

# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

March-April 2010

## Shedding a Light on Solar Development

By Shani Kleinhaus, SCVAS' Environmental Advocate

On January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Board of Directors of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society adopted the following policy on the development of solar infrastructure: "Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) supports sustainable energy programs that foster the development of renewable energy resources while focusing on energy conservation. We encourage the promotion of solar energy projects, policies and programs that focus on solar energy production in existing and planned communities, but do not impact rural and natural landscapes. We see a great need for incentives that would encourage solar energy harvesting in population centers throughout our nation (focused, for example, on rooftops and paved areas), and for investment in the development of solar technology with a small environmental footprint. We are as concerned about the need for renewable energy and projects as any other environmentally conscientious organization or individual. At the same time, we must ensure that providing one valuable resource does not outweigh other equally valuable resources."

### Background

In January 2010, the California Energy Commission's Public Interest Energy Research Program issued a call for research proposals to focus on "Reducing the Environmental Impacts of Solar Energy." The call solicits research topics that focus

on new mitigation strategies and methodologies for habitat assessments and impact assessments, and of validation of existing mitigation measures such as setting land aside. The details of this solicitation for research projects highlight the facts (1) that scientific

knowledge has yet to catch up with landscape-scale solar development; (2) that almost nothing is known of the full, long-term impacts of such developments; and (3) that the toolkit of measures that are usually employed to mitigate for environmental harm is inadequate in the case of hundreds or thousands of acres of solar infrastructure. Indeed, the call for proposal states, "Research will help resolve some of the scientific uncertainties about the biological impacts of utility-scale solar energy development in California's deserts, and will inform the process of project siting and development."

In light of the paucity of scientific information on environmental impacts of utility scale solar projects and on how they may be mitigated, SCVAS believes that landscape-changing projects should be examined with extreme caution. We are concerned with the push to convert natural and agricultural lands into solar "farms" that create, in essence, industrial landscapes. We argue that in areas that provide refuge to significant populations of plants and wildlife, the primary consideration

*(continued on page 14)*

**The Spring  
Birdathon Starts  
March 27th -  
Sign-up For Your  
Favorite Team(s)  
Today!  
-Page 8**

## General Membership Meetings

Palo Alto Arts Center

Newell & Embarcadero Rds

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00



Wednesday, March 17th

### "Wild Birds in Motion" with Larry Arbanas

*(of Earthwhile Nature Productions)*

Don't miss this program by Larry Arbanas, Cornell Lab of Ornithology filmmaker and Northern California resident. Having spent endless hours kneeling in swamps swatting mosquitoes and flies while shooting footage of birds (so we don't have to), he'll share some of his best footage with us.

Wednesday, April 21st

### "Breeding Strategies of California Birds" with Bob Stewart

Taking an organized approach to the role of male and female relations, Bob will relate unique behavioral facts for many species, including wonderful personal experiences from his many years of watching nesting birds as a researcher and teacher. Come enjoy Bob Stewart's fascinating show on behaviors of birds we think we know, but have lots more to learn about when it comes to their intimate lives.

- ❖ 8th Annual "Going Native Tour" with CNPS — Page 4
- ❖ Winter Brings Record Firsts! — Field Notes, Page 6
- ❖ Young Audubon's "Amazing Bird Chase" — Page 9
- ❖ Christmas Bird Count Results & Summaries — Beginning on Page 10
- ❖ Beak & Feather Boutique on April 3rd — Page 15

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# March - April '10 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**

## **Wednesday Mar. 3, 12:00 PM**

### **City of Sunnyvale Landfill**

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

## **Saturday Mar. 6, 8:00 AM**

### **Windy Hill OSP**

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

## **Sunday Mar. 7, 9:00 AM**

### **Stanford Campus**

Half day. Leader: Dick Stovel (650) 856-6105. From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto take University Ave. exit west through downtown and into Stanford campus (University Ave. becomes Palm Dr.). Meet at the end of Palm Dr. at entrance to Main Quad. Local breeding birds and early returning migrants should be active. This field trip is highly recommended for beginning birders. **RC**

## **Wednesday Mar. 10, 8:30 AM**

### **Grant Ranch County Park**

Half day. Leader: Pat Brennan (408) 266-7572. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. and go approximately 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot on left, after main park entrance (do not enter the Main Park Entrance on the right). Freshwater ducks, Yellow-billed Magpies, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2 mile walk. Possible entry fee. **LO, RC**

## **Saturday Mar. 13, 8:00 AM**

### **Uvas Creek Park Preserve**

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go west

on Tenth St. about a mile where it turns right and becomes Uvas Pkwy. Turn left at Miller Ave., drive over Uvas Creek and turn left into Christmas Hill Park and park in the first isle to the right. Trip is a fairly easy but long walk. Note: Low water conditions in the creek may require an alternate birding destination in the Gilroy area. **LO, RC**

## **Sunday Mar. 14, 8:00 AM**

### **Almaden Lake Park and Alamos Creek**

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. Meet in the west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south. The park is on the east (left) side of Almaden Expwy. Continue past the park to Coleman Road and return northbound on Almaden Expwy to the park entrance on the right. Expect about 3 miles of easy walking. We will bird the lake and the trail upstream looking for waterfowl, raptors, and a wide variety of riparian birds. **Spring forward**, or be an hour late for this trip. **LO, RC**

## **Saturday Mar. 27, 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, Chestnut Picnic Area parking lot. A top riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. Entrance fee required. **LO, RC**

## **Sunday Mar. 28, 8:00 AM**

### **Oka Ponds**

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From Hwy 17 in Los Gatos take Lark Ave. exit west. Turn right on Oka Rd., left on Mozart Ave. and an immediate right on Oka Lane. Meet at gate at the end of the lane. **RC**

## **Saturday Apr. 3, 8:00 AM**

### **Alum Rock Park**

Half day. Leader: Al Eisner (650) 364-3686 evenings, (650) 926-2018 days and voice-mail. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward the hills then left on

Toyon Ave. then right on Penitencia Creek Rd. and continue on into the park. Meet in the "Rustic Lands" parking area, on the right just before reaching the "T" intersection and underpass. Expect a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk, looking for resident breeding birds (possible Rufous-Crowned Sparrow, and American Dipper if we are lucky), early migrants, and lingering winter birds. Also be prepared for some mud! Possible entrance fee. **LO, RC**

## **Sunday Apr. 4, 7:30 AM**

### **Gilroy Hot Springs Road**

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Parking space is limited in some places on this trip so we will meet at 7:30 AM behind McDonalds (near Kenneth Cole) on the right side of Leavesley Rd. (corner of Arroyo Circle) and will carpool from there. FRS radios tuned to channel 11 will be especially useful during the driving portion of this trip. Highlights: migrating and breeding birds of southern Santa Clara County. **RC**

## **Wednesday Apr. 7, 12:00 PM**

### **City of Sunnyvale Landfill**

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell, Allen Royer and/or Elaine Gould. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. See details from Mar. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **Saturday Apr. 10, 8:00 AM**

### **Grant Ranch County Park**

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. See directions and details from Mar 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **Sunday Apr. 11, 9:00 AM**

### **Charleston Slough**

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. From Hwy 101 in Mt. View take San Antonio Rd. north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at the entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. This trip is recommended for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. Bring your spotting scope and a friend.

## **Wednesday Apr. 14, 8:30 AM**

### **Stevens Creek County Park**

Half day. Leader: Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330. See directions and details from Mar 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **Saturday Apr. 17, 9:00 AM**

### **Hidden Villa**

Half day. Leader: Garth Harwood (650) 879-1602. Bird the farm, gardens and

## Field Trips *continued*

wild land edges of this unique facility with Hidden Villa's Environmental Education Director. There will be special emphasis on learning to bird by ear. From I-280 in Los Altos take El Monte Rd. past Foothill College, turn left at Moody Rd. then after approx. 1.7 miles left into Hidden Villa. Meet at the first parking lot beside the entrance. A \$5 per car parking fee is required. Following this walk, participants may opt to join in on a nest box monitoring session at a nearby park or preserve. **LO, RC**

### Sunday Apr. 18, 8:00 AM

#### Ed Levin County Park (North)

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

### Saturday Apr. 24, 8:00 AM

#### Arastradero OSP

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west (toward the Santa Cruz mountains) turn right on Arastradero Rd. and meet in the

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

### Sunday Apr. 25, 8:00 AM

#### Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University

Half day. Leaders: Marion & Kendric Smith. **Trip limited to 16 people**; call Marion at (650) 493-7210 to reserve a space. There is a fee of \$5/person for Jasper Ridge. Meet in the parking lot on the right side of Sand Hill Rd. as you head west toward the Preserve (near the freeway at the intersection of Lawler Ranch Road and Sand Hill Rd.). Form your own carpool at the parking lot - **carpooling is required** to minimize the number of cars on the Preserve. Caravan with a leader from the parking area between 7:50 AM and 8:00 AM (ONLY!) when the gate will then be open. **(Do not leave from the parking lot any earlier - waiting and/or parking outside the gate is not allowed as it poses an unacceptable traffic hazard!)** From I-280, the main gate is on the left side of the road about 2 miles West (away from the freeway) on Sand Hill Rd. Trip involves 2-3 miles of moderately strenuous walking, and goes rain or shine.



