



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May-June 2011

Volunteers Make All the Difference

By Toby Goldberg
SCVAS Programs Coordinator

I am extremely privileged to get to work with an amazing group of outstanding volunteers everyday – and I definitely hear about all of the outstanding efforts put forth by the volunteers with whom I don't work directly. The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is blessed by both the caliber and dedication of the people who make supporting our mission a priority in their lives. I try to highlight their activities and achievements in each issue of this newsletter – see the Volunteer Ventures column on page 4 – but every once in a while we get the opportunity to spotlight our volunteers through other means. Here are just a few of the SCVAS volunteers who have been recognized by our community at large:



Gordon Barrett (left) and Elaine Gould (right) lead students on a field trip to the Wetlands in Mountain View.

General Membership Meetings

NOTE New Location in 2011

**Cubberly Community Center - Rm H1
Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Rds**
(go to www.scvas.org for maps to this location)

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Wednesday, May 18th
(rescheduled from 2010)

“From Birds to Bats”

with Dave Johnston & Tom Stewart



Join bat biologist and long time SCVAS member Dave Johnston and his field assistant Tom Stewart for a lecture exploring the fascinating world of Mexican Bats and Least Storm-Petrels. Tom will also share some of the joys - and frustrations - of field work.

Above: Mexican Fishing Bat
Photo © Dave Johnston

Annual Meeting and Potluck Wednesday, June 15, 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.

Elaine Gould and Gordon Barrett

(by Toby Goldberg)

For anyone not familiar with our Flagship Environmental Education Program – the Wetlands Discovery Program – it is truly a labor of love. During the peak of the program's season, volunteers can be called on to work with students in the school and to lead birding field trips 2 to 3 times a week (in addition to everything else they've committed to). Almost without fail, both Gordon and Elaine respond to that call and help provide 3rd grade through 6th grade students in Santa Clara Valley with a high-quality (and much needed) outdoor experience. This year we were able to submit their names for special recognition to the Junior League of San Jose's Volunteer Awards, and both of them were selected as Outstanding Volunteers for 2011. Their hard work and passion for education clearly shone through.

(continued on page 4)

- ❖ A 'Kumlien's' Iceland Gull and an Indigo Bunting take center stage during February & March
– *Field Notes, Page 6*
- ❖ Young Audubon Summer Adventures are not to miss!
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- ❖ Have Fun and Join the Summer Bird Count!
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March - June '11 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

Sunday May 1, 8:00 AM

Rancho Canada del Oro OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser (408) 997-1727 or jannana@pacbel.net

Directions: From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy southeast to Harry Road; go right 1 block, then left on McKean. Take McKean about 6 miles, past Calero Reservoir, and turn right on Casa Loma Road. Meet in the parking lot at the end of the road, about 2 miles. **Birds:** Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Wood-Pewee, Purple Finch, possible Cassin's Vireo, Lazuli Bunting, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, and Allen's Hummingbird. **Notes:** Bring water. **LO**

Wednesday May 4, 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. **Directions:** Meet at Donald M. Somers Water Pollution Control Plant, junction of Borregas Avenue and Caribbean Drive. Meet at Trailhead at north end. **Notes:** Birding geared toward beginners. Bring binoculars; loaners also available. **RC**

Saturday May 7, 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. **Directions:** 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). **Birds:** 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**

Sunday May 8, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. **Directions:** Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Road, located north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. **Notes:** This is a good birding trip for beginning

birders although all levels are encouraged to attend. This will be a good trip to utilize your spotting scope. Bring a friend.

Saturday May 14, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Road northeast toward the hills then left on Toyon Avenue, right on Penitencia Creek Road and continue into the park. Pass under the bridge and meet at the far end of the upper parking lot. **Difficulty Level:** Moderately strenuous, 3 to 4 miles. **LO**

Sunday May 15, 8:30 AM

Mount Madonna County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey (408) 996-3860. **Directions:** 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 shortly passes through grasslands, chaparral and coastal forest where Redwood and Douglas Fir dominate the landscape. **Notes:** Bring water. **LO**

Saturday May 21, 8:00 AM

Arastradero OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** From I-280 take Page Mill Road west, turn right on Arastradero Road and meet in the parking lot about a half-mile on the right. **Difficulty Level:** Moderately strenuous. **RC**

Sunday May 22, 8:00 AM

Russian Ridge OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. **Directions:** Meet at the vista point pullout located on the Bay side of Skyline Boulevard (Hwy. 35), a little over one mile northwest of Page Mill Road. **Birds:** Possible Grasshopper Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting. **Notes:** Bring extra layers of clothing in case it's foggy and cold. **NF**

Saturday May 28, 8:00 AM

Monte Bello OSP

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

Sunday May 29, 8:00 AM

Skyline Ridge OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** Meet at the northeast corner of Skyline Boulevard (Hwy. 35) and Page Mill Road (the corner nearest San Francisco and the bay). Do not park in the Russian Ridge Parking Lot. **Difficulty Level:** Moderately strenuous with some elevation change. **Birds:** Possible Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager. **Notes:** Bring extra layers of clothing as temperatures can vary wildly at this time of year. **LO**

Wednesday June 1, 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 4th.

