



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May-June 2010

Nature's Teachings

Will Year-3 Data from the Coe Fire Surveys Yield Answers?

by Bob Power, SCVAS Executive Director

In early 2008 a small group of interested birders set out to study the Henry Coe State Park wildfire of 2007, known as the "Lick Fire." (<http://coefire2007.info/>) The goal of this effort was to document the response of bird communities over time in the various habitats burned in the Lick Fire, and to relate any changes in bird communities to the vegetation changes that are being documented in other post fire research. Generally speaking there is little known about the response of bird communities to wildfires in the western United States. While extensive study occurs



on plant communities and the regeneration of the vegetative structure of habitats, there is a void in the information regarding how those vegetative changes affect bird communities.

The eight survey routes are roughly 4 miles in length and consist of both burned and unburned habitats for control purposes. Each route was surveyed between 2 and 4 times in 2008 and all routes were surveyed 4 times in 2009. Each survey happens within a discreet window of time to enable the comparison of data from one year to the next. In the words of Amy Lauterbach, project manager and inspirational leader, "There's a lot of noise in the data, and we won't be able to do any real analysis until we have at least one more year of data, but it will be fun to poke around." Because of the survey start-up timing in 2008, only the third and fourth windows from 2008 offer complete data-sets to compare to 2009. But those comparisons

Annual Meeting and Potluck Wednesday, June 16, 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: Please bring your own plates and cups to the dinner to help reduce the use of wasteful plastic and paperware.

are indeed fun to poke around. (And just once more for emphasis, two years of data have relatively little meaning, and no one should draw conclusions from these numbers; poking around is just for fun.)

(data presented on page 9)

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 19th

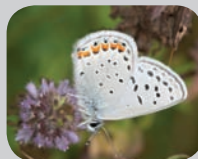
Palo Alto Arts Center

Newell & Embarcadero Rds

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

"Native Insects of the Pacific Northwest" presented by Judy and Pete Haggard

How do you provide the stable environment needed to maintain healthy populations of insects, which in turn help maintain the health of the plants, which in turn attract other wildlife such as birds and frogs?



Pete and Judy Haggard discuss these questions, and many more, as well as help to identify some of our local insects. If possible, they will also provide a display of live insect specimens, and meeting attendees are encouraged to bring insects to the talk for identification.

❖ *Have Fun and Join the Summer Bird Count!*

— Page 4

❖ *Late Spring Class Highlights Santa Clara County Breeding Birds*

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❖ *Board of Directors Nominations for 2010*

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❖ *White-faced Ibis & Brandt's Cormorants made for exceptional sightings!*

— Field Notes, Page 6

❖ *Young Audubon Summer Adventures are not to miss!*

— Page 8

May - June '10 Field Trips

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

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

LO = Lunch optional; RC = Heavy rain cancels; NF = No facilities available

Saturday 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: Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. 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 parking lot, Chestnut Picnic Area. A top riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. Entrance fee required. **LO, RC**

Wednesday May 5, 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 May 8, 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. Meet at the Gazos Creek Coastal Access parking lot, on the west side of Highway 1 midway between Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz (about 25 miles from each). Gazos Creek usually has a good variety of breeding (and singing) songbirds (possible MacGillivray's Warbler), while Pescadero Marsh and vicinity should add some migrant shorebirds and resident marsh birds. **LO**

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Sunday May 9, 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 12, 8:30 A.M.

Rancho Canada del Oro O.S.P.

Half day. Leader: Janna Pauser (408) 997-1727. Hwy 85 exit Almaden Expwy. Follow Almaden 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 15, 7:45 AM

Anderson Dam/Coyote Creek County Park.

Half day. Leader: Jean Myers (408) 846-4810. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd east and meet on the west side of the Target Parking lot (next to Hwy 101). We will carpool to the top of Anderson Dam, hike 2-3 miles and drive to other locations along Coyote Creek. Bring water and a snack and dress appropriately (the trail is steep and uneven in places). A Santa Clara County Parks Day use fee will be required. **LO**

Sunday May 16, 8:00 AM

Santa Teresa County Park South

Half day. Leader: Janna Pauser (408) 569-9264. From the southern end of Almaden Expwy (Almaden Valley) turn right on Harry Rd., immediately left on McKean Rd then after 1.3 miles turn left on Fortini Rd; 0.6 miles later go left on San Vicente and immediately right into the small dirt parking lot. We'll take the lower (mostly flat) Fortini /Mine trail to the Pueblo picnic area. Hoped for species include Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Western Kingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher and Lazuli Bunting.