## Planning Ahead:

### Saturday May 1, 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 2, 8:30 AM

#### Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. For directions see the write-up for March 27<sup>th</sup>.

### Wednesday May 12, 8:30 AM

#### Rancho Canada del Oro O.S.P.

Half day. Leader: Janna Pauser (408) 997-1727. 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**

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

**Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Topic TBA – go to [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) for details.

### Tue. 4/13; 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: Ruddy Duck

### Thur. 4/22

#### EARTH DAY!

Go out and celebrate the beautiful planet we live on! There are lots of events happening around the area to do just that - go to [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) for more information.

### Thur. 4/29, 4:30PM (Dinner at 6:30PM)

#### Volunteer Appreciation Birdwalk & BBQ

McClellan Ranch Park.  
See page 4 for details

## SCVAS Events Calendar:

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

**Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Topic TBA – go to [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) for details.

### Tues. 3/09, 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: Mountain Bluebird

### Sat. 3/13, 1-4PM

#### Cavity Nesters Recovery Program (CNRP) Nestbox Training #3

#### Arastradero OSP, Palo Alto

If you are interested in becoming a nestbox monitor, but missed the orientation meeting in February, it's not too late! Join David "Tex" Houston as he prepares new monitors for the coming breeding season, including tips on how to clean out the boxes, record the data, and deal with any

"surprises" along the way. Please RSVP to (408) 252-3740 or [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org).

### Tues. 3/16; 6:30PM

#### Birdathon Kick-Off Party

#### McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

For anyone involved in a Birdathon Team - as a participant or a sponsor. Join us for laughs, food, friends, and tips to make your birdathon experience a great one! Please RSVP to 408-252-3747.

### Sat. 3/20; 10:30AM & 1PM

#### Young Audubon Whale Watching

#### Monterey Bay

Rescheduled from January 18<sup>th</sup>  
See page 9 for details

### Sat. 4/3; 10AM-2PM

#### Beaks & Feather Boutique

#### McClellan Ranch Park

See page 13 for details



# Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg  
Programs Coordinator

I love the fact that nationally, we have an entire week – **April 19<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>** – devoted to honoring our hard-working volunteers! This year's theme is "Celebrating People in Action" – and I can't think of more active, involved people than SCVAS' volunteers! Last year alone, SCVAS volunteers donated thousands of "formal" hours of service, which doesn't include all of the at-home, behind-the-scenes things they do!

So - to all of our volunteers – **THANK YOU!** Please stop in the office to say "hi" and let us show our appreciation, or join us for one of the fun activities we have planned in the coming months as another way for us to say "Thanks!"

Thanks to our friends at the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge in Alviso, we are able to offer a special, behind-the-scenes, levee tour on **Wednesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> from 12:30-3:30PM**. This unique experience, led by Refuge biologists, will take us into areas of the reserve generally closed to the public, and give us a chance to see some of the late wintering and early breeding birds that visit the Refuge. Space is limited, and advance registration is required – so don't wait! Call me today to sign up!

And, in case that's not enough, we will also host a special Volunteer Appreciation Birdwalk and BBQ at McClellan Ranch Park on **Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>**. We'll take advantage of the lengthening spring days (and the birding expertise of our Executive Director) to do some birding, some socializing, and some sharing of what we all love about volunteers. The birdwalk will begin at 4:30PM, dinner at 6:30PM. Please RSVP no later than **Friday April 23<sup>rd</sup>** to (408) 252-3740 or [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org). We look forward to seeing you!

And, if you've been thinking about getting involved, now is a great time to explore our many opportunities and see what might be a good fit for you. Here are a few opportunities that



**1st Annual Point Reyes Birding Festival  
West Marin County**

Go to [www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org) for more details and to register.

might peak your interest (more available on our website under "Get Involved"):

**Publicity, Marketing and Media Assistants** – SCVAS always has a number of events, activities, classes, etc. that we want to share with the community, but we need help getting the word out! We are looking for volunteers willing to work with us on a variety of media-related tasks throughout the year, including posting information on online calendars, updating our SCVAS website, etc. In particular, we'd like to expand our publicity and outreach for our Monthly General Meetings. There are different levels of involvement and different tasks that can fit anyone's schedule and interest - time commitment will vary, but we will work with your schedule and availability. This is a great opportunity to help get SCVAS' name out into the community!

**Wetlands Discovery Program Docent** – Share the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with 3rd through 6th graders throughout Santa Clara County. Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat, both in the classroom and out in the field. This program is rewarding for both volunteers and the hundreds of South Bay children who participate (over 1000 in 2008/2009)! No experience is necessary - we will provide training for both field and class sessions. All a potential docent needs is a love of nature and a desire to share it.

**Native Plant Garden** – Join us in keeping the Nancy Hertert Memorial Native Plant Garden at McClellan Ranch Park beautiful! We need volunteers to help plant, weed, water, propagate, label, and more. This has definitely become a much-loved part of McClellan Ranch, but we need some help keeping it that way – any and all help is welcome!

*SCVAS and SCVAS' Bird Sanctuary Program are proud to support the 2010 "Going Native Garden Tour". We applaud all gardeners who have chosen to include California Native Plants in their landscaping decisions - good for the yard, good for the bird, good for the environment!*

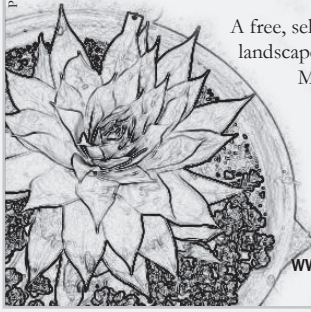
CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter  
in association with UCCE Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County  
present

## **Eighth Annual Going Native Garden Tour**

Sunday, April 18, 2010  
10 am-4 pm  
Locations throughout  
Santa Clara Valley & Peninsula



Photo: Agri Kechie



A free, self-guided tour of over 50 gardens landscaped with California native plants • Many private home gardens, some public native gardens • Visit as many as you like ☐ for ideas, for photos, for inspiration.

**Free admission**  
Registration required at  
[www.GoingNativeGardenTour.org](http://www.GoingNativeGardenTour.org)

# 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).

## Name That Bird Tune: Tips and Tricks for Demystifying Bird Song with *Jim Liskovec*

This short course is intended to focus on the tools and methods of learning bird song at this prime time of year. We will explore the What, How, and When of bird song, and discuss resources available for the learning process. We'll listen to recorded bird song and then practice our listening skills on two morning field trips. Our activity will foster a greater appreciation for the importance of bird songs and add to your enjoyment of birding. **Some basic birding experience required.** **Dates:** **Class:** Monday 3/29, 6:30-8:30PM; **Field:** Tuesday 3/30 & Friday 4/2; 6:30-8:30AM. **Location:** **Class:** McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino; **Field:** Rancho San Antonio OSP. **Fee:** \$30 members; \$35 non-members. **Class limited to 12 participants.**



## “Who Made That?” An Exploration of the Nests (and Eggs) of Our Local Birds with *Freddy Howell and Toby Goldberg*

The springtime is a great time of year to watch birds industriously building their nests and getting ready to welcome their little ones into the world. But most of the time, we only see the beautifully crafted nests after the birds have finished with them for the season – and can't tell which bird goes with which nest! Using collections from all over the county, we'll examine the amazing, and sometimes humorous, skill of our local species and help you learn to identify species by the evidence they leave behind. **Date:** Thursday, 4/8; 6-8PM. **Location:** McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino. **Fee:** \$10 members; \$15 non-members. **Class limited to 20 participants.** **This class is designed for adults and children, ages 8 and up.**



## Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Field Seminars Beginning Birding – What's Along My Creek? with *Bob Power*

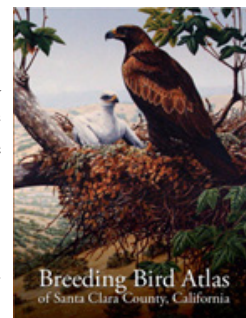
This class will be conducted partly outside of our feeders at McClellan Ranch and partly along the Stevens Creek trail. Please bring a portable lawn chair/camp chair/folding chair, blanket, warm clothing, and comfortable walking shoes. Class will focus on local backyard birds that are attracted to feeders as well as our local creekside nesting birds. We'll discuss bill shape and facial patterns as we work on important field marks used to identify local birds. Bring Sibley's Guide to Birds of Western North America and binoculars if you have them; we'll provide binoculars if you don't. **Dates:** Three Thursday morning sessions available: 4/1, 4/8, and 4/15, 8-10AM (please specify which session when signing up). **Location:** McClellan Ranch, Cupertino. **Fee:** \$10 members per class; \$15 non-members (with special 3-class discount: \$25 members; \$40 non-members). **Class size is limited to 15.**



## Planning Ahead:

### Breeding Birds of Santa Clara County with *Bob Power*

This four-class / four-field trip series will introduce you to the Breeding Bird Atlas of Santa Clara County and the data collection methods used to compile the atlas. **Dates:** Classes: Wednesdays 5/5, 5/12, 5/19 & 5/26, 9:30-11:30AM; Field Trips: Saturdays 5/8, 5/15, 5/22, & 5/29; 7AM-12PM. **Location:** Classes: McClellan Ranch Park; Field: TBD. **Fee:** \$100 members; \$125 non-members. **NOTE: This series of workshops requires some familiarity with the identification of local birds.**



## Don't forget - Spring is Nesting Season!



☞ When landscaping, be careful to watch out for nests, eggs, and fledglings - make sure you're not disturbing our breeding birds!

☞ It's not too late to get your nest boxes ready! Our local cavity nesters will be eagerly seeking out nesting sites and starting their broods throughout the Spring. If you haven't already, check your nest boxes for old nests, debris, etc., and clean them up for this year. But make sure to not disturb active nests! If in doubt about a particular nest box, leave it until the end of the season.





# Field Notes

(December 2009-January 2010)

by Bill Bousman

## Waterfowl

Wintering **Greater White-fronted Geese** were found locally during the period in groups of one to four in such locations as the Sunnyvale WPCP, Shoreline Park, and Joseph Grant CP (m.ob.). Individuals were found irregularly in other spots in the South Bay. Less expected were overflights of larger groups, including more than 100 over the Alviso ponds on 19 Dec (MSt), 200 over Lake Cunningham the next day (DSt et al.), and 36 that touched down on Grant Lake on 4 Jan (OH). One to two immature **Snow Geese** were found at the Sunnyvale WPCP during the period (RKe, FV, MDo, DWe, v.ob.). An immature at Shoreline Park on 19 Dec (RWR) and two birds on the Sunnyvale GC on 25 Dec (ChW) may have been related to this twosome. An adult was found along Condit Road in Morgan Hill on 9 Dec (SCR) and remained there until at least 5 Jan. An adult at the nearby San Pedro percolations ponds 7-23 Jan (v.ob.) was possibly the same bird, but the adult seen at the Coyote Creek GC on 4 Jan (MJM) may have been different. A **Ross's Goose** showed up in Shoreline Park on 5 Dec (KO, MSc, DWe, GJ) and remained with the Canadas through the period (m.ob.). It is likely that the same bird was near the Palo Alto landfill on 7 Jan (WGB) and at the Geng Road pond on 14 Jan (SM). Two birds were at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 9 Dec (RWR, FV). A HY bird was found along Condit Road on 9-11 Dec (SCR), but it is not clear that this was the same bird seen at the San Pedro percolation ponds on 11 Jan (RWR, FV). Three birds on Grant Lake on 15 Dec (OH) may have included the single bird seen there in November. A Ross's at Lake Cunningham on 19 Dec (JPa) may have presaged an ongoing set of observations of a single bird all within a 5-10 km radius of Cottonwood Lake, including the Villages GC on 21 Dec (MF), Cottonwood Lake on 25 Dec-1 Jan (v.ob.), the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds on 7 Jan (JPa), near the Steinbeck School on 9 Jan (JPa), and DeAnza Park on Meridian on 15 Jan (JPa). An immature **Tundra Swan** touched down on Lake Cunningham on 23 Dec (BHi) and soon left, this swan rarely lingers. For the most part, **Eurasian Wigeon** were found in typical numbers for the winter period. The exception was on the outer Alviso ponds, A9 and A14. On 20 Dec, the San Jose CBC day, 38 males and 2 females were tallied on these ponds (SCR, MMR), but not all were within the count circle. There are fewer than a half dozen occasions where observers have found this wigeon in double digits, this winter's count is a record for

the county. Small numbers of **Blue-winged Teal** were found in typical locations including four birds at the SCRWA (Gilroy) treatment ponds on 9 Dec (RWR, FV), one to three birds along Adobe Creek over the period (v.ob.), at least two in the Lockheed Martin ponds or nearby in the Sunnyvale WPCP for the period (v.ob.), and up to eight birds at the Storm Water Pond at Moffett Field 21 Dec-6 Jan (MMR, WGB). Less expected sightings included a female along Thompson Creek on 20 Dec (BT), three in Artesian Slough on 9 Jan (MDo et al.), a pair in Pond A2W on 13 Jan (RKe, PKe), and a pair in the middle of Shoreline Lake on 29 Jan (WGB). A Green-winged Teal found in the Lockheed Martin ponds on 9 Jan (MDo et

## White-faced Ibis and Swainson's Hawk were first winter records

al.) had white scapular stripes, but also a hint of a vertical white bar at its shoulder suggesting that it was an intergrade between Green-winged and **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** (or Common Teal). These intergrades may be slightly more common in the South Bay, although few have been photographed. A male Eurasian in the Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh on 13 Jan (RKe, PKe) and nearby in Stevens Creek on 17 Jan (WGB) showed no sign of intergradation. Large numbers of **Redhead** were found on the Alviso ponds with 191 tallied on 20 Dec (MMR, SCR), but numbers dropped in January (v.ob.). Birds were found in double digits on Pond A2E and Crittenden Marsh east of Stevens Creek during the period (v.ob.) with a high count of 66 on 21 Dec (MJM). The inland male on the Ogier Avenue ponds continued in the period through at least 21 Jan (SCR, RP, RKe, RPh). A male **Common X Barrow's Goldeneye**, returning for its third winter to the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds, was seen during the period (JPa, MJM). A pair of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** continued at Shoreline Lake. Additionally, two females were there on 19 Dec (RWR) and 27 Dec (KS, SS), an immature male and female were seen on 1 Jan (MMR, AR), and an immature female was seen again on 19 Jan (WGB). The female found on Lake Cunningham in November was found again on 20 Dec (DSt et al.) and 3 Jan (JPa). Two adult females were seen on Pond A10 in Alviso on 20 Dec (MMR, SCR).