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

Sunday June 5, 8:00 AM

Smith Creek/Twin Gates "Birding by ear" field trip

Half day. **Leader:** Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. **Directions:** From I-680 take Alum Rock Avenue northeast, turn right on Mount Hamilton Road and go past the main entrance to Grant Ranch County Park (approximately 9 miles). Continue uphill for another two miles to the Twin Gates parking lot on the left. **Birds:** Possible birds include Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, woodland and riparian breeding birds. **Difficulty Level:** Moderately strenuous over rolling hills.

Field Trips *continued*

Wednesday June 8, 9:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park, Cupertino.

Half day. **Leader:** Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. **Directions:** From I-280 take Foothill Boulevard south about 2 miles. Turn left into Stevens Creek County Park and left again into the Chestnut parking area. **Birds:** Riparian habitat. **Notes:** Entry fee required. *LO*

Saturday June 11, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. **Directions:** See the May 14th write-up for Alum Rock Park.

Sunday June 12, 8:00 AM

Rancho del Oso (coastal Big Basin State Park)

Half day plus. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** 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). **Difficulty Level:** This is a long but fairly level hike (approximately 5 miles) along the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail. **Birds:** Swainson's Thrush, Winter Wren,

Wilson's Warbler and woodpeckers. **Notes:** Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids (in a backpack if possible) and dress in layers.

Saturday/Sunday June 18-19

Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

Leader: Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260, or ltjaeger@att.net. **Directions:** Meet at 7:00 AM Saturday at the large Yuba Pass parking lot on south side of Hwy 49. From the South Bay take Hwy 80 to Truckee; go north on Hwy 89, then west on Hwy 49 to Yuba Pass. **Birds:** Saturday will be spent exploring the Yuba Pass area for Red-breasted and Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed and Black-backed Woodpecker, American Dipper, Townsend's Solitaire, Calliope Hummingbird, Evening Grosbeak, Yellow-rumped, Hermit, Nashville & MacGillivray's Warblers, Lincoln's Sparrow and more. On Sunday the group will bird east of the pass in drier habitat where Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee, Sage Thrasher, Vesper and Brewers Sparrow, and other Great Basin specialties occur. Our last stop is the fresh water Marsh of Sierra Valley, where Sandhill Crane, Yellow-headed Blackbird, White-faced Ibis, various ducks, and in some years, Black Tern, breed. **Notes:** Motels in the Sierra City area are recommended for their proximity to the meeting locations. Camping is available at a number of sites throughout the region,

including Yuba Pass itself. **Trip limited to the first 15 people** to register with Clay via email or phone.

Saturday July 16, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

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

Saturday August 6, 8:30 AM

Ano Nuevo State Reserve

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

Sunday August 14, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. **Directions:** See the write-up for July 16th.

Events Calendar

Wed. 5/4; 7:30-9PM

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

Tues. 5/10, 9:30AM

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

Sat. 5/21; 8:30-11:30AM

Special for SCVAS Volunteers: Bird and Wildflower Hike at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve
Rescheduled from 3/19, this is a special opportunity for all of you hard-working volunteers! Space is limited, so please call 408-252-3740 to reserve a spot.

Tue. 6/14; 10AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group - meets at the home of Pat Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264.
Picnic Lunch in Pat's beautiful backyard – bring a sandwich! On the agenda: planning the discussion agenda for 2011-2012 (10-11AM), followed by lunch at 11AM.

Tue. 6/7; 6PM

Birdathon Awards Dinner
McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

Wed. 6/15; 6 PM

Annual Potluck Dinner & Board Elections
McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

Looking ahead:

August 17th-21st
Western Field Ornithologists Conference

Sierra Vista, AZ

If you've never been to southeast Arizona during the late summer season (or even if you have), this is an opportunity you won't want to miss. Go to www.westernfieldornithologists.org for details and to register.



Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg

Programs Coordinator

After all this rain we've had – and the long tease of spring-like weather only to revert back to winter - 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 a plethora of activities - from slideshows to field trips to bird 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 are looking for the chance to actively get involved with a good cause, we have opportunities available for any interest, energy level and availability.

Here are just a few to pique your interest, although 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.

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 volunteering just a few hours in the last week of May is helpful. No experience needed, just a willingness to count store items and sort through boxes. And don't worry - we'll supply the 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 are looking for enthusiastic volunteers willing to participate in various bird- and nature-related activities for children, such as building bird feeders, dissecting owl pellets and more. See page 8 for some examples of upcoming activities.

