



# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May - June 2009

## The Perils of Wind Power

by Bob Power, SCVAS Executive Director

In November 2006 five Audubon chapters including Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) entered into a settlement agreement with the wind power companies at Altamont Pass. In lieu of a costly Environmental Impact Report process, the parties agreed to the following:

- Requirement that industry reduces avian mortality at Altamont by 50%, and that this milestone be achieved by November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.
- Adoption of adaptive management measures recommended by the Scientific Review Committee (SRC), if industry fails to meet the 50% avian mortality reduction.
- Removal of turbines.
- Seasonal shut-down of turbines.
- Development of a long-term conservation and protection plan for the birds; a combined Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) involving both the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California's Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

A lack of perceived progress on the part of the wind companies in implementing this agreement led to Golden Gate Audubon entering into mediation discussions with the wind industry in November of 2007. The discussions were discontinued in November 2008 for lack of progress. Now we've passed the first quarter of 2009 and it's not clear that any progress has been made towards reducing avian mortality. There are entirely too many questions and not enough answers:

- Burrowing Owl mortality has increased dramatically, but it's not clear that this has anything to do with wind turbines as evidence of mortalities was recovered from the area of non-operating turbines.
- Golden Eagle mortality, estimated at 50 eagles annually at Altamont may represent a much broader population sink for the species.

June is the time for our  
Annual Potluck Dinner!

All are welcome!

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Doug Bell, Raptor Biologist for the East Bay Regional Park District, estimates that 169 breeding pair of Golden Eagles would be necessary to keep up with the current mortality rate. But there are only an estimated

- 58 pair of nesting Golden Eagles locally. Adding to the puzzle is an increase of sub-adult Golden Eagles pairing with adults, indicating, well.....

(continued on page 10)

### General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 20th

Palo Alto Arts Center  
Newell & Embarcadero Rds

Doors open 7:30PM; program 8:00PM

photos ©  
Paul Bannick

**"The Owl and The Woodpecker: Encounters with  
North America's Most Iconic Birds"**  
with author Paul Bannick

Author and award-winning photographer, Paul Bannick, will take you on a visual journey of 11 key North American habitats through the needs of all 41 of North America's owl and woodpecker species. His new book, THE OWL AND THE WOODPECKER, is a stunning photographic study and having him here from Seattle in person to talk about owls and woodpeckers will be very special. His talk will be accompanied by field stories and rich natural history derived from thousands of hours in the  
(cont. on page 8)



- ❖ Late Spring Classes Focus on Breeding Birds – Page 5
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# May - June '09 Field Trips

(Full details for all of our Field Trips are also available online at [www.scvas.org](http://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 2, 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 3, 8:00 AM

### Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. From Hwy 280 in Cupertino, take Foothill Blvd. south about 2.1 miles (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd). Turn left into first park entrance and meet in first parking lot, the Chestnut Picnic Area. A top riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. \$5 entrance fee required. **LO, RC.**

## Wednesday May 6, 12:00 PM

### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Bobbie Handen. Contact organizer Silvana 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 9, 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); 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 Hwy 1 midway between Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz (about 25 miles from each). **LO.**

## Sunday May 10, 8:00 AM

### Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Steve Tracey (408) 966-3860. Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. A good birding trip for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. A good trip to check out your spotting scope. Bring a friend.

## Wednesday, May 13, 8:30 a.m.

### Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330. See directions and details on May 3rd listing. **LO, RC.**

## Wednesday thru Sunday May 13 - 17 Mojave, Death Valley & Kern River Preserve

Leader: Rick Fournier, E-mail [Rimbirding@aol.com](mailto:Rimbirding@aol.com) (no e-mail access call Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527). This route is one of California's premiere birding trips providing exceptional natural beauty and landscapes. From beginning to end, the bird diversity and habitats will be memorable. Our four-night five-day trip will begin in the Mojave Desert finishing up at the Kern County Reserve. The first day, we'll bird Mojave and local hot spots. Day two, Butterbreth Springs Wildlife Sanctuary, California City, 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 at the Oasis Campground or, for those wishing lodging, Big Pine. Saturday, we'll bird Deep Springs, Westgard Pass, Shotgun Pass and Kern County Reserve, overnight at Lake Isabella. Sunday we'll visit Chimney Peak before heading home. Expect a variety of regional breeding birds and hopefully some vagrants. This will be a joint trip with the Santa Clara Valley and Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society. This trip has a minimum of five participants, and a maximum of ten. Contact Rick as soon as possible to secure your space.

## Saturday May 23, 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 24, 8:00 AM

### Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

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

## Wednesday, May 27, 8:30 a.m.

### Rancho Cañada del Oro O.S.P.

Half day. Leader: Janna Pauser (408) 997-1727. Note: this is the fourth Wednesday in May. Hwy 85 exit Almaden Expwy. Follow Almaden to southeast to end; right on Harry; 1 block, then left on McKean. Take McKean 6+ miles past Calero Reservoir, turn right on Casa Loma Rd. Meet at parking lot at end of road (2 miles). We'll bird along a quiet road, easy walking. Bring water. Birds of oak woodland and riparian habitats. **LO.**

## Saturday May 30, 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.**

## Sunday May 31, 7:30 AM

### Smith Creek/Twin Gates

"Birding by ear" field trip.