## Loons through Gulls

A **Pacific Loon** on Pond A16 in Alviso was a good find on 24 Dec (MDo). A **Common Loon** was in the Capitancillos percolation ponds 3-8

Dec (JPa, AV). A single bird showed up at the Los Gatos Creek CP percolation ponds on 11 Dec (SCR) and at least two birds were there by 19 Dec (CVR). One or both remained there through the month (v.ob.). A few **Brown Pelicans** lingered into January as occurred last year. Surprisingly, birds were found inland with an immature over the Coyote Creek GC on 5 Jan (WGB), one at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds on 7 Jan (JPa), and one at the Parkway Lakes on 14 Jan (MJM). An adult **Pelagic Cormorant** was again on an Alviso pond levee on 20 Dec (MMR, SCR) and 15-16 Jan (WGB, MMR, RGJ, MJM). Surprisingly, additional singles were found on Pond A2W on 17 Dec (FV, RWR) and on Stevens Creek Reservoir on 2-8 Jan (PLD, v.ob.). The **American Bittern** found in the Mountain View Forebay in November was seen there irregularly through at least 16 Jan (v.ob.). The bird found at the Oka percolation ponds was seen again on 17 Dec (GJ) and the one on Grant Lake was observed on 2 Jan (OH). Birds at new locations included one over Triangle Marsh in Alviso on 20 Dec (MMR, SCR), one in an 'oxbow' northwest of Riverside Drive in the Coyote Valley on 26 Dec (MJM), and possibly the same birds at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 21 Jan (RPh). **White-faced Ibis** continued into the period for our first winter records of the species. Mostly single birds were found, from Pond A4 in Sunnyvale to the Palo Alto Baylands (m.ob.). But four were seen together in the Mountain View Forebay on 26 Jan (GHa). All were 1st-winter birds. The Calaveras Reservoir **Bald Eagles** were seen again 27 Dec-2 Jan (DWe, v.ob.). Likely wintering birds included an adult at Calero Reservoir or nearby at the Almaden Reservoir 1 Dec-13 Jan (AV, v.ob.) and in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM). Other birds seen included a 3rd-year bird in the Coyote Valley 22-25 Jan (RPh, RSh, JPa), an adult at Anderson Reservoir on 23 Jan (GJ, HS), an adult in Coyote Valley on 23 Jan (PLaTfide AME), one over Joseph Grant CP on 28 Jan (MO'B, DR), and an adult and juvenile at Coyote Reservoir CP on 30 Jan (RWR et al.). A juvenile **Swainson's Hawk** was seen and photographed in the Coyote Valley on 13 Jan (RPh) for the first winter record for the county. A **'Harlan's' Red-tailed Hawk** returned to the Coyote Valley on 3 Dec (RPh) for its fourth winter and has been found there at least through 5 Jan (RPh, WGB). An adult **Ferruginous Hawk** has wintered in the Coyote Valley (m.ob.) and an immature was seen there on 1 Jan (MDo, KDo). Elsewhere, a bird was seen near the Sierra Road summit on 20 Dec (MJM, v.ob.) and 3 Jan (JY, AL et al.), an adult was at the south end of Calaveras Reservoir on 20 Dec (fide KHo), two adults were on Coyote Ridge on 26 Dec (SCR), and two adults and an immature were in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM). A wintering **Prairie Falcon** was seen again in the Coyote Valley through at least 9 Jan (v.ob.). Single birds were also

## Field Notes *cont'd*

found at Ed Levin CP on 8 Dec (WGB) and the SCRWA (Gilroy) treatment ponds on 9 Dec (RWR, FV). A **Black Rail** was seen flying into the levee at the Palo Alto Baylands on the high tide of 2 Jan (SSa), the first since the winter of 2005-06. Wintering **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found in the Alviso Marina CP on 19 Dec (JT), possibly the same bird in Pond A12 on 15-16 Jan (WGB, MMR, RGJ, MJM), eleven birds on closed refuge ponds in Alviso on 16 Jan (MMR, RGJ, MJM), and one at Shoreline Lake on 28 Jan (JAC). A **Ruddy Turnstone** and a **Red Knot** were just north of the county line at the San Francisquito Creek delta on 21 Dec (MMR). **Sanderling** were found on Pond A12 during the period with a high count of 68 on 20 Dec (MMR, SCR), the same observers found one more bird on A13 that day. Surveys on closed refuge ponds on 16 Jan (MMR, RGJ, MJM) tallied nine birds. A second-winter **Glaucous Gull** was on the Pond A14/A15 levee on 20 Dec (MMR, SCR) and possibly a different bird was seen the same day in Artesian Slough (DWe).

### Roadrunners through Goldfinches

Two **Greater Roadrunners** were spotted during the period, both on 26 Dec (SCR, AME). One was on Coyote Ridge and the second was east of Piercy Road. A **Short-eared Owl** was seen along Alviso Slough on 15 Jan (WGB). A **Lewis's Woodpecker** was found in the San Felipe Valley on 26 Dec (MMR), presumably a wintering bird. Good numbers were seen on the Mt. Hamilton CBC on 2 Jan with 23 tallied in the Isabel Valley (MMR, MJM) and 25 in the San Antonio Valley (WGB, RP). An adult female **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found using an extensive system of wells in acacias along Creek Drive in Menlo Park on 30 Nov (JL) and was observed on a number of occasions to use trees across San Francisquito Creek in Santa Clara County (v.ob.). An adult male Yellow-bellied was found on Craig Drive in San Jose on 5 Jan (RWR), most active on wells in a pepper tree. It has remained there through the period. A male **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen on Table Mountain on 30 Dec (RKe, PKe) and a female was over Monte Bello OSP on 4 Jan (GHa). It has been a surprising period for rare, wintering flycatchers. A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was banded at the Coyote Creek Field Station on 20 Dec and recaptured on 13 Jan (*vide* TG). One wintered there in 2003-04 as well. A **'Western' Flycatcher** was found at the Emma Prusch Farm Park in San Jose on 20 Dec (AV) and was seen there again on 23 Dec (WGB). There are few winter records for this common summer resident. A **Myiarchus Flycatcher** was seen along Coyote Creek near La Ragione Avenue on 20 Dec (FV, KF) and was likely an Ash-throated. Both **Tree** and **Violet-green Swallows** are casual winter visitors, but a flock of 300 birds

near Bloomfield and Frazier Lake roads on 1 Jan (SCR) was unusual (roughly 90 Trees and 210 Violet-greens). The only other swallows found during the period were two **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** at the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds on 20 Dec (WGB, JT), one over the Lockheed Martin ponds on 21 Dec (MJM), and two at Lake Cunningham on 18 Jan (MJM).

An **American Dipper** was seen on Alamitos Creek from 16 Dec to at least 23 Jan (AV et al., JPa). Two birds were found along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road 1-12 Jan (J&RM, RKe, PKe, MMR). Two to five birds were seen along Los Gatos Creek above Los Gatos 15 Jan to the end of the period (JPa, v.ob.). A few irruptive **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were found: one was near Twin Creeks on 15 Dec (AV), one was in Cuesta Park in Mountain View on 21-22 Dec (AV, MMR), and six were counted in two locations in the San Felipe Valley on 26 Dec (MMR). Three **Phainopepla** were seen in the Isabel Valley on 2 Jan (MMR, MJM) and two more were found along the San Antonio Valley Road the same day (MA et al.). A wintering **Nashville Warbler** at the Sunnyvale Municipal GC on 21 Dec (RKe, PKe) was a good find, we encounter winter birds in about one year in three. Slightly more common, a continuing **Yellow Warbler** was seen near the Alviso EEC on 1 Dec (CVR, HS), one was near the end of Geng Road in Palo Alto on 24 Dec (RF), and possibly the same bird was seen there on 19 Jan (MJM). The only wintering **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was one seen along Adobe Creek near Mitchell Park on 20 Jan (BBa). A **Hermit Warbler**, also a rare winterer, was seen along Coyote Reservoir on 30 Jan (RWR et al.). The Charleston Road marsh **Northern Waterthrush** was sometimes found through at least 11 Jan (MMR, AME, WGB). The **Chipping Sparrow** flock at Jeffrey Fontana Park has re-established itself this winter (JPa) and at least 10 birds were there on 13 Dec (MDo, EG). A single bird was found along Marsh Road (*vide* KHo). Eight **Sage Sparrows** were found at higher elevations in the Diablo Range on 2 Jan (BP, PK), but only a few birds were found elsewhere that day (RP, MA et al.). Wintering **Grasshopper Sparrows** included one along Coyote Ridge on 26 Dec (SCR) and another at Santa Teresa CP on 4 Jan (GHa). Some birders hunting the elusive **Nelson's Sparrow** wintering at the Palo Alto Baylands had success (v.ob.), others did not. A **Swamp Sparrow** was found at the Oka percolation ponds on 1 Dec (ER). Another bird was found at the Palo Alto Baylands along the outfall channel on 13 Dec (ST) and was seen by many through the period (v.ob.). At least 13 **White-throated Sparrows** were found during the period (v.ob.), two were at feeders. A male **Western Tanager** in a Palo



White-faced  
Ibis  
by Tom Grey

Alto yard on 13 Dec (PMB) was the only one found during the period. **Great-tailed Grackles** were irregular in the Coyote Valley during the period, four males and 10 females were seen at the Ogier Avenue ponds about 13 Dec (RPh), and five males and seven females were at the Coyote Creek GC on 5 Jan (WGB). About 20 **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were found in Alum Rock Park on 20 Dec (*vide* KHo) and another 20 or so were along the Mule Trail on Mt. Hamilton on 2 Jan (BP, PK).

