

# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May-June 2013

## Geared Grebes Set National Green Big-Day Record

by Rob Furrow and Bob Power

On March 23rd, Rob Furrow, Mike Rogers, and Nateri Madavan set the national record for Green Big-days with 173 bird species identified in a 24-hour period, all by bike or on foot. Our researchers determined that the previous record was set in Marin County at 161 species in 2012.

Big-days are the ultimate competitive birder's event, the most famous of which is Cape May Bird Observatory's annual World Series of Birding as depicted in the excellent documentary, "Opposable Chums." Closer to home, the Geered Grebes were participating in the SCVAS Spring Birdathon, a four-week long series of events that coincidentally kicked off on March 23rd. Big-days are often done as competitive challenges to break a record or compete against other teams but just as often are done for fun and to raise money for a good cause. The Geared Grebes have done both: establishing a new national record and raising funds for SCVAS conservation and education programs.



Rob Furrow shows off his birding-by-bike skills at Charleston Slough. Photo by Silvia Wu

Team leader, Rob Furrow, takes over the story from here: At midnight on the morning of Saturday, March 23, 2013, our group met at my house. Mike Rogers, Nateri Madavan, and I double-checked lights and gear, and listened to two different Western Screech-owls calling from my neighborhood. We were off and riding by 12:40am. Twenty-three hours and 20 minutes later we were biking home along Charleston Road. The day was long but birds came steadily, even at 7 pm (or 10pm, for that matter). We finished with 172 species in Santa Clara County and 173 total.

Highlights (by no means a comprehensive list):

- Nice owling up Moody and Page Mill Road, with boatloads of Western Screech-owls at lower elevation, and boatloads of Great Horned Owls at higher elevation.
- Spectacular duck diversity (22 species), with only Hooded Merganser being missed.
- 3 new plover species calling at night, with 2+ Snowy Plovers vocalizing loudly while flying by at the very southeastern end of A2E.

The question is raised: when is the best time for a big day in this county? And was biking even a

*(continued on page 11)*

### General Membership Meeting Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1

Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Roads

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Wednesday, May 15th  
"On Arctic Ground"  
with Debbie Miller



Debbie Miller, author and adventurer, will talk about her 40-year experience in the Arctic, focusing on the incredible diversity of birds and mammals that are so beautifully presented in her new book, "On Arctic Ground: Tracking Time Through Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve." This wonderful discussion will be illustrated with beautiful photos taken by professional wildlife photographers and also with bird recordings. Her talk will include

gripping and personal stories about hiking and canoeing with fellow biologists and photographers more than 600 miles through the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPRA). The NPRA is a largely unknown western Arctic reserve that covers more than 23-million acres protecting invaluable nesting habitats for great numbers of species.

Join us for this amazing evening and share in the wonder of the Arctic!

*(Additional information and detailed directions available at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) or by calling the SCVAS office)*

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Join the Summer Bird Count!

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# Mar - Apr '12 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 May 1, 12:00 PM

### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

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

## Saturday May 4, 8:30 AM

### Mines Rd., Del Puerto Canyon & vicinity

Full day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** 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:** Possible Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch **Notes:** Bring a full tank of gas, lunch and liquids.

## Sunday May 5, 8:00 AM

### Hidden Villa

Half day. **Leader:** Garth Harwood (650) 949-8643. Bird the farm, gardens and 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. **Directions:** From I-280 in Los Altos take El Monte Rd. past Foothill College, turn left at Moody Rd., then after about 1.7 miles left into Hidden Villa. Meet at the first parking lot beside the entrance. **Notes:** A \$5 per car parking fee is required. **LO, RC**

## Wednesday May 8, 8:00 AM

### Rancho Canada Del Oro

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser 408-569-9264. **Directions:** From 101 take the Bailey Ave. exit heading west. Turn left onto McKean Rd. Turn right onto Casa Loma Rd. Staging area 1.6 miles on your left. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south to Harry Rd. Go right one block then left on McKean Rd. about 6 miles. Turn right onto Casa Loma Rd. 1.6 miles to OSA park-

ing. We'll bird the Serpentine trail to the Longwall trailhead and look for breeding birds on this level, open trail. **Notes:** Bring water; creek crossing may necessitate waterproof shoes. **LO**

## Saturday May 11, 8:00 AM

### Rancho Canada del Oro OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser (408) 569-9264 or [jannana@pacbell.net](mailto:jannana@pacbell.net). **Directions:** See write-up from May 8th.