Saturday May 22, 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**

Sunday May 23, 8:00 AM

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

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

Saturday May 29, 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 30, 8:00 AM

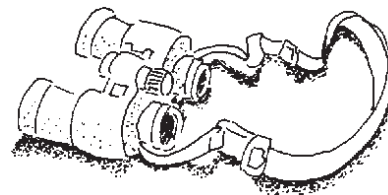
Arastradero OSP

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**

Wednesday June 2, 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 May 5th.



Field Trips *continued*

Saturday June 5

No trip - Palo Alto Summer Bird Count (see page 4 for more details).

Sunday June 6, 8:00 AM

Smith Creek/Twin Gates

"Birding by ear" field trip

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505). From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave northeast, turn right on Mt Hamilton Rd. go past main entrance to Grant Ranch County Park (approx. 9 miles). Continue uphill another two miles to Twin Gates parking lot on the left. Probable birds include Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, woodland and riparian breeding birds. This is a moderately strenuous hike over rolling hills.

Wednesday June 9, 8:00 AM

Rancho San Antonio OSP

Half day. Leader: Roxie Handler. (408) 730-1745. From I 280, take the Foothill Expwy./Grant Rd. exit. Turn south (left) onto Foothill Blvd. Turn right on Cristo Rey Dr. Park entrance is about one mile on left. Meet in the last parking area adjacent to the restrooms. Good riparian habitat: orioles, grosbeaks, thrashers, quail and more.

Saturday June 12, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Dave Cook (408) 275-1492. For directions see write-up for May 9th.

Sunday June 13, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

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

Saturday June 19, 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 (approx. 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 20, 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**, but be sure to bring liquids.

Saturday July 10, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see write-up for May 9th.

Saturday August 7, 8:30 AM

Ano Nuevo State Reserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. The entrance is along Highway 1 about 30 miles south of Half Moon Bay or 20 miles north of Santa Cruz. 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. There is a \$10 per car parking fee; meet at the far (south) end of the parking lot. **LO**

Sunday August 15, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see write-up for May 9th.

SCVAS Events

Calendar:

Thur. 4/29, 6:30PM

Volunteer Appreciation BBQ & Bird-walk

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino (4:30PM - Birdwalk; 6:30PM - Dinner) *RSVP to programs@scvas.org or 408-252-3740.*

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

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

Tues. 5/11, 9:30AM

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

Topic: Parasitic Jaeger

Wed. 6/2; 7:30-9PM

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

Tue. 6/8; 10AM

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

Picnic Lunch – bring a sandwich! On the agenda – planning the discussion agenda for 2010-2011 (10-11AM), followed by lunch at 11AM.

Tue, 6/8; 6PM

Birdathon Awards Dinner

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

Wed. 6/16; 6 PM

Annual Potluck Dinner & Board Elections

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino



Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg

Programs Coordinator

After all this rain we've had, the earth is positively glowing with growth - flowers are blooming in all their brilliant colors, the trees have all put out new leaves, and of course, the birds are singing like crazy as they defend their territories and care for their young. In other words, it's a great time of year to get outside and enjoy the natural wonders all around us!

SCVAS is helping our community do just that. With activities from slideshows, to field trips, to Burrowing Owl counts, and everything in between, our chapter is actively engaged in a wide variety of projects and programs to help educate the public, engage children in nature, protect our natural resources, and so much more. **But we need your help to keep up with the demand for our programs and time!** If you're looking for the chance to actively involve yourself in a good cause, we have opportunities available for any interest, energy level, and schedule availability.

Here are just a few to whet your interest, but many many more are available on our website. You can also give me a call at 408-252-3740, or email me at programs@scvas.org:

Saturday 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 someone to help us on the first or fifth Saturdays of the month. The SCVAS nature shop is an important way for us to connect with our local community, and many of the contacts we develop come about from unplanned weekend "stop-ins" when people visit McClellan Ranch Park. No previous experience needed, although some familiarity with computers is helpful - 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!