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

## Field Trips *continued*

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 3, 12:00 PM

#### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell and Bobbie Handen. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. See details from May 6th.

**Saturday June 6, No trip** - Palo Alto Summer Bird Count. See page 9 for more details.

### Sunday June 7, 8:00 AM

#### 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 the parking lot about a half-mile on the right. Trip involves moderately strenuous hiking. **RC.**

### Saturday June 13, 8:00 AM

#### Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. For directions see write-up for May 10th.

### Sunday, June 14, 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.**

### Wednesday, June 17, 7:45 a.m.

#### Anderson Dam

Half day. Leader: Jean Myers (408) 846-4810. **Note: this is the third Wednesday in June.** Take Hwy101 to Morgan Hill and exit Cochrane Rd. east. Meet at the West side of the Target parking lot (next to Hwy101) Carpool to the top of Anderson Dam. Bring water and a snack and wear sturdy hiking footwear as the trails are uneven and steep in places. We will hike about 2-3 miles and will drive to several locations along Coyote Creek. Santa Clara County Parks day use fee. **LO.**

### Saturday June 20, 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.

### Sunday 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.**

### Saturday, July 11, 8:00 AM

#### Charleston Slough

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

### Saturday, August 8, 8:30 AM

#### Ano Nuevo State Reserve

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

### Saturday, August 22, 9:00 AM

#### Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see the write-up for July 11th.

## Events Calendar:

### Tues. 4/28, 8AM

#### Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast & Birdwalk

Stevens Creek County Park  
RSVP to [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org) or 408-252-3740.

### Wed. 5/6; 7:30-9PM

#### Bay Area Bird Photographers. Topic TBA – see SCVAS website for details.

### Tues. 5/12, 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: Ruddy Duck

### Wed. 6/3; 7:30-9PM

#### Bay Area Bird Photographers. Topic TBA – see SCVAS website for details.

### Tue. 6/09; 10AM

#### 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 2009-2010 (10-11AM), followed by lunch at 11AM.

### Tue, 6/9; 6PM

#### Birdathon Awards Dinner

McClellan Ranch Park

### Wed. 6/17; 6 PM

#### Annual Potluck Dinner

McClellan Ranch Park  
(see page 9 for details)



## Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg

Programs Coordinator

Spring and Summer in Northern California are truly glorious seasons - the sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the plants are blooming. It's a wonderful time to get outside and hike, birdwatch, garden, sail, etc. It's also a wonderful time to get involved in your local Audubon Chapter!

Now more than ever, this chapter depends on the generous donations of time from its volunteers - our programs are in demand more than ever, and we are thrilled that so many schools, community groups, and scouting troupes around the county value what we have to offer. We'd love to say yes to every inquiry that crossed our path, but that's where our volunteers come in - and we need more! If you've been waiting for the right time to get involved, this is it! We have opportunities available for any interest, energy level, and schedule availability.

Here are a few opportunities to peak your interest, but many many more are available on our website, or give me a call at 408-252-3740. You can also reach me at [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org):

**Weekday Nature Shop Assistants** - We are in need of a few more volunteers to give some time in the Nature Shop. Specifically, we are looking for anyone with some free time during the week that could come in and help us ring up customers, process inventory, etc. No previous experience needed - we'll train you in everything from inventory to point-of-sale.

**Late May Inventory Assistants** - We are in need of volunteers to help us count our inventory before the end of our fiscal year on May 31st. Even just a few hours the last week of May would be helpful! No experience needed - just a willingness to count store items and sort through boxes. And don't worry - we'll make it fun!

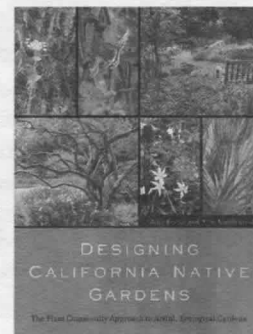
## Audubon-at-Home:

### SCVAS' Bird Sanctuary Program Book Review for Native Plant Gardeners

By Freddy Howell

Bird Sanctuary Program Committee Member

Until recently, finding information about planting native gardens - especially those that attract birds and wildlife to your yard - has been a challenge. There is a new book by local landscape designer Alrie Middlebrook and native plant expert Glenn Keator called "Designing California Native Gardens." The beauty of this book is that it covers all the ecosystems found in California.



The co-author, Alrie Middlebrook, owns Middlebrook Gardens (408-292-9993), a design, build and maintenance firm on Race Street in San Jose, and open to the public on a retail basis on Saturdays from 9am to 3pm. She is also president of the California Native Garden Foundation (CNGF) whose vision is to demonstrate the beauty, garden worthiness and ecological appropriateness of California native gardens and to advance knowledge of native plants and increase their availability.

"Designing California Native Gardens" is available in the SCVAS Nature Shop, the Wild Bird Center - Los Gatos, and other nature book stores throughout the area.