## Sunday May 12, 8:00 AM

### Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

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

## Saturday May 18, 8:30 AM

### Mt 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 about 6.4 miles turn right into the Sprig Lake parking lot. **Difficulty Level:** This half-day birding walk, climbing in the beginning and descending on the return trip, begins in mixed oak woodlands and passes through grasslands, chaparral and coastal forest where Redwood and Douglas Fir dominate the landscape. **Notes:** Be sure to bring liquids. **LO**

## Sunday May 19, 8:00 AM

### Alum Rock Park

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. **Directions:** 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 into the park. Pass under the bridge and meet at the far end of the upper parking lot. **Difficulty Level:** This is a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk. **Notes:** An entry fee will be required per car. **LO**



## Saturday May 25, 8:00 AM

### Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. **Directions:** 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. **Highlights:** Possible Grasshopper Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting. **Notes:** Bring extra layers of clothing in case it's foggy and cold. **NF**

## Sunday May 26, 8:15 AM

### Arastradero OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** 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. **Difficulty Level:** Trip involves moderately strenuous hiking. **RC**

**Saturday June 1:** No trip - Palo Alto Summer Bird Count (*see details on page 10*)

## Sunday June 2, 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 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. **Highlights:** Probable birds include Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, woodland and riparian breeding birds. **Difficulty Level:** This is a moderately strenuous hike over rolling hills.

## Wednesday June 5, 8:30 AM

### New Almaden Township

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser (408) 569-9264. **Directions:** From Hwy 85 in San Jose, take Almaden Expwy south for 4.3 miles and bear right onto Almaden Rd., through New Almaden township. Park in the Almaden-Quicksilver Hacienda parking lot on your right. We'll bird through New Almaden township on Almaden and Bertram Rds. **Difficulty Level:** Easy walking **Notes:** Bring water. This is the first Wednesday of the month. **LO**

## Wednesday June 5, 12:00 PM

### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

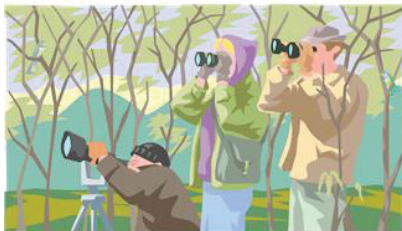
One hour. **Leaders:** Freddy Howell and Allen Royer. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. See details from May 1st.

## Field Trips *continued*

**Saturday June 8, 8:00 AM**

### **Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve**

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



**Sunday June 9, 8:00 AM**

### **Stevens Creek County Park**

Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. **Directions:** 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

the Chestnut Picnic Area, the first parking lot. **Highlights:** A top riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. **Notes:** Entrance fee required. **LO, RC**

**Saturday June 15, 8:00 AM**

### **Rancho del Oso (coastal Big Basin State Park)**

Half day plus. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** Take Hwy 17 to Santa Cruz and then go north on Hwy 1. Meet at the beach parking area alongside Hwy 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 moderately long but fairly level hike along the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail **Highlights:** Swainson's Thrush, Winter Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and Woodpeckers. **Notes:** Be prepared for variable weather; dress in layers.

**Saturday July 13, 8:00 AM**

### **Charleston Slough**

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

**Saturday August 10, 8:30 AM**

### **Ano Nuevo State Reserve**

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** The entrance is along Hwy 1 about 30 miles south of Half Moon Bay or 20 miles north of Santa Cruz. Meet at the far (south) end of the parking lot. **Difficulty Level:** Plan on a 3-4 mile walk (half of it in sand), fog, bright sun and wind. **Notes:** There is a \$10 per car parking fee. Bring a scope, lunch, liquids, and dress in layers. **Highlights:** Possible birds include Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet and early returning shorebirds. **LO**

**Sunday August 18, 8:00 AM**

### **Charleston Slough**

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. **Directions:** See the write-up for July 13th.



Don't Forget:

The SCVAS Nature Shop has books and birding guides for all levels, interests and locales. Come for a visit and check us out!