Observers: MA (Mike Azevedo), Bill Bauriedel (BBa), Bill Bousman (WGB), Phyllis M. Browning (PMB), Jack Cole (JAC), Kelly Dodder (KDo), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PLD), Al Eisner (AME), Rich Ferrick (RF), Karl Fowler (KF), Mary Fullerton (MF), Tom Goodier (TG), Eric Goodill (EG), Garth Harwood (GHa), Bob Hirt (BHi), Kirsten Holmquist (KHo), Owen Holt (OH), Ganesh Jayaraman (GJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Petra Kinsman (PK), Pete LaTourrette (PLaT), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Joanne Lazar (JL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Sonny Mencher (SM), Julio & Renee Mulero (J&RM), Matthew O'Brien (MO'B), Kris Olson (KO), Richard Page (RP), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (BP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Dave Rocha (DR), Alma Rogers (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Edward Rooks (ER), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Sal Salerno (SSa), Ken Schneider (KS), Susan Schneider (SS), Michael Scott (MSc), Robert Shields (RSh), Harjeet Singh (HS), Don Starks (DSt), Michael Strom (MSt), Jim Thomas (JT), Brent Thordarson (BT), Steve Tracey (ST), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), Dave Weber (DWe), Chris Wolfe (ChW), and Jim Yurchenco (JY).

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

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# The 2010 Spring Birdathon starts March 27th!

Need more information about this important fund-raising event? Go to [www.scvas.org/birdathon](http://www.scvas.org/birdathon).

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## "Go Guided" – Join one of our Prearranged Spring Birdathon Teams

We are looking for all levels of birders to join one of our prearranged Big-sit, 4-hour, or 24-hour (maximum count time) Guided Birdathon teams. All you have to do is raise the minimum requirement of \$50 (but we hope you will raise more!), grab your binoculars and go birding! You are eligible to compete for all prizes. Beginners can out-compete experts for prizes by raising more money. Space on guided teams is limited, so register now at [www.scvas.org/birdathon](http://www.scvas.org/birdathon). These teams are for adults over 17. The registration deadline is one week before the trip date. Each leader will contact you with complete details.

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### 24-hour Birdathon Teams

Nothing gets the excitement rolling better than a traditional big-day Birdathon. You will find all families of birds in many different habitats with a bit of competition thrown in. We hand-picked these skilled team leaders for an unforgettable big-day.

#### **Persistent Picidaes with Lisa Myers on Saturday, April 3**

Lisa enjoys introducing people to the world of birding through her own business, Let's Go Birding, and leading field trips for area organizations. Lisa also teaches adult birding classes, many for SCVAS. The Picidaes will start at 8 AM and bird to 5 PM in select spots around Santa Clara County. This is the perfect team for you regardless of your birding level. 100+ species.

#### **Bob-O-Links with Bob Power on Saturday, April 17**

Join SCVAS Executive Director, whose leadership style will complement all birding levels. This is a perfect team if you haven't done a Birdathon before, but want to experience a fast-paced big-day, early AM to dusk. 130+ species.

#### **Rock Wrens with Bob Hirt on Sunday, April 18**

Join long-time birder and SCVAS Board Member, Bob Hirt, for an active day in the field. They'll start early for owls in the western foothills, zigzag down to the Bay for shorebirds, and then climb up the eastern slope, ending after dusk. 130+ species.

#### **DeDUCKtions with Matthew Dodder on Saturday, April 24**

Matthew is a popular Birdathon team leader and birding instructor at Palo Alto Adult School. All levels of birders are encouraged to join this team and experience the thrill of a professionally led team that "gets the birds." Join this fast paced dawn-to-dusk tour of the county. 140+ species.

#### **Varied Twitchers with Mike Rogers on Saturday, April 24**

This is a high intensity day with one of the Bay Area's premier birders, Mike Rogers. Start your big-day early with owling and continue until sunset. This team still holds the record for winning all the 24-hour Most Species awards since 2003. Finding 165 species last year provided this team with well-deserved bragging rights! Join this year and become part of the legend. 160+ species.



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### 4-hour Birdathon Teams

Experience the thrill of a "Big Day," without the 3 AM wake-up call and the excess caffeine. These teams are for beginner to expert birders who want to see fantastic birds and still do chores in the afternoon.

#### **Swifts with Bob Power on Sunday, April 4**

Bob will lead this four-hour-and-not-a-minute-more Baylands blitz, finding Buffleheads to Burrowing Owls. Start in Alviso and end in Palo Alto, swiftly visiting the best habitats around the bay. Count 8 AM to noon. 80+ species.



#### **Hi-Speed Rails with Bob Power on Friday, April 9**

Join Bob on his county blitz, finding Osprey to Orioles. Start at Stevens Creek Reservoir and end at Mountain View Shoreline to visit a hefty mix of habitats. Expect a fast-pace while birding 8 AM to noon. 80+ species.

#### **Rushing Thrushes with Bob Power on Sunday, April 11**

Bob's east-side blitz will start east of Milpitas and end in Alviso, exploring the unique habitats of the Diablo Foothills and the bay. Join this fast-paced chase 8 AM to noon. 80+ species.

#### **Chickadees with Debbie Thompson on Sunday, April 18**

Fun but productive birding is the main objective with longtime SCVAS Board Member, Debbie Thompson. The Chickadees will visit a slice of the bay area – from the wetlands to the woodlands – to uncover as many species as possible, 8 AM to noon. 70+ species.

#### **NEW TRIP ADDED!**

#### **The Cuckoos' Fun Bus with Lisa Myers, David Speer, Lori Cuesta, and Laurie West-Roberts on Saturday April 10th.**

Don't want to drive? Want to see great birds with fun-loving hosts? Join the Cuckoos' Fun Bus for this unique tour of the bayfront from Palo Alto Baylands to Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. Food and beverages provided (but BYO glass). 11 AM to 4 PM. Sure to be a perennial favorite, you won't want to miss out on this historic first adventure of the Cuckoos.

*(Birdathon Teams continued on page 14)*

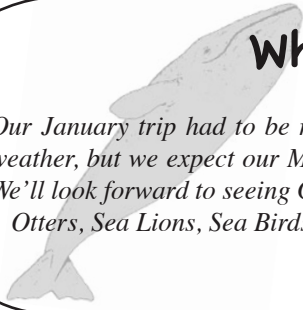


# SCVAS' Young Audubon Program is Flying High!

*We have so many exciting and fun adventures in store this year, that we can hardly contain ourselves! Designed for families and children, our Young Audubon Program has activities and outdoor adventures for all interests and ages. We hope that you and your family will join us for the fun!*

## Whale Watching in Monterey Bay

*Our January trip had to be rescheduled due to extreme weather, but we expect our March trip to be AMAZING! We'll look forward to seeing Grey Whales, Dolphins, Sea Otters, Sea Lions, Sea Birds, and maybe even Orcas!*



**Date: Saturday, March 20th;**

**Time: 10:30AM-12:30PM & 1-3PM**

**Cost: \$20/person for SCVAS members;  
\$25/person for non-members**

*\*\*Scholarships available for families in need\*\**

## “The Amazing Bird Chase” SCVAS' Spring Scavenger Hunt

*A fun, fast-paced, and exciting way to learn new birds, challenge your birding skills, and help SCVAS raise money for it's education programs! Participants will race against the clock to locate and correctly ID common birds and bird behaviors at several open space areas (with lots of help from SCVAS staff and birding volunteers). SCVAS will provide everything your group needs to participate - all you need to bring is a vehicle (to travel between locations), your “eagle” eyes, and your enthusiasm! Awards will be given for completed bird lists, best “rare” bird, fastest team, and more.*

**Join us for one (or both!) of the Chase Dates:**

### Session 1

**Date: Saturday, April 10th**

**Time\*: 9AM-12PM**

Locations: Rancho San Antonio,  
Pichetti Ranch

*(co-sponsored by the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District)*



### Session 2

**Date: Sunday, April 11th**

**Time\*: 1-4PM**

Locations: Palo Alto Baylands,  
Charleston Slough, Shoreline Lake



*\*Each session lasts a maximum of 3 hours, but groups can participate for any or all of the allotted time.*