## Nightjar Survey! Summer 2009

by Mike Wilson, Center for Conservation Biology

College of William & Mary / Virginia Commonwealth University

(Editor's note: Notes below in *italics* - were added by Bob Power, SCVAS Executive Director, to this call for volunteers from the Nightjar Network)

The U.S. Nightjar Survey Network is continuing into its third year as a vital program to gather data on the population distribution and population trends on this group of declining species. We would like to invite all birders and conservationists to participate in the program by adopting Nightjar Survey Routes in 2009 and beyond. *While contributing to this nationwide project we can simultaneously increase our knowledge of Santa Clara County's Common Poorwill status and distribution.*

Nightjars are the group of nocturnal, insectivorous birds that includes species such as the whip-poor-will, common poorwill, chuck-will's-widow, and the nighthawks among others. The U.S. Nightjar Survey Network was introduced in the southeast in 2007 and then expanded in 2008 to gain full coverage across the conterminous United States. We are grateful to the number of participants already involved in the program. The beginning years of data collection have already helped in explaining how the composition of habitats in local landscapes influences nightjar

Common Poorwill  
© 2007 William F Walker;  
[wfwalkerphoto.com](http://wfwalkerphoto.com)



abundance. In turn, these data will one day help to explain population declines. However, there is still need for more routes to be surveyed, greater geographic and species coverage, and longer-term count data.

Nightjar Surveys are standardized counts conducted along census routes at night. Observers count all Nightjars seen or heard for a six-minute period at each of 10 stops along the route. The entire survey will not take much more than one hour to complete and only needs to be conducted one time per year. We have produced a series of routes in each state with many that are still in need of adoption by survey participants. *The routes shown for Santa Clara County are less than ideal. There is an option for creating your own route, and this is a great opportunity for a number of routes to be created in potential Poorwill habitat.*

Please consider adopting a Nightjar Survey Route in your area. The continuing success of the Nightjar Survey Network relies entirely on volunteer participation. *I will be creating a survey route this year and hope you will, too!*

Visit <http://www.ccb-wm.org/nightjars.htm> for more details on route locations, methods of survey, and more. Or contact Mike Wilson at email: [mdwils@wm.edu](mailto:mdwils@wm.edu) for more information.

# 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. Information about our upcoming classes is also available on our website at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org).



*Anna's Hummingbird  
Mating Pair  
by Tom Grey*

## "The Birds and the Bees" with Lisa Myers

We'll cover all those topics that don't always come up while birding in the field, such as "How do the different birds continue their species? How exactly do birds reproduce? Some males have many females, but did you know that some females have many males? In some species it's the males that incubate the eggs." We'll have fun while covering topics like copulation, incubation, plumage changes and biological changes. Don't be shy - sign up and learn something new! We can't talk about all the birds in North America, but we can cover *quite* a few, right in the middle of their breeding season activities.

Dates: **Classes:** Thursdays, 5/7, 5/14, & 5/21; 6:30-8:30PM. **Field Trips:** 5/16 & 5/23; 8:30AM-12PM.

Location: **Classes:** McClellan Ranch, Cupertino. **Field Trips:** Locations TBD

Min: 8 students; Max: 20 students. Fee: \$50 members / \$60 non-members

## Audubon Field Workshop with Bob Power:

### The Birds of Yuba Pass, Sierra Valley, & the Gold Lakes Region

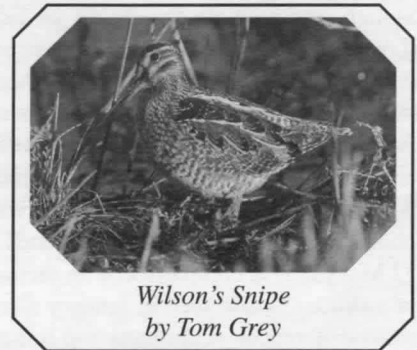
The northern Sierra offers a spectacular array of nesting birds, from Black-backed Woodpeckers and Hermit Warblers to Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Wilson's Snipe. We typically see 100+ species of birds during this workshop, few are species available to study in the south bay, and all are stunning. With a four-day, week-day trip, we're able to avoid the weekend crowds and explore these unique habitats at leisure.

**Important Note:** We organize carpools each morning in Sierra City. We will have a maximum of four vehicles. Please do not sign up for this workshop if you're not prepared to carpool. Carpooling expenses are shared by the participants.

Dates: Monday 6/1 to Thursday 6/4.

Location: We meet at 1:00 p.m. at Yuba Pass on June 1st, and then meet at 7 a.m. in Sierra City on June 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Transportation, lodging, and meals are the responsibility of each participant. Shared meals are available for participants who stay in or near to Sierra City. Detailed itinerary will be forwarded upon registration.

Class size is limited to 15. Fee: \$100 members; \$125 non-members



*Wilson's Snipe  
by Tom Grey*



Come to McClellan Ranch Park and walk through the newly restored "Nancy Hertert Memorial Native Plant Garden." Cheryl Turner and the garden volunteers have turned the garden into a place of beauty once again! The Memorial Garden has officially qualified as a certified Bird Sanctuary, and displays its Bird Sanctuary Plaque proudly.

SCVAS NATURE SHOP  
**OPEN**  
MON - FRI 10 - 5  
SATURDAY 10 - 2  
VISA • MASTERCARD  
ACCEPTED  
408-252-3747

Did you know that the SCVAS Nature Shop sells Gardening Guides, Wildflower Field Guides and California Native plant seeds to help get your garden started?