## Events Calendar

**Wed. 5/1; 7:30-9:00PM**

### **Bay Area Bird Photographers**

Lucy Evans Nature Center, Palo Alto  
Topic: "Two for the Price of One! Birds of Central and South Florida with Tom Grey and Steve Zamek"

see [www.scvas.org/babp](http://www.scvas.org/babp) for details

**Thur. 5/2; 4:30PM (Birdwalk); 6:30PM (Dinner)**

**Volunteer Appreciation Dinner & Birdwalk at McClellan Ranch Preserve**  
RSVP to 408-252-3740

**Sat. 5/11 & 5/12; 10AM-4PM**

### **Pandemonium Aviaries Enchanted Garden and Exotic Bird Tour**

Over Mother's Day weekend, Pandemonium Aviaries will open its doors to the public for an exclusive, once-a-year, behind the scenes tour of their rare bird conservation facility. Kid-friendly guided tours allow the whole family to

experience unique habitats for rare and exotic birds. Tickets must be purchased in advance. *For more information, visit [www.SupportBirds.org](http://www.SupportBirds.org)*

**Tues. 5/14 & 6/11; 10:00AM**

### **Eve Case Bird Discussion Group**

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

Topic 5/14: Our Own Favorite Bird

Topic 6/11: Annual picnic. Everyone welcome - please bring something to eat to share. Birds for 2013/2014 discussions will be decided.



*Bird Sketch*

© John Muir Laws

Free workshops for all ages! No RSVP required, but please be on time. See [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) for more details.

**Wed. 5/15 & 6/12; 3-4:30PM**

### **Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws**

McClellan Ranch

Preserve, Cupertino

**Wed. 6/5; 6PM**

### **Birdathon Awards Dinner**

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

Visit [www.scvas.org/birdathon](http://www.scvas.org/birdathon)



**Wed. 6/19; 6 PM**

### **Annual Potluck Dinner & Board Elections**

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

see page 5 for details

### **Looking ahead:**

**August 22-25**

**Western Field Ornithologists Conference**

Olympia, WA

For full details and to register, go to [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org)



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# Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

## CEQA Reform

The push continues by Governor Brown, with support from developers and Silicon Valley business advocacy groups, to erode the protections provided us by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The 2013 legislative session opened with the resignation of Senator Michael Rubio, who spearheaded the attack on CEQA, to become a lobbyist for Chevron. Senator Jerry Hill, District 13 – Brisbane to Sunnyvale, replaced Rubio as the chair of the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality, in charge of CEQA reforms.

SCVAS has joined dozens of other environmental groups, civic groups and labor unions in an effort to protect CEQA (see <http://ceqaworks.org/>). We encourage everyone to write Jerry Hill or call his office (<http://sd13.senate.ca.gov/>) in support of strengthening CEQA and to show opposition to any exemptions, including large solar farms, such as the Panoche Valley Solar Project.

## City of San Jose now requires 100-ft Riparian Setback

Following many years of SCVAS advocacy for adherence to the 1999 “Riparian Corridor Policy Study” and maintenance of a 100-ft minimum riparian setback for development projects, the City of San Jose is now consistently implementing this policy. Recently, city staff, developers and their teams worked together to institute 100-ft riparian setbacks in projects near Norwork Creek and Thompson Creek, and several small unnamed tributaries. Projects on Upper Penitencia Creek and the Guadalupe are being modified. This is a positive trend, supported by the city council, planning commission and planning staff, the water district and the California water board and other resource agencies, and naturally, by civic and environmental groups.

## The Spring 2013 Burrowing Owl Consortium meeting

Sponsored and hosted by Intuit, the meeting was a great success. About 100 people attended, including burrowing owl enthusiasts from around California, friends from Audubon California and Audubon chapters, many other environmental groups, state and federal resource agency staff, staff from cities in our region, and our favorite local elected and appointed politicians - Thank you Ronit Bryant, Lisa Matichak, and Margaret Capriles - and representatives from Assemblyman Paul Fong and Senator Jerry Hill’s office.

## Searsville Dam and Lake

SCVAS now participates as a stakeholder in the advisory committee that would help Stanford University identify alternatives for action (or no action) regarding the dam and lake in Jasper Ridge, the university’s long-term ecological preserve. At this time, Stanford is conducting a large number of technical studies to create a basis for designing and evaluating alternatives.

Please contact [shani@scvas.org](mailto:shani@scvas.org) if you are interested in these projects.

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# Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg, Programs Coordinator

I don’t know how many different ways to say it, but the fact of the matter is that SCVAS volunteers are truly the cream of the crop. These are people who step in and help just because there’s a need; these are people who willingly give up their free time to support a worthy cause; these are the people who come to the rescue when we send out a “Please Help Now” message; and these are the people who mean so very much to our chapter.