Summer "Adventures" Assistants - During the summer, SCVAS plans numerous activities for families and children to help get them connected with nature. As we expand our offerings, we're looking for enthusiastic volunteers willing to participate in various bird-and-nature related activities for children, such as building simple bird feeders, dissecting owl pellets, and more. See page 8 for some examples of the activities coming up.

Audubon-at-Home: SCVAS' Bird Sanctuary Program *The Joys (and Frustrations) from Abundant Rain*

By Toby Goldberg

SCVAS' Programs Coordinator

Rain will definitely be a common theme for bird-and-garden topics of discussion for months to come. It can, however, be both a blessing and a curse, so it will be important to work with all that the rain brings with it.

I hope I can speak for all gardeners when I say how thrilled I am to see our native garden basking in the moisture of the past several months. It will be important to keep this in mind during the hot summer months, though - most of our native plants thrive on this seasonal moisture and do not need much, if any, additional water during the summer. In fact, some of our native plants will actually be harmed by summer watering after they've become established (I think I killed the Woolly Blue Curls that way...). So make sure to take advantage of the bounty of our current wet season and avoid over-watering! I've been told that the general rule for summer watering is twice in July and August, once in September and October. Otherwise, let mother nature do the work for you.



Unfortunately, not everything that thrives on the wet winter is something we actually *want* in our gardens - invasives and weeds will also be doing very well after all of this rain. When those dratted dandelions or oat grasses or what-have-you's show up amidst the sages and ceanothus, just remember that you're gardening for the wildlife. In other words, be willing to accept some weeds if the alternative is using harmful chemicals. And if you can't, or don't have the time to, remove the weeds all the way down to the roots, just removing the seed heads when they emerge can help prevent their return next year.

So, the moral of the story is that, like everything else, rain brings both benefits and problems to our Backyard Sanctuaries. The trick is utilizing the benefits to their best advantage, and trying to not obsess about the problems.

PALO ALTO SUMMER BIRD COUNT

If you missed the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count (or enjoyed it), and you would like to do it when it is warmer, then the summer count is for you. It is always on the first Saturday of June, this year the 5th. We use the same count circle, and we use the same great group of leaders. Actually everything is the same as a Christmas count, except we take note of breeding behavior.

So if you are a regular to this count, please contact your region coordinator and let them know you are available. If you don't know who that is, or are new to the count, then let me know and I'll direct you to a person and place. As usual, all levels of experience are welcome. It's a Great Time Out!

Jack Cole
408-996-0434
SNOYOWL@Yahoo.com

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.

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.

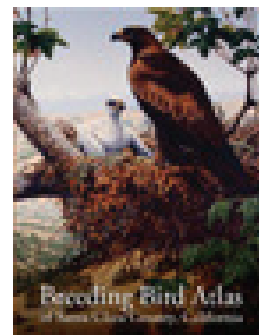
Dates: Classes: Wed's 5/5, 5/12, 5/19, & 5/26; 9:30-11:30AM.

Field: Sat's 5/8, 5/15, 5/22, 5/29; 7AM-12PM.

Location: Classes: McClellan Ranch, Cupertino. Field: TBD.

Fee: \$100 members / \$125 non-members

Important Note: This series of workshops requires some familiarity with the identification of local birds.



Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers at our Annual Meeting on June 16, 2010

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, 2010. 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 2010-11	Debbie Thompson
Vice President 2010-11	Bob Hirt
Treasurer 2010-11	Pete LaTourrette
Secretary 2010-11	Joan Leighton

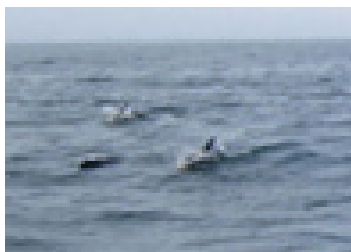


A special thanks to everyone who donated items to the Beak & Feather Boutique!

Whale Watching 2010

Although we had to reschedule from our original date in January, our March 20th trip was even better than we expected!

Photos courtesy of Toby Goldberg



The Whales were very cooperative on the outing, but the dolphins are what made the day! A "mega-pod" of Right Whale Dolphins and Pacific White-sided Dolphins joined the trip and put on a show as we headed back to port.



The Gao Family, our 2010 Whale Watching Scholarship recipients, gets ready for a great day. The children's essays on "Why Nature is Important to Me" made us smile and filled us with hope for the next generation of nature lovers.



Bird-watching enthusiasts were not disappointed, either, with close-up views of Cormorants, Pelicans, Loons, and more!