Come by and check us out!

# Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

## Waterfowl through Bitterns

Late winter **Eurasian Wigeons** included a male in the Palo Alto estuary on 12 Feb (WGB) and a female there on 14 Mar (SCR et al.). Single males were seen at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 18 Feb (WGB) and 6 Mar (RWR, FV). Single males were also found in Pond A14 in Alviso on 28 Feb (MJM) and 11 Mar (WGB), and possibly the same male was in nearby Pond A10 on 29 Mar (MMR, MJM). The SCRWA treatment ponds continued to be the center for **Blue-winged Teal** this period with a high count of 5 males and 3 females on 6 Mar (RWR, FV). The last report of a Blue-winged from Artesian Slough was a single female on 24 Feb (DWe). A pair of Blue-wingeds were on Pond A1 in Mountain View on 10 Mar (MMR) where seldom found. A male in Adobe Creek on 24 Mar (AH et al.) was the only one found there in the period. Another possible hybrid **Northern Shoveler** was photographed at the Palo Alto Baylands on 22 Mar (SZ). A comparison with pictures of a similar hybrid seen in January shows some differences in plumage and it is not clear that it is the same bird. An intergrade **Common x Green-winged Teal** was seen in the Palo Alto Baylands on 8 Feb (WGB). The last report of **Redheads** were four at Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 23 Feb (AS). The male **Common x Barrow's Goldeneye** at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds was seen again on 23 Feb (JPa). The male and two female **Barrow's Goldeneyes** wintering on Shoreline Lake continued there through the end of February (v.ob.). The only loon found during the period was a **Red-throated Loon** at Calero Reservoir on 6 Mar (RWR, FV). **Brown Pelicans** lingering into February and March continued to surprise. At least seven birds were over Shoreline Lake on 23 Feb (WGB). Single birds were seen on Pond A14 in Alviso on 11 Mar (WGB) and on Pond A16 on 20 Mar (CVR) and 29 Mar (MMR, MJM). The first and last sightings were of an adult and the bird appeared to be healthy. These are our first records for March. Also, on 20 Mar, an immature was seen just north of the San Francisquito Creek mouth (WGB). The

**American Bittern** wintering in the Mountain View Forebay was not found in February, but was seen again 17-25 Mar (FV, BP).

## Eagles through Dippers

Adult **Bald Eagles** continued at Calero Reservoir through 13 Feb when two birds were seen (AV, v.ob.). The pair of Calaveras Reservoir birds appeared to be incubating eggs by 18 Feb (MJM) and remained on their nest through the end of the period. An adult over Ed Levin CP on 8 Feb (BP et al.) was likely one of these birds. Elsewhere, an adult was seen at Coyote Reservoir on 28 Feb (JT) and another bird was over Grant Lake on 7 Mar (GHI). An adult **Swainson's Hawk** over Ed Levin CP on 7 Mar (SCR,

*Brown Pelicans lingering into March were unique. Rare passerines included a continuing Eastern Phoebe, a Nashville Warbler, and a Clay-colored Sparrow.*

HLR) was early for this rare migrant. One to two, possibly three wintering **Ferruginous Hawks** were found in the Coyote Valley in February (v.ob.), the last one being the adult with the bad leg seen on 5 Mar (RPh). An adult was found along Marsh Road on 8 Feb (BP). The only **Prairie Falcon** during the period was one seen briefly on the west side of Calaveras Reservoir on 29 Mar (BP et al.). Two **Snowy Plovers** on closed ponds in Alviso on 28 Feb (MJM) were the only sign of birds moving back into the county from their winter haunts. At least 19 **Sanderling** were seen on Pond A14 in Alviso on 28 Feb (MJM) and at least five were there or nearby on 11 Mar (WGB). A single bird was in closed ponds at Alviso on both 28 Feb (MJM) and 29 Mar (MMR, MJM). The 1st-cycle **Glaucous Gull** continued to be seen at Almaden Lake, at least through 6 Mar (v.ob.). The Ogier Avenue ponds hosted at least two 2nd-cycle birds on 7 Feb and one of these again on 21 Feb as well as a 1st-cycle on that date (all SCR). A 1st-cycle Glaucous continued in either New Chicago Marsh or Pond A16 throughout the period (m.ob.). Another immature was on the Pond A11/A14 levee on 29 Mar (MMR, MJM). Two to six **Black Skimmers** were a distant