**Cost to Participate: \$25/group**

*Note: Participants should form their own groups - family, friends, neighbors, classmates, etc.*

*Each group must have at least one child, with a maximum of four children per group.*

For information about any of the above (and any future) activities, or to register, call 408-252-3740 or email [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org). Additional information is also available online - go to [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) and click on “Kids' Corner”

# 2009 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Species	SJ 12/20/09	PA 12/21/09	MtH 1/02/10	Cal-MH 12/26/09
Greater White-fronted Goose	209	4	-	1
Chen goose, sp	1	-	-	-
Cackling Goose	5	20	-	8
Canada Goose	1712	841	32	351
Tundra Swan	CW	-	-	-
Snow Goose	-	CW	-	-
Ross's Goose	-	CW	-	1
Wood Duck	36	10	16	107
Gadwall	979	493	17	135
Eurasian Wigeon	22	4	-	-
Eurasian x American Wigeon	2	-	-	-
American Wigeon	9181	3199	154	21
Mallard	1219	1534	120	982
Blue-winged Teal	1	8	-	-
Cinnamon Teal	126	51	-	3
Northern Shoveler	12031	4901	-	9
Northern Pintail	1198	529	-	-
Green-winged Teal	2509	943	2	28
Canvasback	1920	1675	-	38
Redhead	196	66	-	1
Ring-necked Duck	79	78	27	158
Greater Scaup	658	164	-	44
Lesser Scaup	789	662	1	42
<i>aythya</i> , sp	3475	3011	-	20
Surf Scoter	62	496	-	-
Bufflehead	1460	209	164	188
Common Goldeneye	744	230	-	61
Barrow's Goldeneye	3	2	-	-
Hooded Merganser	12	27	3	21
Common Merganser	89	56	8	148
Red-breasted Merganser	175	-	-	-
Ruddy Duck	11867	8048	192	107
duck, sp	79	-	-	4
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	4	-	4
Wild Turkey	198	-	21	320
California Quail	74	186	420	299
Pied-billed Grebe	121	107	12	103
Horned Grebe	10	5	-	1
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	-
Eared Grebe	3865	74	4	70
Western Grebe	305	64	-	37
Clark's Grebe	66	26	-	2
<i>aechmophorus</i> , sp	206	35	-	25
American White Pelican	371	39	-	22
Brown Pelican	13	44	-	1
Double-crested Cormorant	695	810	1	350
Pelagic Cormorant	1	-	-	-
American Bittern	1	CW	-	1
Great Blue Heron	55	28	4	21
Great Egret	95	40	1	25
Snowy Egret	152	82	-	17
Green Heron	4	3	-	8
Black-crowned Night-Heron	324	127	3	2
White-faced Ibis	-	1	-	-
Turkey Vulture	211	36	6	196
Osprey	1	-	-	7
White-tailed Kite	26	43	-	46
Bald Eagle	2	-	2	1
Northern Harrier	34	27	-	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	6	1	10
Cooper's Hawk	9	15	4	16
<i>accipiter</i> , sp	5	2	-	-
Red-shouldered Hawk	18	51	4	64

Species	SJ 12/20/09	PA 12/21/09	MtH 1/02/10	Cal-MH 12/26/09
Red-tailed Hawk	205	93	42	150
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	-	-	-	1
Ferruginous Hawk	2	-	3	3
<i>buteo</i> , sp	-	1	-	-
Golden Eagle	26	4	11	17
American Kestrel	78	27	5	77
Merlin	8	6	1	12
Peregrine Falcon	5	13	-	8
Prairie Falcon	3	-	-	1
falcon, sp	2	-	-	-
Clapper Rail	-	9	-	-
Virginia Rail	58	7	3	2
Sora	55	10	1	3
Common Moorhen	5	2	-	4
American Coot	7177	7035	487	1390
Black-bellied Plover	692	364	-	-
Snowy Plover	15	-	-	-
Semipalmated Plover	10	310	-	-
Killdeer	115	86	28	134
plover, sp	-	-	-	1
Black-necked Stilt	1118	378	-	2
American Avocet	2455	1346	-	-
Greater Yellowlegs	71	24	6	8
Lesser Yellowlegs	19	2	-	-
Willet	1203	3424	-	-
Spotted Sandpiper	6	2	-	10
Whimbrel	1	11	-	-
Long-billed Curlew	291	191	-	11
Marbled Godwit	746	598	-	-
Ruddy Turnstone	-	1	-	-
Red Knot	-	1	-	-
Sanderling	84	2	-	-
Western Sandpiper	11737	7542	-	-
Least Sandpiper	3273	851	-	47
Dunlin	3724	2772	-	-
<i>calidrid</i> , sp	50	10295	-	-
Short-billed Dowitcher	105	62	-	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	165	247	-	6
<i>dowitcher</i> , sp	1036	1556	-	-
Wilson's Snipe	49	2	1	12
Bonaparte's Gull	442	310	-	-
Mew Gull	537	10	-	5
Ring-billed Gull	1517	506	-	53
California Gull	1879	1110	-	1352
Herring Gull	1016	23	-	296
Thayer's Gull	22	10	-	38
Western Gull	70	80	-	1
Glaucous-winged Gull	72	18	-	-
Western x Glaucous-winged Gull	5	3	-	-
Glaucous Gull	1	-	-	-
gull, sp	3053	550	-	198
Forster's Tern	132	56	-	-
Black Skimmer	-	9	-	-
Rock Pigeon	1856	1037	12	945
Band-tailed Pigeon	379	290	145	1024
Eurasian Collared-Dove	17	1	-	21
Mourning Dove	436	557	87	755
Greater Roadrunner	-	-	-	2
Barn Owl	-	1	-	4
Western Screech-Owl	14	2	12	6
Great Horned Owl	13	10	8	12
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	2	4	-
Burrowing Owl	9	1	-	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	1	-	-

Species	SJ 12/20/09	PA 12/21/09	MtH 1/02/10	Cal-MH 12/26/09
White-throated Swift	90	4	-	20
Anna's Hummingbird	409	359	24	320
Belted Kingfisher	18	10	3	21
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	56	1
Acorn Woodpecker	197	261	224	339
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	1	-	-
Red-breasted Sapsucker	20	9	23	9
Nuttall's Woodpecker	106	96	34	118
Downy Woodpecker	6	12	4	19
Hairy Woodpecker	2	27	12	19
Northern (Red-Shafted) Flicker	164	145	62	195
Northern (Yellow-Shafted) Flicker (intergrade)	1 -	- 1	- -	- -
woodpecker, sp	1	-	-	-
Western Flycatcher	1	-	-	-
Black Phoebe	365	238	16	246
Say's Phoebe	44	12	2	41
<i>myiarchus</i> , sp	1	-	-	-
Loggerhead Shrike	21	3	-	13
Hutton's Vireo	4	15	1	11
Steller's Jay	229	339	32	259
Western Scrub-Jay	473	492	307	726
Yellow-billed Magpie	127	-	124	142
American Crow	1662	964	141	979
Common Raven	50	92	46	76
Horned Lark	42	-	-	112
Tree Swallow	28	16	-	-
Violet-green Swallow	1	3	-	-
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	2	1	-	-
swallow, sp	8	5	-	-
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	203	612	-	301
Oak Titmouse	85	231	211	306
Bush-tit	869	714	82	728
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	-	-	-
White-breasted Nuthatch	68	53	98	164
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	CW	-	-
Brown Creeper	2	29	11	9
Rock Wren	10	-	-	29
Bewick's Wren	49	129	29	61
House Wren	2	-	-	-
Winter Wren	2	-	-	1
Marsh Wren	64	22	1	1
American Dipper	-	-	-	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	5	1	1	6
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	254	203	34	275
Western Bluebird	160	175	248	262
Hermit Thrush	55	91	9	96
American Robin	814	2397	118	1017
Varied Thrush	1	30	-	40
Wrentit	12	68	67	50
Northern Mockingbird	108	50	5	57
California Thrasher	7	33	81	18
European Starling	2720	1333	406	2880
American Pipit	167	62	1	99
Cedar Waxwing	286	1551	5	932
Phainopepla	-	1	5	-
Orange-crowned Warbler	3	4	-	1
Nashville Warbler	-	1	-	-
Yellow Warbler	-	CW	-	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler, form ?	916	329	1	666
Audubon's Myrtle	309 12	420 6	1 -	338 20
Townsend's Warbler	12	32	-	18