Office/Data Entry Assistants - The SCVAS office is looking for volunteers to spend a bit of time helping us process a backlog of data entry for our educational programs evaluations. These evaluations are crucial for us to attract funders for our programs but also are a lot of work for just one (or two) people to deal with. Timing is very flexible and can work around any schedule. Once volunteers are familiar with the data entry material, they can be taken home if desired and worked on from home. Potential volunteers should be comfortable with computers, especially using the Internet, and should have good attention to detail.

Bird Count Leaders & Participants - This important effort helps track the bird populations throughout the Bay Area, and our summer bird count is coming up soon. Volunteers are needed to help lead, count and coordinate. See page 4 for more details.

Spotlighted Volunteers

(cont'd from page 1)

Caroline, Jonathan, and Helen Armer

(by Bob Power)

In October 2009, Caroline Armer (15), Jonathan Armer (12), and their mother Helen Armer, volunteered to create a documentary on Burrowing Owls and their local population decline. The Armers dedicated themselves to the project and devoted weekends and holidays to filming our Burrowing Owls on location and then editing the results. Additionally, the Armers conducted many hours of interviews with Burrowing Owl advocates and two of the leading Burrowing Owl biologists in North America. With some expert guidance from Jean Merrigan and some finishing work from KMVT, the Armers produced *Reversing the Trend: The Fight to Save Santa Clara County's Burrowing Owls*. This beautiful documentary has now been seen by hundreds of Santa Clara County residents, planners, and decision-makers. In January 2011, the documentary won the youth category of CReaTV's CReaTiVe Awards; an outstanding volunteer project with extraordinary results.



The Burrowing Owl Documentary Production Team at the CReaTiVe Awards ceremony (from left to right): Helen Armer, Jean Merrigan, Jonathan Armer, Bob Power, and Caroline Armer

Jessie Ruthruff

(by Shani Kleinhaus)

In November of 2010, SCVAS assumed the responsibility of assembling the Administrative Record for our litigation efforts to hold the County of San Benito accountable and to require an adequate Environmental Impact Report for the Panoche Valley Solar Project. Little did we know just what this would entail. San Benito County provided us with hundreds of documents that had to be sorted, categorized, indexed, duplicated and organized according to complex, and often baffling, court rules, and it was Jessie's outstanding administrative abilities, dedication and tenacity that saved us. She volunteered long hours - often into the night - sifting through piles and boxes of emails, studies, opinions, decisions, letters, announcements and various other documents to get the record formatted and organized in just the right way. We submitted the record to the County in February, and promptly hired Jessie part time to help Susan with the Birdathon effort. Stop by our office on a Monday, Thursday or a Friday afternoon and say hello.



Jessie is now hard at work in the SCVAS office assisting with all things Birdathon.

Conservation Corner

by Shani Kleinhaus

Environmental Advocate (EA)

Here are some of the projects that your EA and Environmental Action Committee are working on:

Panoche Valley Update

SCVAS litigation efforts to hold the County of San Benito accountable and to require an adequate Environmental Impact Report for the Panoche Valley Solar project are proceeding as expected. We submitted the Administrative Record in February 2011, and in March the record was certified - 15 volumes and 11, 242 pages. Our attorney Rose Zoia is working on an opening brief, due April 29th. We expect the hearing to be held on August 8, 2011 or soon after.

Recent stories in the Hollister Freelance indicate that Solargen Energy is experiencing financial difficulties and delays in the pursuit of the Panoche Solar project.

Santa Clara County Park Acquisition Policy

SCVAS, in coordination with other local environmental organizations, engaged in advocacy efforts with Santa Clara County Supervisors and their staff. These efforts contributed to improvement of a proposed change to the policy for Parkland Acquisitions by the county.

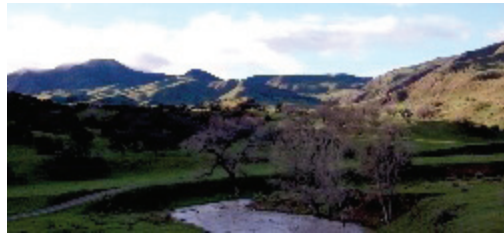
As we hoped, the Board of Supervisors unanimously accepted the County Parks Department's status report and approved the Parks Department's policy recommendations. This decision maintains the "regional" criterion for parkland acquisitions, and effectively diverted an effort to define "park deficiency" in urban areas as a criterion for allocating Park Charter funds for local neighborhood park acquisitions.

Supervisors requested that County Parks Department develop a proposal for a formalized parkland acquisition program to address urban and suburban park needs. The board gave direction that any such program should be consistent with County Parks' historical roles as a provider of park services in the unincorporated areas and as a partner with other parks and recreation service providers in parkland acquisitions. The board further directed that any such program would not be at the expense of County Parks' traditional commitment to the acquisition of regional parklands.