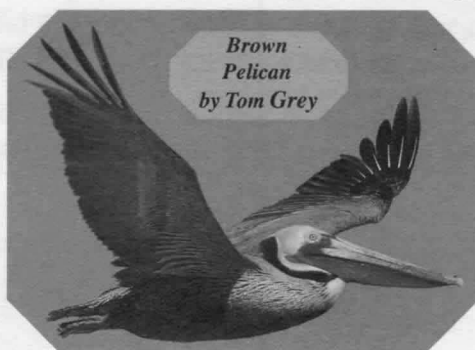
view on the northwest island in Pond A1 in Mountain View on 18 Feb (FV) and 17 Mar (FV, MMR). Four birds seen on the south island in Charleston Slough on 22 Mar (AH) may have been from the same group. A **Greater Roadrunner** was found along Cañada Road east of Gilroy on 8 Feb (LA). A pair was found east of Hellyer Road on 7 Mar (WGB) and one bird was seen there on 12 Mar (RWR, FV). The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the season was along Coyote Creek below Barber Lane on 4 Mar (WGB). As is typical of recent years, Ed Levin CP supported the most migrants with birds seen there through the end of the period (m.ob.), at least five males were tallied on 8 Mar (MMR). Other locations in the Diablo Range included one at the south end of Calaveras Reservoir on 7 Mar (MJM) and two at Alum Rock Park on 24 Mar (WGB). Feeder birds included one male in the Almaden Valley 17-22 Mar (JPa) and at least five males in Morgan Hill on 28 Mar (SCR). A bird was found in the Ulistac Natural Area in Santa Clara on 29 Mar (PT). Although in many of the same locations, **Allen's Hummingbirds** were found in fewer numbers, the first bird was seen at Ed Levin CP on 27 Feb (MJM). There were no reports of **Pileated Woodpeckers** from their normal haunts, but wandering birds were found along Stevens Creek at Blackberry Farm (about 310-ft elevation) on 12 Mar (BB) and in Stevens Creek CP (about 800-ft elevation) on 14 Mar (J&HVZ *vide* DJ). The Lake Cunningham **Eastern Phoebe** was last seen on 1 Feb (PH, JT). A **Western Kingbird** found at Ed Levin CP on 7 Mar (SCR, HLR) is the earliest arrival date I have for this summering bird by six days. At least one **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was found at Lake Cunningham throughout the period (v.ob.). One or two birds were reported in pines near the Glenbrook Apartments in Cupertino at the end of February (DJ), having been there since fall. A single bird was at Ed Levin CP on 7 Mar (SCR, HLR). A **Pygmy Nuthatch** was heard in Upper Stevens Creek CP on 3 Feb (WGB) and one was in Sanborn CP on 26 Mar (JPa, LR). **American Dippers** were found again along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road with three on 1 Feb (DWe) and one on 9 Feb (WGB). One to two were seen on Los Gatos Creek near downtown 28-31 Mar (LMY et al., BP).

## Field Notes *cont'd*

### Warblers through Siskins

We find wintering **Nashville Warblers** in about one year in three, so one seen in the Edenvale Garden Park in San Jose on 24 Feb (JPa) was a pleasant surprise. This bird was seen through 11 Mar (v.ob.). A wintering **Yellow Warbler** near the Alviso EEC was found at least through 13 Mar (v.ob.). A female seen along Geng Road and the Palo Alto Muni GC on 12 Feb (WGB) was probably the same bird there on 1 Jan, whereas the other bird reported in January was a young male. Another wintering bird was found along Coyote Creek below Barber Lane 4-6 Mar (AS). Presumably, a bird at Stevens Creek CP on 22 Mar (JT) was a spring arrival, but very early. The female **Black-throated Gray Warbler** wintering on the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) grounds remained there at least through 9 Mar (JPa, AV), the first spring arrival was a singing male along Charcoal Road on 27 Mar (RWR, FV). A wintering **Palm Warbler** near the Palo Alto maintenance yard next to the Flood Control Basin was last seen on 14 Feb (WGB), it was starting its prealternate molt. Wintering **Western Tanagers** included a male near the Penitencia Creek percolation ponds on 8 Feb (JPa), the continuing female-type near San Francisquito Creek above El Camino on 16 Feb (CB), one at Vasona Reservoir CP on 20 Feb (JPa), and one to two birds at Edenvale Garden Park 25 Feb-8 Mar (RWR, FV, AV, v.ob.). The wintering **Chipping Sparrow** flock continued at Jeffrey Fontana Park through 24 Mar

(JPa, v.ob.) with a maximum of eight birds. The first spring movement was of birds seen at Ed Levin CP on 25 Mar (MK *fide* RWR, FV). The wintering **Clay-colored Sparrow** along the Guadalupe River Trail north of Blossom Hill Road continued to be enjoyed by many through 17 Mar (JPa, v.ob.). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** found in Santa Teresa CP on 10 Mar (JPa) may have been a wintering bird, one singing on the slopes above Sandy Wool Lake in Ed Levin CP on 25 Mar (RWR, FV) was a returning



summer resident. The wintering **Swamp Sparrow** along the wastewater outfall at the Palo Alto Baylands was last seen on 7-8 Feb (PLaT). A **White-throated Sparrow** was found again along Guadalupe Creek off Guadalupe Mines Road on 18 Feb (JPa). A single bird was seen along Coyote Creek below Tasman on 4 Mar (WGB) and was there through at least 10 Mar (v.ob.). A bird was reported at a Milpitas feeder on 11 Mar (MO'B), there again for its third winter. Another feeder bird showed up in a Gilroy yard 22-28 Mar (JMy). There were scattered reports of at least one male and two female **Great-tailed Grackles** at the Coyote Creek GC during the period (v.ob.).

