waterthrush** wintering in the Charleston

Road marsh was seen at least through 15 Feb (v.ob.). This is at least the seventh consecutive winter that a waterthrush has wintered here. A female **Wilson's Warbler** was found in the same area as the Black-and-White Warbler at Lake Cunningham on 5 Feb (WGB) and it



Crested Caracara
by Tom Grey

remained through 26 Feb (v.ob.). This bird is believed to have wintered in this area. The wintering **Chipping Sparrow** flock at Jeffrey Fontana Park in San Jose continued through the period with at least nine birds recorded on 15 Mar (JPa). One seen at Ed Levin CP on 20 Mar (MA) was an early migrant. A **White-throated Sparrow** has been at an Almaden Valley feeder from about 23 Feb to at least 20 Mar (JPa). One was seen at a Los Gatos feeder on 24 Feb (LSu). A White-throated Sparrow seen at Ed Levin CP 23-24 Mar (R&JLi, v.ob.) is likely a wintering bird that was last seen there in January. A dull bird was in a Morgan Hill yard on 29 Mar (SCR). **Great-tailed Grackles** have been found more consistently at the Coyote Creek GC during the period (m.ob.). The high count of males was four on 1 Mar (RGJ et al.) and of females was three on 3 Mar (MJM). Birds have also been found nearby at the Ogier Avenue ponds. A male seen at Lake Cunningham on 9 Mar (JPa) was the only report of birds elsewhere. Observers: Linda Adams (LA), Michael Armer (MA), Marilyn Bauriedel (MB),

Bonnie Bedford-White (BB-W), Bill Bousman (WGB), Daniel Bump (DB), Dotty Calabrese (DCa), Al Eisner (AME), Rosita Fakhrevaezi (RF), Steve Glover (SAG), Barbara Harkleroad (BH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Richard Jeffers (RGJ et al.), Roland Kenner (RKe), Randy & Janet Little (R&JLi), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Hugh & Debbie McDevitt (H&DMcD), Greg Meissner (GM), Jean Myers (JMy), Lisa Myers (LMy), Matthew O'Brien (MO'B), Kris Olson (KO), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (BP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Rick Roberts (RR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rosenthal (SRO), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Rosalie Strait (RS), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Jim Thomas (JT), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), Dave Weber (DWe), and Chuck Woodrum (CW).

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

In Memorium:

"Joseph Greenberg, who was very active within the birding community in California between 1964 and 1974, passed away at Sunrise Senior Living of Oakland Hills on February 24. He was 89. Joe led many field trips for Santa Clara Valley Audubon and along with his son Russ, was energetically involved in the early days of "vagrant chasing" in the state. After he relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1974, Joe was State Coordinator for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Surveys in Georgia, and he founded the Atlanta Audubon's Shade-Grown Coffee Committee in 1997. Birds and birding were the joys of his life. I will miss him greatly, and I hope that his friends from the "old days" of California birding will remember him fondly." Doug Greenberg, Berkeley CA

A Creek Runs Through It *continued from page 1*

The newspaperman E. T. Sawyer, in his History of Santa Clara County, California described additional floods in San Jose in the late 1860s and again in December 1971. These floods washed away houses, streetcar tracks, and what-ever else was in the way of Los Gatos Creek and the Guadalupe River. Curiously, Sawyer wrote that “[s]ince that date the two creeks have been widened and improved so that now there is no danger of overflows.” Those who were again flooded out in some of the great floods of the twentieth century would find Sawyer’s comments puzzling.

Boosters of the “Valley of Heart’s Delight” at the end of the nineteenth century bragged of the perfect growing season and unlimited water from artesian wells. Farmers knew better as they saw the water table steadily dropping. Soon there were discussions of how to recharge the aquifer. This led to early conservation attempts, such as check dams to prevent “wasted water” flowing to the bay. Eventually, plans were in

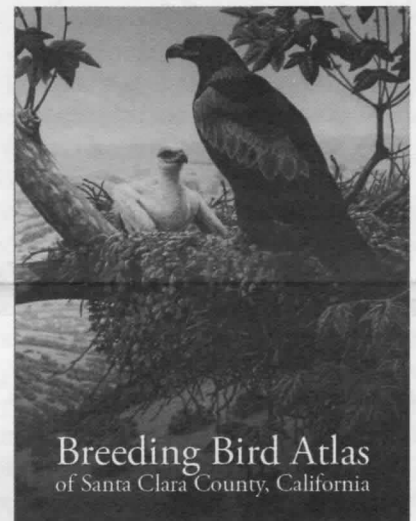
place for the construction of dams and percolation ponds, but there was no money to pay for them. Politics and the Great Depression intervened and the construction then took place. Most of our dammed creeks date from that era.

The aquifer has recovered, but not because of the new dams and ponds. Rather we now import more than half our water by aqueducts from other sources. The modifications we have made to our creeks have caused significant changes in their fish assemblages and in their bird life. There are possibilities for some restoration, but not if we continue to insist on our profligate use of water for eastern landscaping styles that have no business in our dry western habitats. Even now, one hears talk of water wastage in the Sacramento River delta, as though water allowed to maintain the health of our estuaries has no value compared to subsidized agriculture or well-watered golf courses. There is much to be done.