Thus, public discussion about the appropriate guidelines for a parkland acquisition program to address urban and suburban park needs is to continue, and we will continue advocating for nature and burrowing owls, and for open space. We thank the many volunteers and "Armchair Activists" who participated in this campaign by attending public meetings and by writing to the Parks department and to Santa Clara County supervisors and hope you all will continue lending your voice in support of our advocacy efforts in this and other efforts.

Stevens Creek Restoration – Phase II

The City of Cupertino has decided to proceed with the design and environmental review for Phase II of the \$2.7 million



A view of Panoche Valley
(care of www.savepanochevalley.com)

Stevens Creek Park Project. The project would provide for creek restoration and the extension of the Stevens Creek Trail from Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard. SCVAS is very much in favor of this project.

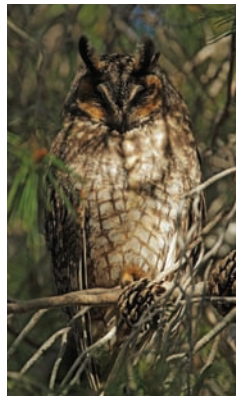
Design of the project has started so that Cupertino can receive a \$1.2 million California River Parkways grant for its implementation of the project, about one third of the estimated cost. The terms of the grant required that planning had to begin immediately. On Jan. 18 the Cupertino Council voted to allocate up to \$200,000 to start the project, even though it is not clear that the city can secure the additional funding needed to finish it. They instructed staff to seek those additional grants from the Santa Clara Water District and other agencies. In June 2011 the city council will revisit the project to examine funding availability.

The already completed Phase I at Blackberry Farm is widely touted as a model for successful urban stream restoration. That phase re-created a lively ecosystem: aquatic insects and steelhead trout thrive in pools and riffles formed to enhance aquatic habitat in the widened creek. Ancient western sycamores were preserved and provide shade and shelter to birds and bats. The Phase I work included widening the creek channel and adding meanders, as well as planting more than 6,000 native plants to create a riparian woodland and meadow both for wildlife and people. Recreation facilities and the Stevens Creek Trail provide connectivity and services to the Cupertino community and beyond.

Phase II will engineer a "natural" extension of the Blackberry Farm restoration. The project would remove expanses of concrete from the creek banks, expand the creek channel and enhance it with backwater and riffles to encourage spawning by steelhead trout and to increase survival of fry. Riparian vegetation will be planted to replace the concrete along the creek banks, and ancient sycamores and oaks will be preserved. The restored creek would provide a backbone to all the other uses of the land that surrounds it: the Stocklmeier orchard, the golf course, and the trail linking both sides of the creek to the urban environment beyond.

Please contact Shani (shani@scvas.org) to:

- Join our Environmental Action Committee and get involved in our advocacy efforts. The committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month, 7:30PM at McClellan Ranch.
- Join our Armchair Activists list and be notified when you can help support our advocacy efforts in your community.
- Request our support when birds and biodiversity are threatened in your community.



A Long-eared Owl at
Merced Hot Springs
© Tom Grey

Field Notes

(February-March 2011)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Cormorants

Wintering **Greater White-fronted Geese** lingered into March. Two birds were found regularly at Lake Cunningham during the period (m.ob.). One to nine birds were seen at various locations from Shoreline Park to the Palo Alto Muni GC over the period with nine birds seen on Adobe Creek in the Palo Alto FCB on 1 Feb (PJM) and perhaps the same ones along Pond A2W on 1 Mar (FV). An immature **Snow Goose** found in January at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds remained during this period, at least through 27 Mar. It was either found near the ponds or at DeAnza Park, about a half mile away (v.ob.). One or two **Ross's Goose** continued to be seen at Lake Cunningham through 5 Mar (m.ob.). One to two birds were at the South County Regional Waste-Water Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy 3-4 Feb (RWR, FV, WGB). A Ross's on the Palo Alto Muni GC on 3 Feb (GHa) may also have been the solo bird at Shoreline Park on 11 Feb (RoF, PaF) and 1 Mar (FV, RoF). **Tundra Swans** continued to be seen along Bloomfield Road through 11 Feb, pleasing many observers. Numbers increased from the initial five birds to the nine that were tallied 10-11 Feb (MDeF, CH, DLSh). A single male **Eurasian Wigeon** was seen again at the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 3 Feb (RWR, FV). One in the Palo Alto estuary on 6 Feb (JDeB) was also a repeat. The number of males in Pond A9 in Alviso had declined to two by 12 Feb (WGB). Two birds were seen at the east end of the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 20 Feb (SSH). The most regular location was Pond A16 in Alviso where one to two males were seen 26 Feb-27 Mar (v.ob.) A single male was on the former Arzino Ranch lands on 27 Mar as well (DWe). Pond A16 also provided a male **Eurasian X American Wigeon** 1-5 Mar (MJM, AME). Atypically, **Blue-winged Teal** were not seen after 14 Feb. Two pairs were at the SCRWA treatment ponds 3-4 Feb (RWR, FV, WGB). Two birds were also at the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 5 Feb (JTh). On 14 Feb, two males were seen in Artesian Slough in Alviso (GHa) and another male was in the Lockheed-Martin marsh (RCP, MW). As in recent years, the number of **Redhead** drop after January, five were in