A singing male was seen at the SCVWD ponds on 31 Mar (JPa, SC). A wintering immature male **Bullock's Oriole** was in flowering eucalyptus at the Stanford Dish on 10 Feb (WGB), the first arriving bird was a male at Ed Levin CP on 15 Mar (BH). There were a few reports of **Pine Siskins**. In the Santa Cruz Mountains, two were at the Almaden Reservoir on 2 Feb (WGB), and up to 22 were over Monte Bello OSP on 28 Feb (GHa) with single birds at the end of the period. The only report from the Diablo Range was of eight birds in Joseph Grant CP on 7 Mar (JT). Surprising yard birds included one in San Jose on 8 Mar (JT) and another in the Almaden Valley on 29 Mar (JPa).

Observers: Linda Adams (LA), Charlie Bacon (CB), Barbara Banfield (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Shao Chen (SC), Garth Hall (GHI), Garth Harwood (GHa), Peter Headland (PH), Bob Hirt (BH), Alice Hoch (AH), Debi Jamison (DJ), Mary Kelly (MK), Peter LaTourrette (PLaT), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Lisa Myers (LMY), Jean Myers (JMy), Matthew O'Brien (MO'B), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (BP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Heather Rottenborn (HLR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Linda Ruthruff (LR), Ashutosh Sinha (AS), Janet Tatchell (JT), Phil Terzian (PT), Jim Thomas (JT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Janet & Hal Van Zoeren (J&HVZ), Ann Verdi (AV), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), Dave Weber (DWE), and Steve Zamek (SZ).

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

## 2008 Christmas Bird Count Summaries

*(This one was inadvertently left off of our last issue. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who made this count a success!)*

### The Calero-Morgan Hill CBC

*Ann Verdi, Coordinator and Compiler*

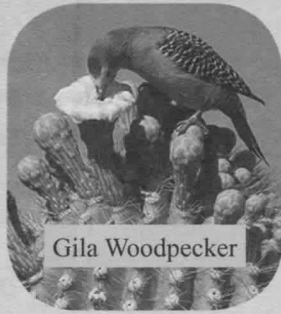
The 2008 Calero-Morgan Hill CBC was held on Dec 27, 2008 under fair skies. We ended up with 143 species for the day, and here are some highlights: 33 Cackling Geese (with most seen in Coyote Valley) - over 120 Wood Ducks - 200 Common Mergansers seen in a large flotilla at Chesbro Reservoir - 434 Wild Turkeys (highest count of any California CBC this season) - an immature Brown Pelican at the Water District - two adult Bald Eagles, a tagged individual seen in Coyote Valley and Calero Reservoir, and an untagged bird at Anderson Reservoir - a Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk wintering in Coyote Valley - four Ferruginous Hawks - 10 Merlin (a high count for this CBC)

- Eurasian Collared-Doves in Morgan Hill and Silver Creek - Tree Swallows at Anderson Reservoir - Violet-green Swallows at Calero Reservoir, Coyote Valley, and Santa Teresa Hills - a Greater Roadrunner in the Diablo foothills - an American Dipper upstream of Almaden Reservoir - White-throated Sparrow along Alamitos Creek Trail in suburban Almaden Valley - and Great-tailed Grackles at the Coyote Creek Golf Course. Count week birds of interest included an American Bittern at the Water District and Chipping Sparrows at Jeffrey Fontana Park in suburban Almaden. My thanks to all who participated this year. Our next count will be on Dec 26, 2009 - hope you can join us then!

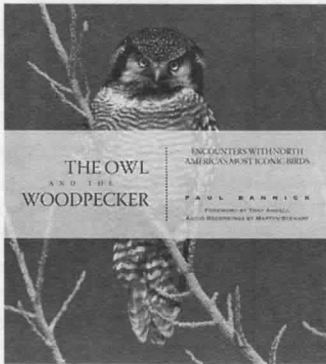
## May Gen. Mtg

(cont. from page 1)

field. He will have a special focus on western habitats. His talk will look at the way owls and woodpeckers define and enrich their habitat and how their life-histories are intertwined.



Gila Woodpecker



This book features a foreword by Tony Angell and audio by Martyn Stewart.

Copies of Paul Bannick's **THE OWL AND THE WOODPECKER** are on sale at SCVAS' Nature Shop at McClellan Ranch Park.

### We wish to thank the generosity of the following contributors for their financial support, February through March, 2009.

#### Avocet Circle:

Doug and Gail Cheeseman

#### Environmental Advocate Campaign:

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#### Partner:

Robert and Deborah Hirt

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## 2009 Spring Birdathon Golden Eagle Sponsors

SCVAS wishes to extend a very special "Thank You!" to our generous prize sponsors. We're grateful for their help in making our Spring Birdathon so successful in raising money for our youth environmental education and conservation programs. We have over 25 prize sponsors for the Spring Birdathon. Please visit [www.scvas.org/birdathon](http://www.scvas.org/birdathon) for more information.