In praise of the Breeding Bird Atlas

“I did think that it was the most awesome summary of various types of data relating to Santa Clara county that I have ever seen, or even dreamed could be produced! It is an amazing book. I got dizzy (in a good way) while going through it. There is just so much information there, that it definitely is a must for anyone interested in birds of the Bay Area.”

*Alvaro Jaramillo
Biologist
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO)*



Breeding Bird Atlas
of Santa Clara County, California

Available in the SCVAS Nature Shop!



Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers

at our Annual Meeting and Potluck on June 18, 2008

The Nominating Committee of the SCVAS Board of Directors is pleased to nominate the following candidates for elected positions on the Board for the term indicated. New directors and officers will take office on July 1, 2008. SCVAS members in good standing may participate in the voice vote at this Annual Meeting. The majority of available votes will determine the winner.

<u>Position and Term</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
President, '08-'09	Bob Hirt
Vice-President, '08-'09	Debbie Thompson
Secretary, '08-'09	Joan Leighton
Director, '08-'11	Dotty Calabrese
Director, '08-'11	Dave Cook
Director, '08-'11	Matthew Dodder

We continue to seek new Board Members interested in birding, education and conservation!
Call 408-252-3747 for more information.

Young Audubon Summer Adventures Are Coming!

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"Canoes in Sloughs"



Wetlands Exploration with Save the Bay

Saturday, July 12TH*
9AM-2PM



Palo Alto Baylands
For ages 10** and up!

Cost: \$35/Adult, \$25/Child for SCVAS Members
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*Space is limited for all activities,
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Elkhorn Slough Safari

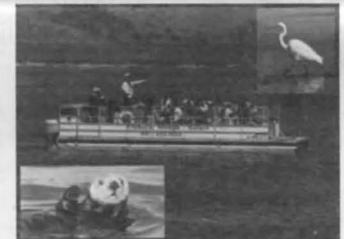
Nature Boat Tours in Elkhorn Slough

Time and Date TBD
(call for updates/details)



Moss Landing/Monterey Bay
For ages 3** and up!

Cost: \$30/person for SCVAS Members
\$35/person for non-SCVAS Members



Bird Banding

with San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

Saturday, AUGUST 16TH*
8:30-10:30AM



McCarthy Ranch in Milpitas
For all Bird Lovers, ages 5** and up!
Cost: \$25/family



To sign-up or for more information, call (408) 252-3740, send an e-mail to programs@scvas.org, or check out our website at www.scvas.org

We thank these members for their generous contributions, February 2008 through March 2008:

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Earth Day, Earth Month - Earth Day Every Day!

by Karen Hoyt.

(Adapted with permission from an article in the Sky Hunters Environmental Education Newsletter)

April 22nd was Earth Day, a global holiday celebrating the environment and the wonder of life on our planet. The first Earth Day was organized in 1970 to promote the ideas of ecology, encourage respect for life on earth, and highlight growing concern over pollution of soil, air, and water. Earth Day celebrations are held throughout the month of April as the movement has grown. Yet we don't need to wait for a special date on the calendar, we can celebrate and take care of the Earth every day!

Today there is a lot of talk about your carbon footprint, the measure of the impact your activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced. This footprint can be measured in the total amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. You may not be aware, but electricity is one of the biggest producers of carbon emissions. Every time you flip on a light switch or turn on the television you are adding to global warming. Of course, it is not possible to go without lights in this day and age, but there are numerous things you can do every day to limit your impact. Turn IT off when not in use. Turn off the lights when you leave a room and turn off your computer at the end of your workday. Use energy-saving

light bulbs.

A few other everyday things to think about: Set your central heating timer to turn down at night and off when the house is empty. Insulate your hot water tank: defrost your refrigerator/freezer regularly: hang heavy cloths, such as towels, outside to dry before putting them in the dryer. Unplug your cell phone as soon as it has finished charging.

How about converting to a locavore? A locavore is someone who eats food grown or produced locally or within a certain radius, such as 50, 100, or 150 miles. The locavore movement encourages consumers to buy from farmers' markets or even to produce their own food, presuming that fresh, local products are more nutritious and taste better. Locally grown food provides an environmentally friendly means of obtaining food, since supermarkets that import their food use more fossil fuels and non-renewable resources.

Don't buy overly packaged products. Look for the least amount of packaging to generate the least amount of waste. Recycle as much as you can instead of filling the local landfills. Remember your BIG R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replant!

Some highlights from Earth Day Celebrations of years past:



Learning all about Peregrine Falcons from W.E.R.C.



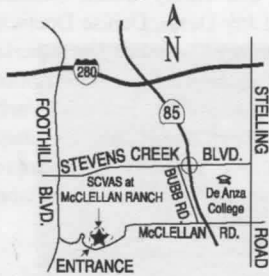
Meeting the local Police "men"



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SCVAS is the chapter of the National Audubon Society for Santa Clara County.

2008 Volume 58, Number 3

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