Field Notes

(February-March 2010)

By Bill Bousman

Waterfowl

Wintering **Greater White-fronted Geese** lingered into spring with one to two at the Coyote Creek GC through 19 Mar (MJM, v.ob.), one at The Villages GC through 18 Mar (MF), four in the Shoreline area through 17 Mar (CL, v.ob.) and one at Lake Cunningham on 25 Feb (JPa). A wintering **Snow Goose** at the San Pedro percolation ponds was seen through 27 Feb (SCR, v.ob.). The wintering **Ross's Goose** in the vicinity of Shoreline Park stayed at least through 27 Mar (WGB). A 1st-winter bird at the San Pedro percolation ponds remained until 27 Feb (SCR, v.ob.). An adult at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds was seen on 13 Feb (AV) and 22 Feb (MJM). Lingering **Eurasian Wigeon** included two males in the Palo Alto FCB through 8 Feb (MDo et al., JDeB), two males at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds on 10 Feb (RWR, FV) and 17 Mar (WGB), and three males still on Pond A14 in Alviso on 18 Mar (WGB). The last **Blue-winged Teal** in Adobe Creek this season were recorded on 2 Feb (AH et al.). At least eight birds were at the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 10 Feb (RWR, FV) with only two there on 17 Mar (WGB). A pair of Blue-winged Teal moved into Pond A1 in Mountain View on 18 Feb (JDeB) and a number of birds were seen there through the period (m.ob.), including at least eight there on 29 Mar (RSe). A solo male was at the Geng Road pond on 7 Mar (DK), and a pair was in Artesian Slough on 27 Mar (BP). An apparently pure male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was seen again in Stevens Creek near the tidal marsh on 7 Mar (MDo). The numbers of wintering **Redheads** dropped during the period with the last concentration noted being 87 birds in Crittenden Marsh on 8 Feb (WGB, RWR, FV). A single male was on Lake Lagunita at Stanford on 14 Feb (RSc) and 17 Mar (KA). Another male was seen on Pond A16 in Alviso on 28 Feb (MMR). The male **Common X Barrow's Goldeneye** wintering at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds was seen again on 13 Feb (AV) and 22 Feb (MJM). Untypically, a pair of

Barrow's Goldeneyes has remained on Shoreline Lake through the end of March (m.ob.). Another male was seen there on 8 Mar (WGB).

Loons through Gulls

Curiously, an adult **Red-throated Loon** showed up on the small pond near Gate 5 at the Monte Bello OSP on 8-9 Mar (GHa). We seldom encounter loons in montane stock ponds or reservoirs. Lingering **Brown Pelicans** continued to be found during the period. Nine adults on 22 Feb (WGB) was a high count for the Shoreline area, but by the end of the period only one was seen on 29 Mar (GL).

Continuing White-faced Ibis and a one-day Brandt's Cormorant were exceptional records.

In Alviso, the high count was of five adults on Pond A16 on 16 Feb (WGB), but only one was noted on 28 Feb (MMR, RGJ). Surprisingly, a single bird was seen over McClellan Ranch on 7 Feb (LMy et al.) and an immature was at Lake Cunningham on 22 Mar (MJM). A **Brandt's Cormorant** on Shoreline Lake on 9 Mar (AS, PLD), our sole March record, was a surprise but it did not stay. The **American Bittern** wintering in the Mountain View Forebay was seen more or less regularly throughout the period (m.ob.). A bird on Grant Lake was seen again on 25 Mar (OH, WGB). The wintering immature **White-faced Ibis** continued, adding our first February and March records for this species. Mostly one or two birds were seen, either in the Palo Alto Baylands or near the Mountain View Forebay. But three birds were tallied in the Palo Alto Baylands on 4 Feb (MBr, MMacP) and 9 Feb (AP), and three were recorded in Adobe Creek at dusk on 17 Mar (GL). Nesting of the Calaveras Reservoir **Bald Eagles** was first noted on 20 Feb (CVR) and they have remained at their tower nest through the period. Elsewhere, an immature was observed fishing on Lexington Reservoir on 6 Feb (BC),