The following are our 2009 Golden Eagle Sponsors who donated more than \$600 in prizes:

- Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris  
Financial support plus four Monterey Bay pelagic trips.
- Bob and Deb Hirt, SCVAS members  
Week time-share lodging in Mexico, Spain, or Colorado.
- David Presotto and Caryl Carr  
5-night vacation home stay in Sea Ranch, CA.
- Nancy Teater  
7-night vacation home stay in Sea Ranch, CA.
- Wild Bird Center, Los Gatos  
Pentax 10x43 binoculars and accessories



Margaret Okuzumi, John and Grace Hattori, Richard Hilton, Barbara Holbrook, Caroline Houston, Elizabeth Karren, Jonathan and Joella Kermit, Roger Kidd, Joanna Koch, Lisa Lawrence, Mary Lorey, Dean and Julia Mayberry, George and Lilo Miller, Carole Nast, Irene Osterbrock, Shirley Porter, Roberta Preu, Patricia Prickett, Uri Rabin, Patricia Rouzer, Kay Schroer, Harold and Karen Svendsen, Barbara Tyler, Rita Vrhel, Anuradha Yagati

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# The Palo Alto Summer Bird Count is Almost Here!

*Please consider helping us track our local breeding birds and enjoy a fun day in the field!*

The first Saturday in June each year - this year, June 6th - is the date for our annual counting of the birds in and around Palo Alto. We use the same circle as the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count, which ranges from along the bay to the Open Space areas along Skyline. The count circle is split about equally between Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. We are looking for folks of all ages and experience levels to participate. If you are a regular to this count, just contact your faithful region coordinator, but if you are new and want to join, let me know and I'll find a place for you. **Contact: Jack Cole, Count Organizer, 408-996-0434 or [snoyowl@yahoo.com](mailto:snoyowl@yahoo.com).**



## Annual Meeting and Potluck Wednesday, June 17, 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.



**NOTE: Bringing your own plates and cups to the dinner helps reduce the use of wasteful plastic and paperware.**



Join Cheesemans' Ecological Safaris on a voyage of discovery to an awe-inspiring world de-

voted to nature, wildlife, science and peace. From the stunning vistas of Tierra del Fuego to the busy penguin rookeries of the Falklands, from the dramatic landscapes of South Georgia to the ice-covered terrain of the Antarctic, this safari will have you completely captivated. Board the comfortable and safe 87-meter ice ship, the MV Polar Star, for an expedition offering 25 days on the ship, and an unparalleled seventeen landing days in the Southern Ocean (including 7 days along the Antarctic Peninsula). During days at sea, staff naturalists on the ship's bridge and stern share sightings of whales and seabirds, including many of the world's species of albatross and nesting Snow Petrels. Maximum time on shore will be available for photography, wildlife experiences and exploring the landscapes of the great Southern Oceans. This trip is sure to leave you breathless for years to come!

## Join Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris for a special Antarctic Adventure that you'll never forget!!

**Where:** The Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia, and Falkland Islands

**When:** December 28, 2009 to January 25, 2010

**What:** A non-smoking expedition for wildlife enthusiasts looking to spend maximum time in the field.



**Expedition Leaders:** Doug, Gail and Ted Cheeseman as Expedition Leaders. **NOTE:** This will

be Doug and Gail's last trip to the Falklands, so this is an excellent chance to take advantage of their 16 (or more!) years of Antarctic experience.

**Size:** 92 participants, not including our expedition staff - everyone can go ashore at the same time, without requiring time-limited shifts.

**Continuing decades of support for SCVAS conservation programs, a portion of the proceeds from this trip will be donated to the SCVAS chapter.**

For costs, more information or to reserve your space, go to [www.cheesemans.com](http://www.cheesemans.com), email [info@cheesemans.com](mailto:info@cheesemans.com), or call (800) 527-5330 (toll-free) or (408) 741-5330 (local).

## Wind Power *(continued from page 1)*

- Re-powering, where a much larger turbine replaces between 14 and 40 smaller turbines seems to be the magic bullet. Or not. Limited survey data indicates a significant decrease in raptor mortality where re-powering has been implemented, as seems intuitive. But along comes the next exasperating report that with the raptor mortality going down, the bat mortality goes in the opposite direction.

Within this context of more questions than answers, some very important dates loom. On June 1st the SRC files their recommendations for the prioritized management measures to be rolled into an adaptive management plan. On August 1st, Audubon and the wind industry are to propose an adaptive management plan back to the SRC and the County. The SRC is then to act on the adaptive management plan by November 1st.



Parallel to, but separate from this process is the development of the HCP-NCCP. Mike Lynes (Golden Gate Audubon's Conservation Director) and I are representing Audubon, along with the consultants from ICF Jones and Stokes, the wind power representatives, and the USFWS and CDFG representatives. This conservation plan boundary encompasses an area of 185,000 acres (289 square miles). It's our job to ensure that the plan first and foremost aids in the recovery of the birds being impacted at Altamont. There will be more to come, and I'll keep you apprised.

In the meantime, conserve; in the long run, that's the better answer.

### **Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers at our Annual Meeting on June 17, 2009**

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, 2009. 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 2009-10	Debbie Thompson
Vice President 2009-10	Bob Hirt
Treasurer 2009-10	Pete LaTourrette
Secretary 2009-10	Joan Leighton
Director 2009-12	David McIntyre
Director 2009-12	Ashok Khosla

## SCVAS / McClellan Ranch

### Wish List

You - our kindly, generous members - are often asking us here in the office if there's anything we need. And over the years, we have been well taken care of because of that generosity.

The time has come again to put out a "Wish List" call for large office items:



We are in need of new office computers - desktops and/or laptops - to help us keep things flowing smoothly with our membership database, scheduling, newsletter, online communications, you name it!