Species	SJ 12/20/09	PA 12/21/09	MtH 1/02/10	Cal-MH 12/26/09
Northern Waterthrush	-	1	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	62	27	-	11
Spotted Towhee	41	136	40	110
California Towhee	290	372	71	293
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	6	-	-	41
Chipping Sparrow	1	8	-	6
Lark Sparrow	6	-	78	2
Sage Sparrow	-	-	12	-
Savannah Sparrow	180	77	8	33
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	-	-	1
Fox Sparrow	31	18	26	11
Fox Sparrow, slate-colored	-	-	3	-
Fox Sparrow, unidentified form	-	-	26	-
Song Sparrow	254	110	4	109
Lincoln's Sparrow	50	16	1	12
White-throated Sparrow	2	3	-	1
White-crowned Sparrow	1948	1063	222	1520
Golden-crowned Sparrow	745	802	170	729
<i>zonotrichia</i> , sp	-	-	-	73
sparrow, sp	100	66	15	1
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	214	900	478	966
Dark-eyed (Slate-Colored) Junco	1	-	2	-
Red-winged Blackbird	710	613	450	1253
Tricolored Blackbird	12	809	53	63
Western Meadowlark	553	470	58	501
Brewer's Blackbird	1397	533	145	722
Great-tailed Grackle	-	-	-	2
Brown-headed Cowbird	12	24	-	112
blackbird, sp	65	128	224	209
Hooded Oriole	-	1	-	-
Purple Finch	2	19	7	48
House Finch	1061	462	25	965
Pine Siskin	-	7	-	-
Lesser Goldfinch	339	602	42	777
Lawrence's Goldfinch	20	-	26	-
American Goldfinch	201	79	-	109
House Sparrow	97	87	11	82
Total Species	177	168	98	151
Total	123,440	90,081	6,760	31,566

Key: sp = species undetermined  
 CW = Count Week

SJ = San Jose: compiled by Kirsten Holmquist  
 PA = Palo Alto: compiled by Al Eisner  
 MtH = Mount Hamilton: compiled by Bob Hirt  
 Cal-MH = Calero-Morgan Hill: compiled by Ann Verdi

Data entry and chart format by Bonnie Bedford-White.



# 2009 Christmas Bird Count Summaries

## Palo Alto CBC

by Al Eisner, compiler

Low-elevation participants in the December 21 Palo Alto CBC had mostly decent conditions, with brief periods of rain or drizzle. At higher elevations a combination of wind and rain or fog became a problem for much of the day. Nonetheless, we found an above-average 168 species.

Two species were new to the count. One wintering White-faced Ibis was seen by Bill Bousman at salt pond A1 and the Mountain View forebay. And Mike Mammoser found a Northern Rough-winged Swallow at the Lockheed Ponds among an impressive total of 25 swallows (3 identified as Violet-green and 16 as Tree). Another 3 (Tree) were seen by Mike Rogers at the Moffett Golf Course. Any swallow is rare on the count.

Two stakeout birds provided second-ever count records, both in San Mateo Co. One was the female Phainopepla at Jasper Ridge (seen on count day by Dan Quinn); the other was the female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker along Creek Road in Menlo Park (Joanne Lazar et al.). Our previous Yellow-bellied was a male found four years earlier only about a half mile

from there. Also second-time (after last year) was a Eurasian Collared-Dove in East Palo Alto. Bob Power observed the male Hooded Oriole which has been returning to a Manlo Park feeder for several years, for a third count record (the second being the same bird a year ago). Rounding out the rare San Mateo Co. sightings were 8 Chipping Sparrows found at Webb Ranch by Ron Thorn and Leonie Batkin



Female  
Phainopepla  
©Tom Grey

(5th count record). This private area, not previously covered (at least not in recent years), also paid off with 805 Tricolored Blackbirds, a species missed the previous five years! (4 more were at Felt Lake.)

Santa Clara Co. also produced a third-ever count record: the Nashville Warbler found by Roland Kenner and Pat Kenny at the Sunnyvale Golf Course. A Northern Waterthrush was at the Charleston Road marsh, where it has become a most routine

in recent winters. Geng Road added a count-week-only Yellow to complete this trio of vagrant warblers. The 20 Cackling Geese at Shoreline Park were only a fraction of the wintering flock, while the Ross's Goose at this location chose Dec. 21 for its one-day vacation. The American Bittern at the forebay was also a no-show on count day, as is often the case.

Regular species missed were Red-breasted Merganser, Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch (not a good year), Pygmy Nuthatch and Winter Wren. We had a new record for American Crows (964, previous high 623), and also notable highs for Western Bluebird, Acorn Woodpecker and Cedar Waxwing (although in the latter two cases birds per party-hour were higher in the 1960s). Several species in low numbers compared to recent years were Hutton's Vireo, Townsend's Warbler, and Fox Sparrow (although one could not yet claim any trend), while the only Golden-crowned Kinglet found was in the lowlands.

Thanks to Jack Cole for coordinating the count, to the region coordinators who assisted him, and to all the participants. Let's do it again next year!

## Mt. Hamilton CBC

by Bob Hirt,

Coordinator and Compiler

This is the 32nd Mount Hamilton CBC. We did our count this year on Sunday, January 2, 2010. We had 24 participants in seven areas. We found 6,787 individual birds representing 98 species.

We are the only Bay Area count that expects and usually has snow but this year we had clear skies for most of the day and the normal winter vistas were replaced by striking views of the Sierra Nevada on the East and the Pacific on the West. We are at elevation 4,300 feet at the top and below 2,000 in the lower areas where the ranches are located. Habitat is quite diverse from Ponderosa Pines to Sage and Chaparral.

Again this year we had very dry

conditions. Many of the stock ponds were low or dried up. Poor berry crop and no flowering trees or plants. Land birds were way down. Total numbers of birds were about the same as the prior year. Few warblers were found. Again no Loggerhead Shrikes or Varied Thrushes. Seed eaters were also low. A high point was 81 California Thrashers which is an all-time high. 23 Red-breasted Sapsuckers add color to the day and were also an all-time high. Bill Bousman found 12 Rock Pigeons on the Hurner/Stoddard ranch for the first time for the count (city slickers... you know). We pass on our thanks to the other ranches (A2Z, Arnold and Isabel) that generously give us permission to count their birds each year.

The countdown dinner was again hosted by Elinor Gates at one of the highest



California  
Thrasher  
©Tom Grey

homes in the Bay Area. Thanks also to Lisa Bigley who assisted at the dinner and did the feeder watch and to the leaders (Mike Rogers, Mike Mammoser, Bill Bousman, Bob Power, Kirsten Holmquist, Chuck Coston and Mike Azevedo) and to all the participants for their time and courage.

Gorgeous views, great birds, great and company and terrific food for all make this a fantastic event.

## Calero-Morgan Hill CBC

*Ann Verdi*

*Coordinator and Compiler*

The Calero-Morgan Hill CBC was held on Dec 26, 2009. In the eleven years we've been doing this inland count in the mid-south county, this was our best ever with 151 species tallied, and 91 participants out in the field to best our long hoped for goal of 150 species. Highlights in Coyote Valley included Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk, plus eleven Long-billed Curlews and a staked-out Burrowing Owl along Laguna Ave. Birds seen along the Coyote Creek riparian corridor included Ross's Goose, Cackling Goose, Redhead, Horned Grebe, American Bittern, Orange-crowned

Warbler, plus two female Great-tailed Grackles at the Coyote Creek Golf Course. Special birds seen in the Diablo Range included two Greater Roadrunners, Lewis's Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Grasshopper Sparrow. Birds of interest in the Santa Cruz Mountain area of Almaden included our only Bald Eagle of the day, an America Dipper, Winter Wren, plus Chipping Sparrows in suburban Almaden Valley. Other highlights included a Greater White-fronted Goose in the Silver Creek area, a Brown Pelican at Anderson Reservoir, and a White-throated Sparrow at Calero CP. Some interesting numbers included over 1000 Band-tailed Pigeons seen both in the Diablo Range and the Santa Cruz

Mountains, over 20 Eurasian Collared Doves, and a double-digit number of 13 Loggerhead Shrikes, a species which has been declining over the past several CBC's. My thanks to all who came out for this successful count. We hope you can join us for the next CBC.