both an adult and a 2nd-year bird were at the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 10 Feb (RWR, FV), an adult was seen at Chesbro Reservoir on 5 Mar (RSh) and 26 Mar (JPa), and a sub-adult was over Ed Levin CP on 14 Mar (AJ et al.). Wintering **Ferruginous Hawks** are frequently seen through February, but this year the last one reported was in the Coyote Valley on 3 Feb (RWR, FV). A **Prairie Falcon** was seen in Halls Valley on 3 Feb (OH) and is likely a Diablo Range breeder. Two **Snowy Plovers** were seen on closed refuge ponds in Alviso on 28 Mar (MMR, RGJ), apparently returning breeders. A 1st-winter **Glaucous Gull** was found on Pond A16 in Alviso on 13 Feb (MSi) and a second bird was found there on 15 Mar (MMR), one or both birds were found there irregularly through the period (v.ob.). Another 1st-winter bird was seen on Almaden Lake on 20 Mar (AV, JPa). **Black Skimmers** continued on Charleston Slough with a peak count of 14 birds on 29 Mar (GL).

Roadrunners through Grackles

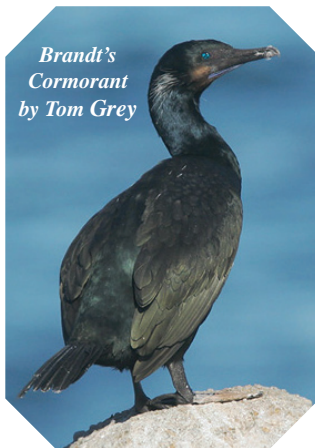
A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen along San Antonio Valley Road just after it leaves the valley on 28 Feb (GT, MV). In the south county, one was seen near Pacheco Pass on 14 Mar (JB). A **Short-eared Owl** was flushed in a field in the Coyote Valley on 25 Mar (TGs), encountering this owl is always a surprise. A male **Rufous Hummingbird** was seen in Ed Levin CP on 12 Feb (MMR), quite early. In March, about 10 males were recorded, most in Ed Levin CP (v.ob.), but also single males were in the Villages on 6 Mar (MF), at a Los Altos Hills feeder on 16 Mar (RCo), and in an Almaden Valley yard on 20 Mar (JPa). The first **Allen's Hummingbird** of the season was found in Ed Levin CP on 28 Feb (MMR, DWe). Two to three **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were seen in San Antonio Valley 28 Feb and 10 Mar (GT, MV, WGB). A count there of 14 on 16 Mar (RCi, JMi) was more impressive. The last report of the female **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** in Menlo Park (and a sometime visitor to Santa Clara County) was on 10 Feb (KC). The last sighting of the male on Craig Drive in San Jose was on 6 Mar (RWR). A **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen over Hwy 17 on 7 Feb (DLSu). Birds became noisy in March with at least six encountered from Upper Stevens Creek CP to Mt. Madonna CP 18-

Field Notes *cont'd*

23 Mar (v.ob.). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were found in a variety of montane locations in March (v.ob.), but none were found in the valley. An **American Dipper** was found along Saratoga Creek near Toll Gate Road on 6 Feb (MMR, AR) where occasionally found. Two dippers nest-building were seen again along Los Gatos Creek above East Main Street on 17 Feb (GHa) and 28 Feb (WGB). Nest-building was also ongoing by a pair along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road throughout March (m.ob.). As with the Red-breasted Nuthatches, a few **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were found in montane areas in March (v.ob.), but none were seen in the valley. Typically, **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** appear in the second or third week of March, so a bird near the IBM Almaden Research Center on 11 Feb and two there on 28 Feb (both JPa) were likely wintering nearby. A male **Hermit Warbler** found on Black Road in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 23 Mar (PLD) was perhaps one of our rare wintering birds, first migrants do not appear until mid-April. The Charleston Road marsh **Northern Waterthrush** was found again on 8 Feb (RWR, FV), 9 and 15 Feb (LMi), and 27 Mar (WGB). A female **Wilson's Warbler** found in Los Gatos Creek CP on 20 Feb (AWa) likely wintered nearby, as our summer residents do not show up until mid-March. The wintering **Chipping Sparrow** flock in Jeffrey Fontana Park in the Almaden Valley persisted through the period (m.ob.) with a high count of 10 birds there on 28 Feb (WGB). Another wintering chippie visited an Almaden Valley