We are currently using Mac's, but would gratefully accept any computers with a decent amount of memory and harddrive space, and recent operating systems/software.

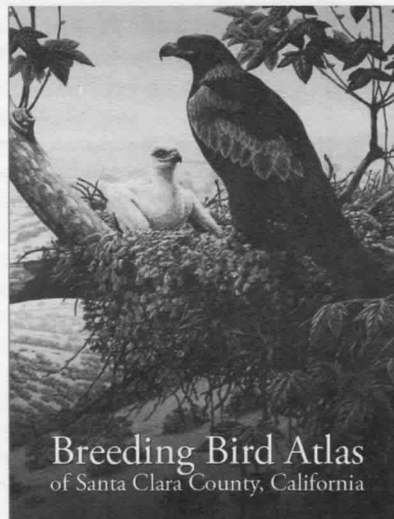


Contact our Office Manager, Susan Bell, at 408-252-3747 if you think you could help us out.

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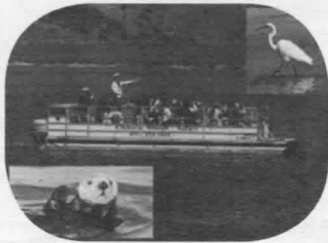
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# Young Audubon Summer Adventures Are Coming!

Join SCVAS and friends as we bring you some exciting ways to learn about our local wildlife and explore the Bay Area this summer!

Details (Dates, times, costs, etc.) will be available on the SCVAS website shortly, but here's what we're working on for Summer 2009:



**Elkhorn Slough Safari**  
Nature Boat Tours in Elkhorn Slough at Moss Landing  
For all ages 3\*\* and up!

Scholarships  
available for  
families in need

**Audubon "Bird" Camp**  
Bird watching, Bird walks, bird crafts, and so much more!  
McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino  
For ages 5-7\*\* and 8-10



\*Space is limited for all activities, so don't forget to sign up early!  
Priority will be given to groups with Children.



**Bird Banding**  
with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory  
"Conservation in Action!"  
McCarthy Ranch, Milpitas  
For all Bird Lovers, ages 5\*\* and up!

\*\*All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian for the activities/age groups indicated

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

## A Note From Our Friends At Greenbelt Alliance:

Dear Santa Clara Residents,

Greenbelt Alliance would like to reach out to citizens who are interested in the City of Santa Clara's General Plan update. Specifically, we would like to form a group of residents interested in urban parks, creeks and trails to meet about how we can highlight these important issues throughout the General Plan process. I would also like to encourage folks who are interested in the 'urban forest' to help promote other

climate-friendly policies in the General Plan. If you recently attended the community workshop on "Building Climate Friendly Communities" by the Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance and Planning and Conservation League, then this is an excellent opportunity to take what was learned there and apply it to your city.

Greenbelt Alliance has a seat on the General Plan steering committee and along with advocating for more compact homes near transit, we would like to promote policies that enhance urban

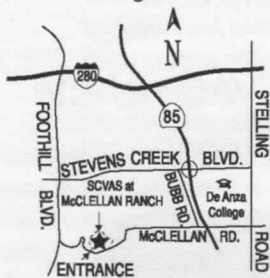
living, such as access to fresh foods, east-west trail connections for cyclists, etc. More importantly, we want to engage the community in this important planning process and make sure your concerns and ideas are being heard and addressed.

If this interests you, please contact Michele Beasley, South Bay Field Representative, Greenbelt Alliance ([www.greenbelt.org](http://www.greenbelt.org)); 1922 The Alameda, Suite 213, San Jose, CA 95126; [mbeasley@greenbelt.org](mailto:mbeasley@greenbelt.org), 408.983.0856.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society  
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| Bob Power                   | <a href="mailto:bob@scvas.org">bob@scvas.org</a>           |
| <b>Office Manager</b>       | 408/252-3747   |
| Susan Bell                  | <a href="mailto:scvas@scvas.org">scvas@scvas.org</a>       |
| <b>Programs Coordinator</b> | 408/252-3740   |
| Toby Goldberg               | <a href="mailto:programs@scvas.org">programs@scvas.org</a> |
| <b>Office Fax</b>           | 408/252-2850   |
| <b>Office E-mail</b>        | <a href="mailto:scvas@scvas.org">scvas@scvas.org</a>       |
| <b>Website</b>              | <a href="http://www.scvas.org">www.scvas.org</a>           |

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

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

**RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422**

**GIFTS:** SCVAS welcomes gifts, including those made in honor of or in memory of friends or relatives. Such gifts will be used at SCVAS' discretion for its programs and activities unless specified otherwise by the donor. Tax-deductible donations may be made in the form of a check made out to SCVAS and sent to our Cupertino address.

SCVAS is a private, non-profit corporation affiliated with the National Audubon Society

*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.

**Avocet Editor:** Toby Goldberg

**OFFICE HOURS**

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Monday - Friday | 10 AM - 5 PM |
| Saturday        | 10 AM - 2 PM |

**2009 Volume 56, Number 3**

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

- \$20: One Year SCVAS Membership     \$35: Two Year SCVAS Membership

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*Please note: As a generally policy, SCVAS does not share personal information with other organizations.*