Long-billed Curlew  
©Tom Grey

## San Jose CBC

*by Kirsten Holmquist,*

*Coordinator and Compiler*

The San Jose Christmas Bird Count this year experienced the best weather I have ever had for a Christmas bird count. The final species count was the highest ever for this circle. We had a species total of 177. The previous high count was 172. 115 volunteers gave up their day to spend the day counting birds. Thanks to all.

This year marked the first ever appearance of Pelagic Cormorant on the San Jose CBC. This cormorant was found along the edge of A-11 (Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn). Eurasian Wigeons were reported in record numbers (22 within the circle and 16 outside) by the same team on A-14. Other notables seen by this team include Horned Grebes (A-11, A-14), Barrow's Goldeneyes (A-10), and Glaucous Gull (A-14). Also reported along the shoreline area of the count were: 1) Greater White-Fronted Geese (Bill Walker, Mary Wisnewski, Lori Cuesta, Matthew Dodder near Drawbridge and Bill Bousman, Jim Thomas at the WPCP), 2) Tree Swallows (Bill Walker et al and Steve Tracey, Monica Spiller near the EEC and Bill Bousman, Jim Thomas at CCFS), 3) Northern Rough-Winged Swallow (Bill Bousman, Jim Thomas at the WPCP), 4)



Pelagic Cormorant  
©Tom Grey

Eurasian Collared Doves (Steve Tracey

et al and Bill Bousman et al), and 5) White-Throated Sparrow (Bill Bousman et al).

On the eastern side of the count, a couple of Ferruginous Hawks were seen: 1) Dave Cook, Tom Snell, and Sarabelle Hitchner reported a possible juvenile along Sierra Road, and 2) Julie Bryson, Rob Colwell, Rita Colwell, Tom Olsen, and Carol Moore had an adult along the south end of Calaveras Reservoir. Lawrence's Goldfinches were reported in Alum Rock Park by Howard Friedman. And, a Chipping Sparrow was found by John Harshman along Marsh Road in the Calaveras area.

Once again, the Lake Cunningham counters were kept busy with the write-ups this year. Jim and Sue Liskovec had an Osprey and Violet-Green Swallows. Don Starks's team had a female Barrow's Goldeneye and a number of high-flying Greater White-Fronted Geese.

Janna Pauser found an Aleutian Cackling Goose and a Chen goose that was likely the Ross's Goose reported earlier that week. She also saw several Tree Swallows at the marina. Brent Thordarson had a Blue-Winged Teal provide a photo op on Thompson Creek. And, in a count week report, Bob Hirt saw a Tundra Swan touch down on the lake for a few minutes before skittering off again.

In more urban areas, Ann Verdi uncovered a "Western" Flycatcher in Emma Prusch Park. Karl Fowler and Frank Vanslager caught a glimpse of a Myiarchus-type flycatcher along Coyote Creek. And, a White-Throated Sparrow came to the feeder of Cindy Lee for the second year in a row.

Other news from the count includes some interesting changes in species composition. The habitat changes occurring on the Don Edward's Bay National Wildlife Refuge due to restoration efforts continue to drive high counts of individuals for duck and shorebird species. Acorn Woodpeckers were also reported in numbers never seen before. Sadly, Downy Woodpeckers posted the lowest numbers ever. Also on the downside were Tricolored Blackbirds and Killdeer.

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## Solar Power *(cont. from page 1)*

should be the preservation of biodiversity. Thus, SCVAS opposes the siting of landscape-scale solar projects in Important Bird Areas and in areas where threatened and endangered species occur.

Dissenting voices such as ours are not simply saying «don't develop» and offer no alternatives. There is a growing movement of solar energy proponents who point out better, sustainable solutions. Bill Powers, author of the City of San Diego's innovative Smart Energy 2020 plan, argues that the transition to solar energy can be executed much more rapidly and efficiently, produce many more sustainable jobs, and minimize environmental harm by the promotion of local photovoltaic solar infrastructure for homes, commercial and community buildings or for lands close to large population centers. Mr. Powers' analysis of the costs of substations and transmission infrastructure associated with utility-scale desert infrastructure shows that such projects are not cost effective. A 2007 estimate from the Energy Commission suggests that there is roof space for over 60,000 MW of PV capacity in California, equivalent to the peak summertime load for all of the state.

Champions of utility-scale solar infrastructure argue that to be efficient and cost-effective, renewable energy programs necessitate large-scale investment in large-scale projects. Further, they argue that such large-scale infrastructure is the optimal path to follow for a rapid transition to renewable energy. To support the unrealistic assumption that large solar farms can be built quickly, Governor Schwarzenegger is moving ahead with a quest to exempt 25 large projects per year from the rigors of environmental assessment and review. We believe that environmental law must be upheld, and that comprehensive analysis of large-scale renewable energy projects and their associated infrastructure will show that they

are fundamentally inefficient, expensive, slow, and that the urban alternatives are far more preferable.

Large Scale photovoltaic (PV) solar development can be developed in population centers, as evident in the Southern California Edison (SCE) plan to develop a 250 to 500 MW urban PV project. In its 2008 application, SCE stated "SCE's Solar PV Program is targeted at the vast untapped resource of commercial and industrial rooftop space in SCE's service territory" and "SCE has identified numerous potential (rooftop) leasing partners whose portfolios contain several times the amount of roof space needed for even the 500 MW program." In the 2009 approval of this application for a Solar Rooftop program, Energy Commissioner John A. Bohn, said "This decision is a major step forward in diversifying the mix of renewable resources in California and spurring the development of a new market niche for large scale rooftop solar applications. Unlike other generation resources, these projects can get built quickly and without the need for expensive new transmission lines. And since they are built on existing structures, these projects are extremely benign from an environmental standpoint, with neither land use, water, or air emission impacts."

We hope that the push for development of renewable energy becomes more sensible and cautious, and that scientifically rigorous methodology is applied to address both economic and environmental questions in our progress towards renewable, clean energy on our roofs and in our backyards.

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## Birdathon Teams *(cont. from page 8)*

### *Big-sit Birdathon Teams with Lori Cuesta*

The Big-sit Birdathon is perfect for those who don't want to spend a lot of time chasing around town. Big-sit Teams count birds from one location, eliminating the long day but keeping the challenge and competition.

#### **Sitting Ducks on Sunday, March 28**

Lori's team will count bird species seen only from the Charleston Slough platform in Mountain View, using scopes to search the wetlands and the scrub. Come witness the intriguing behavior of these birds during the changing tides from 8 AM to noon. 30+ species.

#### **Yellow-rumped Squatters on Sunday, April 11**

Join Lori's team at our headquarters in McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino from 8 AM to noon to see how many species you can identify from a single spot. 30+ species.

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### *Birdathon-by-Sea with first mate Susan Bell and Captain Charles Bell*

This is a wonderful opportunity to bird the marshes of Alviso Slough from a vantage that few ever see; aboard the historic 44' tugboat the Sea Dive!

#### **Surf Scoters on Saturday, March 27th**

Join Captain Charles Bell and crew cruising the slough starting at the South Bay Yacht club, birding the bay out to the towers and back again. Identify waders, ducks, shorebirds and raptors while hoping for a rail or bittern. Meet at 9:00 AM at the South Bay Yacht Club located at the corner of Hope and Catherine Streets in Alviso; set sail at 10:00 AM and return at 12 noon. Refreshments included (but bring a lunch if you would like to linger onboard in the Alviso Marina afterwards). 30+species.

Register by going to [www.scvas.org/birdathon](http://www.scvas.org/birdathon) or by calling Susan at 408-252-3747.



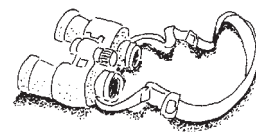


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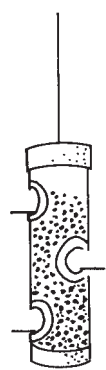
# The Beak and Feather Boutique!



**Saturday, April 3rd; 10AM-2PM**  
McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino



This is a great opportunity to both clean out your unused birding supplies and pick up some great second-hand deals! Check out the list below to see what items can be donated. All donations are tax-deductible, and will be accepted through March 26th.



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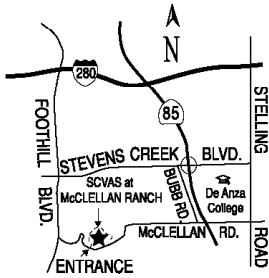
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\*All items must be clean and in good condition.  
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