the Alviso ponds on 12 Feb (WGB) and a pair was seen in Pond A16 28 Feb-1 Mar (RWR, FV, DWe, MJM). An adult female **Long-tailed Duck** was found on Pond A10 in Alviso on 27 Mar (MMR, RJG), but was not seen again. It may have been the same bird as seen there in January. The wintering male **Common X Barrow's Goldeneye** continued at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds through 9 Mar (AV, JPa, MJM). The pair of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** at Shoreline Lake stayed until 28 Feb, whereas the single wintering female was last seen on 16 Feb (m.ob.). At least one **Mountain Quail** was heard calling in the Adobe Creek drainage

Rarities for the Period Included a 'Kumlien's' Iceland Gull and an Indigo Bunting

on the slopes of Black Mountain on 12 Mar (JY). They had been heard in that area regularly prior to 2004, but not in recent years. A juvenile **Red-throated Loon** was found on the northernmost of the Los Gatos Creek CP percolation ponds on 20 Feb (RFu) and was there at least through 22 Feb (m.ob.). Another Red-throated was seen on Pond A11 in Alviso on 28 Mar (RWR, FV). A juvenile was found on Shoreline Lake on 30 Mar (RS) and has continued there into April. Single adult **Brown Pelicans** were seen on Pond A16 in Alviso on 14 Feb (GHa) and 1 Mar (MJM).

Bitterns through Shorebirds

The **American Bittern** wintering in the vicinity of the Mountain View Forebay was seen again on 3 Feb (GHa) and 10 Feb (CBe). A bird found on the Ogier Avenue ponds on 23 Feb (RWR, FV, AV) was the first one found there this winter. The wintering **White-faced Ibis** continued through at least 27 Feb, mostly in the Palo Alto Baylands, but with occasional excursions to the Mountain View Forebay and the Palo Alto FCB (m.ob.). Nesting **Bald Eagles** from north to south. The nesting pair on the west side of Calaveras Reservoir were on a new nest closer to the reservoir shore by 4 Mar (SR) and were apparently incubating by the end of the period (m.ob.). The pair nesting in the northern part of Anderson Reservoir were seen on their nest on 31 Mar (DPo). The pair

that nested last year in the northern part of Coyote Reservoir has been seen regularly during the period, but there is no evidence of nesting (m.ob.). A new nesting pair was seen building a nest next to San Felipe Lake on 29 Feb (PJM) and have remained at this nest through the period (v.ob.). Late winter **Ferruginous Hawks** included one west of Calaveras Reservoir on 5 Feb (HS, VK) and a dark morph south of Anderson Dam the same day (SCR). Single birds were seen on Marsh road on 13 Feb (ViT et al.) and 14 Mar (DWe). Birds wintering in the Coyote Valley were last seen on 2 Mar (MJM). A **Prairie Falcon** was seen east of Hellyer Avenue on 5 Mar (DPe) and may be a wintering bird. The juvenile **Sandhill Crane** remained at Lake Cunningham until 7 Feb (DM). The wintering **Solitary Sandpiper** was last seen along Thompson Creek on 13 Feb (RGJ). But then it (or another) was discovered 23 days later at Lake Cunningham (GHa) and remained there through the end of the period (m.ob.). Our two previous winter records were for stays of 3 and 4 days, this bird appears to have stayed well over 50 days. A scattering of **Lesser Yellowlegs** records was about typical for recent years: five birds in the impoundment north of the Alviso Marina CP on 14 Feb (GHa) and two birds in flooded fields along Disk Drive on 27 Mar (MMR, DWe). Good concentrations of **Sanderling** continued to be found in Pond A12 in Alviso during the period with a high count of 36 on 12 Feb (WGB). One to two alternate **Red-necked Phalarope** seen in Pond A12 on 27-28 Feb (MMR, RGJ, RWR, FV) are very rare this early, we have only three or four prior March records.