yard on 15 Feb (JPa). **Grasshopper Sparrows** were singing along the Calero Creek Trail of San Vicente on 20 Mar (JPa), at the IBM Almaden Research Center on 24 Mar (JPa), and in Ed Levin CP on 27 Mar (SR, AM). The wintering **Nelson's Sparrow** was found again at the Palo Alto Baylands on 27 Feb (TGr). A **White-throated Sparrow** was found in the Picchetti OSP on 2 Feb (RKe, PKe). One to two birds were in Belgatos Park from 6 Feb to at least 30 Mar (JPa). Another bird was in Stevens Creek CP on 13 Mar (MDo et al.). A male **Western Tanager** was in Edenvale Garden Park on 28 Feb (JPa). One was heard the next day in Los Gatos (SCR, DJ). A first-winter female was photographed in Vasona CP on 9 Mar (ER) and either this bird or another was heard there on 30 Mar (JPa). Migrants and returning summer residents normally appear in early April. A wintering 1st-winter male **Black-headed Grosbeak** visited a Saratoga feeder on 27 Feb (DJ *fide* SCR). **Great-tailed Grackles** continued at the



Coyote Creek GC during the period (v.ob.) with a high count of seven females on 14 Mar (MMR).

Observers: Kumaran Arul (KA), Joseph Belli (JB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Matt Brady (MBr), Brian Carr (BC), Rich Cimino (RCi), Rita Colwell (RCo), Karen Corbelli (KC), John DeBell (JDeB), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PLD), Mary Fullerton (MF), Tom Grey (TGr), Ted Gross (TGs), Garth Harwood (GHa), Alice Hoch (AH), Owen Holt (OH), Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Dave Johnston (DJ), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), David Kohler (DK), Garrett Lau (GL), Cindy Lee (CL), Maggie MacPherson (MMacP), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Andy Melnick (AM), Jeff Miller (JMi), Leo Miller (LMi), Lisa Myers (LMy), Janna Pauser (JPa), Armando Picciotto (AP), Bob Power (BP), Sheila Raymond (SR), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alma Rogers (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Edward Rooks (ER), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Rick Schermerhorn (RSc), Robert Sexton (RSe), Robert Shields (RSh), Marty Sidor (MSi), Ashutosh Sinha (AS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Glen Tepke (GT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Martijn Verdoes (MV), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), Alan Walther (AWa), and Dave Weber (DWe).

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

SCVAS was very saddened to hear of the loss of Jean Dubois, long time member, birder, and host of the Eve Case Discussion Group. Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife and family.

Young Audubon Summer Adventures

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

Additional details are also available on the SCVAS website - www.scvas.org.

"Heron Watch"

Explore the wonder of nesting Egrets and Herons at the Palo Alto Baylands. Activities will include a nestling/fledgling count, Bird Bingo & Scavenger Hunt, and more!



Date: Wednesday, June 23rd

Time: 9:30-11:30AM

Location: Palo Alto Duck Pond

Cost: \$5/child

Registration Deadline: 6/16

Ages 7 and up!**



McClellan Ranch Bird Day

Bird watching, bird walks, bird crafts, and so much more! Join SCVAS naturalists as we get to know our local birds.

Date: Saturday, July 17th

Time: 10AM-2PM

Location: McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

Cost: \$20/child for SCVAS Members; \$25/child for non-members. *There is a multi-child discount for families.*

Registration Deadline: 7/9

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.

➤ Register by calling 408-252-3740



Scholarships available for families in need



Bird Banding

with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
"Conservation in Action!"

Come share in a very special opportunity to witness a live bird banding demonstration provided by experts from the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

Date: Saturday, July 31st

Time: 8-10AM

Location: Coyote Creek Field Station (near McCarthy Ranch), Milpitas

Cost: \$25/family

Registration Deadline: 7/23

Ages 7 and up!**

Skyline Ridge Nature Day

Bugs, Birds, Plants, Rocks, and more! Join SCVAS & MROSD naturalists as we explore the wonderful world around us. A great chance to be outdoors and get dirty!

Date: Saturday, August 7th

Time: 10AM-2PM

Location: Skyline Ridge Regional Open Space Preserve

Cost: \$20/child for SCVAS Members; \$25/child for non-members. *There is a multi-child discount for families.*

Registration Deadline: 7/30

For ages 5-7 and 8-10**

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

To register for any of the above activities, call (408) 252-3740, or send an e-mail to programs@scvas.org.