Gulls through Phainopepla

A 2nd-cycle **'Kumlien's' Iceland Gull** was found and photographed in the Ogier Avenue ponds on 5 Mar (SCR) and was also recorded there again on 9 Mar (RWR, DWe). The Ogier Avenue ponds have also been a good spot for **Glaucous Gulls**. Both 1st-cycle and 2nd-cycle bird were seen there on 5 Feb (SCR). One or more 1st-cycle birds were seen there 26 Feb-12 Mar (m.ob.). This winter, the Palo Alto dump is digging in trash near the fence with Byxbee Park, providing good views of thousands of gulls. A 1st-cycle Glaucous was picked out of that crowd on 21 Feb (MJM) and this or another bird was seen at least through 6 Mar (MJM, MDo, RFu). Two 1st-cycle birds were seen in the New Chicago Marsh on 25 Feb (SCR) and single 1st-cycle or immature birds were seen nearby in Pond A16 on 1 Mar (MJM) and 5

Field Notes *cont'd*

Mar (AME). A 1st-cycle Glaucous was seen at Almaden Lake on 8 Mar (EGu) and again on 13 Mar (SCT et al.). Finally, an immature bird was spotted on Pond A12 in Alviso on 27 Mar (DPe, DWe). The wintering flock of **Black Skimmers** has apparently stayed hidden in the northwest corner of Pond A1 in Mountain View, but 10 birds were seen in the Mountain View Forebay on 15 Feb (PJM). These birds reappeared on 23 Mar (WGB) and nine or 10 birds have been more or less regular since, either in Charleston Slough or the forebay (v.ob.). Two birds were seen on Pond A16, where they have nested in the past, on 26 Feb (SCR) but have not been reported since 1 Mar (v.ob.). A **Greater Roadrunner** has been heard cooing and been seen east of Hellyer Road 3-11 Mar (RWR, FV, v.ob.). At least one **Long-eared Owl** has been heard in the Stevens Creek Canyon in Monte Bello OSP, first detected on 5 Feb (JHi, DBr et al.). The last of the **Short-eared Owls** at the vole fest in Coyote Valley was seen on 8 Feb (WGB). The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the spring was on Piers Lane at the Stanford Dish on 16 Mar (PDu), that bird has remained through the period. Similarly a male at a feeder in Mountain View on 18 Mar (DC) has also remained through the end of the month. Otherwise birds have been found widely on both side of the valley (m.ob.). The first **Allen's Hummingbird** of the season was at a feeder in The Villages in San Jose on 9 Mar (MFu). As in other years with strong irruptions of **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, good numbers continued to found along the valley floor and nearby during the period. **American Dippers** continued along Los Gatos Creek above Main Street on 7 Feb and 8 Mar (RWR, FV, GHa) and along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road 11-12 Mar (PBr, MDo, RCP et al.). A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** at Ed Levin CP on 12 Feb (SCT) was the only report away from the Santa Cruz Mountains. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** along the Stiles Ranch Trail in Santa Teresa CP on 9 Feb (GHa, LR) was a continuing wintering bird. A singing bird at Monte Bello OSP on 5 Mar (MDo) was the first spring arrival.

Warblers through Evening Grosbeak

A **Yellow Warbler** seen near the end of Geng Road in Palo Alto on 21 Mar (DWe) likely wintered near by. Returning summer birds are usually not seen until the second week in April. A **Black-throated Gray**

Warbler found along San Francisquito Creek at the San Mateo Drive bike bridge on 21 Feb (RFu) was also a wintering bird. The **Palm Warbler** wintering at the end of Embarcadero Way in Palo Alto was seen again on 21 Feb (AME) and 27 Feb (RGJ). The wintering will-o'-the-wisp **Northern Waterthrush** at Charleston Road marsh was seen again on 11 Feb (RWR, FV, AME), 23 Feb (DWe), and 27 Feb (JMu). The Jeffrey Fontana Park wintering **Chipping Sparrows** were found throughout the period (JPa, RWR, FV). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** along the Stiles Ranch Trail on 9 Feb (GHa, LRo) was likely a bird overwintering. The three singing birds seen there on 27 Mar (SCT) were likely returning breeders. The **Swamp Sparrow** found at the Ogier Avenue ponds in January was seen again on 20 Feb (JTh, SCT), 26 Feb (RWR, FV), and 27 Feb (AV). Only four **White-throated Sparrows** were found during the period. One was regular at a feeder in an Almaden Valley yard throughout the period. A single bird was seen again at Foothill College on 5 Feb (R&BMcD). A bird found at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds was seen again on 7 Feb (AV). Similarly, one found along the Los Alamitos Creek Trail in January was seen at least three times during this period (JPa, SCT et al.). A **Western Tanager** was found along San Francisquito Creek again on 3 Feb and 10 Mar (both RFu) near the San Mateo Drive bike bridge. This is like the same bird as found early in the winter along the creek. A basic male **Indigo Bunting** came to a feeder in Saratoga 13-19 Feb and 19-29 Mar (GBa, LBa). Its molt into alternate plumage was well underway during its March visit. We have one prior winter record. Between 3 and 7 female-type **Great-tailed Grackles** were seen at the Coyote Creek GC through 5 Mar (v.ob.). We've not found evidence of nesting there in the last two summers, but don't know where the local population is breeding. Good numbers of **Pine Siskins** have been found at a number of feeders, including in Morgan Hill (18, RHe), Saratoga (14, GBa), and The Villages (8, MFu). Other locales where birds were seen included Almaden-Quicksilver CP (30+, MJM, JPa), Santa Teresa CP (6, AV), Monte Bello OSP (GHa), and Henry Coe SP (JY, AL). The **Evening Grosbeak** invasion



Indigo Bunting
by Tom Grey

declined during the period. The concentrations off Orchard Parkway in Santa Clara had largely dispersed by mid-January, but there were reprises of 12 birds on 3 Feb (AB) and four on 13 Feb (RCi). The birds in the 15-block area from Sylvan Park in Mountain View to Mango Park in Sunnyvale remained in good numbers through 15 Feb (m.ob.) with a high count of 16 at South

Mary and Maranta avenues on 7 Feb (MSa). After 15 Feb, none were found there until three were seen on 31 Mar (MSa). Other sightings included six over the Gamble Garden in Palo Alto on 1 Feb (PJM), 30 on Kenneth Drive in Palo Alto on 7 Feb (CBe), three to 10 birds on the Los Alamitos Creek Trail 10-12 Feb (JPa et al.), one over Lake Cunningham on 5 Mar (SCR), and three to seven birds at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park 26-28 Mar (JPa et al.).

Observers: Gordon Barrett (GBa), Linda Barrett (LBa), Cynthia Berg (CBe), Adam Blazczak (AB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Patty Brown (PBr), Debbi Brusco (DBr), Dotty Calabrese (DC), Rich Cimino (RCi), John DeBell (JDeB), Malia DeFelice (MDeF), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDu), Al Eisner (AME), Mary Fullerton (MFu), Ron Fulks (RoF), Patty Fulks (PaF), Rob Furrow (RFu), Ed Gustafson (EGu), Garth Harwood (GHa), Chris Hayward (CH), Rick Herder (RHe), Jan Hintermeister (JHi), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Vivek Khanzode (VK), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Ron & Barbara McDow (R&BMcD), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Dominik Mosur (DM), Julio Mulero (JMu), Janna Pauser (JPa), Don Pendleton (DPe), Dennis Porter (DPO), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Logan Rosenberg (LR), Steve Rosenthal (SR), Steve Rotenborn (SCR), Mike Sabin (MSa), Debi Shearwater (DLSh), Sachin Shurpali (SSh), Harjeet Singh (HS), Ramu Srivatsa (RS), Jim Thomas (JTh), Steve Tracey (SCT), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), Mary Wisniewski (MW), and Jim Yurchenco (JY).

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

Young Audubon Summer Adventures

"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 15th

Time: 9:30-11:30AM

Location: Palo Alto Duck Pond

Cost: \$5/child

Registration Deadline: 6/13

Ages 4 and up!**



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, August 13th

Time: 8-10AM

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

Cost: \$25/family

Registration Deadline: 8/8

Ages 7 and up!**

➤ 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

SCVAS & Friends Summer Nature Days

Bugs, Birds, Plants, Creeks, and more! Join SCVAS, The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), the City of Cupertino, and more of our naturalist friends and experts as we explore the wonderful world around us. A great chance to be outdoors and get dirty!

Session 1: "All About Birds"

Tues, July 26th; 9AM-2PM
Picchetti Ranch OSP, Cupertino

Bird watching, bird walks, bird crafts, bird stories, and so much more!

Session 2: "Explorations"

Wed, July 27th; 10AM-2PM
Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

Let's get outside and explore!

Session 3: "Bugs and the Creek"

Thur, July 28th; 10AM-2PM
McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

Come and learn what makes these creepy critters cool!

For ages 5-10

Choose just one day or all three!

Cost: \$25/child for SCVAS Members; \$30/child for non-members.
(3-day discount: \$60/members; \$75 non-members)

Note: there is also a multi-child discount for families.

Register by:
7/11

**All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian for the Heron Watch and the Bird Banding activities. Parents may stay for Nature Days if they choose.

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

2011 Friends of SCVAS

Gifts received between February 1st and March 31st, 2011

A special thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their generous support in the Save Panoche Valley Campaign:

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A special thank you to the following corporations for their generous direct or matching grant support:

AMD Foundation, Citrix, Google, Hewlett-Packard, HP Company Foundation, Juniper Networks' Company, KTFoundation, Motorola Foundation, Nonprofits' Insurance Alliance of California, SanDisk Corporation.

PALO ALTO SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Please Help Us Track Our Local Breeding Birds and Enjoy a Fun Day in the Field!