Henry Coe (cont. from page 1)

Photos depict Bob Power's survey route, shown over a 2.5-yr period



		2008	2009
Anna's Hummingbird	Burned	24	137
Anna's Hummingbird	Control	6	1

As the vegetation recovers, does the nectar / gnat / nesting availability equation go up exponentially, or is this a one-year phenomenon? This species highlights the anticipation of year 3 data.



		2008	2009
Nuttall's Woodpecker	Burned	111	80
Nuttall's Woodpecker	Control	48	60
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Burned	201	215
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Control	28	29
Violet-green Swallow	Burned	97	77
Violet-green Swallow	Control	14	23
Oak Titmouse	Burned	195	280
Oak Titmouse	Control	100	131
White-breasted Nuthatch	Burned	148	145
White-breasted Nuthatch	Control	70	81

Various sized cavity-nesters with upward and downward fluctuating populations raise multiple questions about cavity and food availability, the habitats lost, and the resource that is returning.

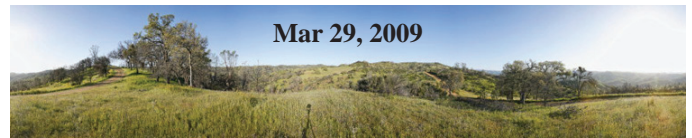


		2008	2009
Steller's Jay	Burned	50	51
Steller's Jay	Control	41	74
Western Scrub-Jay	Burned	269	340
Western Scrub-Jay	Control	92	97

Tale of two Jays. Is the Steller's Jay slower to recover or is the study area simply a landscape that will always be better suited for the Scrub-jay?

		2008	2009
Bewick's Wren	Burned	27	52
Bewick's Wren	Control	10	10
House Wren	Burned	46	91
House Wren	Control	38	28

Wrens rule! Will this trend continue in 2010 or will we see a leveling off of dramatic population increase?



		2008	2009
Lark Sparrow	Burned	10	35
Lark Sparrow	Control	1	
Sage Sparrow	Burned	18	28
Sage Sparrow	Control	0	0

Are the species returning to a pre-burn population level, taking advantage of a temporary plant mosaic and creation of significant edge habitat, or is the returning plant regime different than the old regime?



		2008	2009
Lazuli Bunting	Burned	38	112
Lazuli Bunting	Control	1	
Brown-headed Cowbird	Burned	5	12
Brown-headed Cowbird	Control		1

To hear Bill Bousman talk about the resurgence of Lazuli Buntings in recovering burn areas is one thing. To experience it is another. One of the true joys of this survey work was the Bunting explosion of 2009. Now, as for the cowbird, year 3 will be very interesting to watch for this edge-specialist and a presumed continued rise in its population.

What are we to learn about the response of bird communities over time following major burns? Year 3 surveys, which began in April, hold great promise.

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Surf Scoters Birdathon

Saturday, March 27th, 2010

44 Species



Susan & Charles Bell kicked off the birdathon season with this year's most unique birdathon adventure: a ride through Alviso Slough & back on the historic tug boat, the Sea Dive.



Tons of fun!

The Sea Dive Birdathon Theme

Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale,
A tale of a fateful trip,
That started from the Alviso port,
Aboard this worthy ship.

Susan was a mighty sailing woman,
Captain Charlie brave and sure,
Six passengers set sail that day,
For a two hour tour, a two hour tour.

The passengers started getting rough,
Binoculars were tossed,
If not for the courage of the fearless crew,
The Sea Dive would be lost, the Sea Dive would be lost.

The ship set ground on the shore of the bird-forsaken
South Bay isle,
With Susan,
Captain Charlie Too,
The Italian guy and his wife,
The Surf Scoters,
And the rest, Here on Sea Dive Isle.

(Composed by: Walt and Teresa Russo sung to the tune of Gillian's island.)



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SCVAS wishes to thank our generous prize sponsors who help make our Spring Birdathon so successful in raising money for our youth environmental education and conservation programs. We have over 25 prize sponsors for the Spring Birdathon. Please visit www.scvas.org/birdathon for more information.

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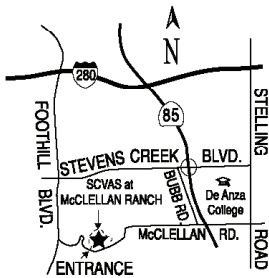
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RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422

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