Saturday June 4th, (always the first Saturday in June), is the date for our annual counting of the birds in and around Palo Alto. We use the same circle as the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count, which ranges from along the bay to the Open Space areas along Skyline. The count circle is split about equally between Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

We are looking for folks of all ages and experience levels to participate. If you are a regular to this count, just contact

your faithful region coordinator, but if you are new and want to join, let me know and I'll find a place for you. It becomes difficult sometimes to place people at the last minute, so let me know as soon as possible if you wish to join the count.

Jack Cole, Count Organizer
408-996-0434
snoyowl@yahoo.com

Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers at our Annual Meeting on June 15, 2011

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, 2011. SCVAS members in good standing may participate in the voice vote at this Annual Meeting. The majority of available votes will determine the winner.

Position and Term	Candidate
President 2011-12	Ashok Khosla
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2011 Spring Birdathon Sponsors

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.

Golden Eagle Sponsors

- Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris – In-depth nature and wildlife tour to Panama.
- Bob and Deb Hirt – Week stay in international time-share.
- Patagonia, Palo Alto – two Torrentshell jackets and other gear.
- Nancy Teater – Week vacation home stay in Sea Ranch, CA.

Great Egret Sponsors

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- Los Gatos Birdwatcher
- Patagonia
- David Presotto

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- Spirit of Health Therapeutic Massage
- Tapestry Bistro
- Trader Joe's
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- David Wimpfheimer

Thanks to Together Green (the Toyota and Audubon Partnership for Conservation), Burrowing Owls in Mountain View Get a Habitat Boost.



Left: Phil Higgins prepares volunteers to help restore Burrowing Owl Habitat by planting Native California Plants at Shoreline Park in Mountain View. This effort was made possible by a Together Green grant.

Right: Teens and families from around the Santa Clara County cheerfully rake, dig, bend, and toil - all in the name of the Burrowing Owls!



Your Home, Your Future, Your Choice

The Bay Area is your home. You volunteer here. Raise your kids here. You work hard to protect the places you love.

Well, change is coming to the region. Over the next two decades it is expected to add nearly a million new households and more than as many new jobs. Meanwhile, the growing cost of energy and the realities of climate change require us to get smarter about how we move people and where we build.

Bay Area residents can now have a direct say in what happens in this place we call home. This month regional planning agencies will begin to plan how and where we build transportation and housing in the region for the next two decades.

Take a seat at the table. Go to YouChooseBayArea.org and experiment with housing and growth options and see how they will impact the things you hold dear in your community. Go to a YouChoose county forum and talk directly with the regional leadership, letting them know your choices and priorities.

Remember, the decisions are made by those who show up. Go to YouChooseBayArea.org to learn and/or register for a public forum.

Contact **Margot Rawlins** at mmrawlins@siliconvalleycf.org for more information, or check out <http://www.kqed.org/news/science/climatewatch/milestogo/>

SCVAS' Volunteer Memorial Fund Provides Once-in-a-Lifetime Experiences for Gilroy Middle-Schoolers

The Education Committee and Board of Directors were delighted to be able to fund two students at South Valley Middle School to attend their annual Yosemite Institute through the Volunteer Memorial Fund, established in 2006. As part of their scholarship application, Kevin De La Rosa Rivas and Jamie Dorman – students in Ginger Gallup's 6th grade class – both expressed their reasons for wanting to attend this program. The common factor was a desire to experience nature in a new way, and to learn more about the Sierras.

As a follow up to their experience, the students wrote to tell us about their week; here are a few excerpts:

"The coolest part of the trip was when we saw a coyote hunting in the meadow. It was an amazing feeling because people were close to it taking pictures and it didn't run away. It was as though it was posing." – Jamie Dorman

"The second day we got to play in the snow. It was so fun! Our leader showed me how to work in a group—that was special to me. But, the most exciting moment was when we were all in "spider cave" and everything was dark. That showed me the importance of working together with everybody." - Kevin De La Rosa Rivas

To the supporters of the Volunteer Memorial Fund, and on behalf of these – and many other students like them – thank you!

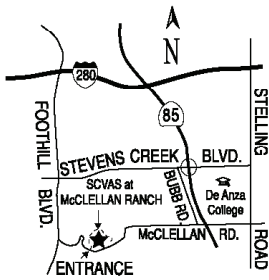


Jamie Dorman (left) and Kevin De La Rosa (right) experience the great outdoors in a whole new way, thanks to SCVAS' Volunteer Memorial Fund Scholarship Program

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

GENERAL MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month except July, August and December and are open to the public. Details about up-coming meetings are available in the Calendar section of the SCVAS website - www.scvas.org.

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

RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422

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

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2011 Volume 58, Number 3

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Make all checks payable to SCVAS.

Please note: As an organizational policy, SCVAS does not share member information with other organizations.