Over the last few months - with birdathon activities, education programs, advocacy issues, and all the regular monthly activities that our chapter is known for - our dedicated volunteers have provided thousands of hours to help this chapter thrive. Many of these volunteers stay out of the spotlight, but their hard work makes all the difference. From the tireless efforts of our board and our many committee members to the many volunteers who answered the last-minute call to help build nest boxes at George Mayne Elementary (including a large group of SJSU students in Professor Marquez’s ENVS 185 class) - Thank You!!

Of course, there are always lots of opportunities for everyone to get involved in many different ways. From weekly field trips to one-time events, there are activities that will fit into any-and-everyone’s schedule and interests. Below are just a few examples, although many more are available on our website. You can also call me at (408) 252-3740, or email me at [programs@scvas.org](mailto: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.

**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 we 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, 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 10 for more details.



# Adult Education Classes - Early Spring 2012

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).

## Bird Photography in the Field with Ashok Khosla (and his photo-coaching team)

If you love birds and want to capture those fleeting moments - join a team of experienced bird photographers and get the personalized coaching you need to take better pictures of your birding experiences. Curious about places to go for bird photography? Trying to decide what gear to buy? Perplexed and puzzled by picture processing? Then join us and learn how to improve the drama of your photos and bring home more keepers.

The class has three parts: an evening class to discuss bird photography techniques, a morning session in the field, and an afternoon session at the EVs EcoCenter learning how to post-process your digital images (using Adobe Lightroom - available as a free downloadable 30-day trial, so download just prior to class); bring a computer! All levels of photographic skills are welcome to join, as are digiscopers.

**Dates:** Thur. 5/2 (class), 7-10PM; Sat. 5/4 (field & post-processing), 7AM-10:30AM & 1-5PM (there will also be a no-host lunch from 11:30AM-12:30PM, location still TBD).

**Location:** Class and Post-Processing Session - Environmental Volunteers EcoCenter 2560 Embarcadero Rd. Palo Alto. Field - TBD (most likely Palo Alto and Mountain View Baylands).



Orange-crowned Warbler  
Photo courtesy of Ashok Khosla

**Fee:** \$50 members; \$80 non-members.

Class size is limited to 15.

**NOTE:** Please contact the Environmental Volunteers at [Eric@Evol.org](mailto:Eric@Evol.org) or (650)493-8000 ext. 345 to register for this class



## Annual Meeting and Potluck

Wednesday June 19, 6 PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve

*It's that time of year again!*

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



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



## Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers at our Annual Meeting on June 19, 2013

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, 2013. 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 2013-14	Ashok Khosla
Vice President 2013-14	Bob Hirt
Treasurer 2013-14	Pete LaTourrette
Secretary 2013-14	Joan Leighton
Director 2013-16	Melanie O'Brien

# Field Notes

(May - June 2013)

by Bill Bousman

## Geese through Bitterns

A group of six to eight **Greater White-fronted Geese** found along lower San Francisco Creek in the third week of January remained through the period, spending time in both counties (m.ob.). Three birds were at the Coyote Creek GC on 7 Feb (MMR, NM) and singles were at Lake Cunningham 1-14 Feb (JPa, KBu, RWR, FV) and in Shoreline Park on 27 Feb (AME). The single **Snow Goose** wintering in New Chicago Marsh and fields south of Los Esteros was joined by two others on 20 Feb (RWR, FV, BM) and the three remained at least through 25 Feb (v.ob.). They were joined as well by at least one **Ross's Goose** over that period (v.ob.). The immature **Ross's Goose** at Lake Cunningham remained there at least through 17 Feb (v.ob.). A group of five **Tundra Swans** was found north of Bloomfield Road on 6 Feb (WGB) and were seen there irregularly through 2 Mar (v.ob.). A single Tundra Swan, with a stained head and neck was found in the Ogier Avenue ponds on 25 Mar (HD), but did not remain. At least seven **Eurasian Wigeon** were still on Pond A14 in Alviso on 2 Mar (MMR, MJM) but had dropped to one by 24 Mar (MMR, RGJ, MJM, LCr). A flooded pond off of Moffett Field had one to three males for most of the period (RFu, v.ob.). One to three male Eurasians continued at the South County Regional Waste Water Authority treatment ponds in Gilroy through most of the period as well. A male Eurasian Wigeon found during the last period inland on a pond in Anderson CP was seen again on 7 Mar (BH) and 13 Mar (H&GW). **Blue-winged Teal** continued to turn up in New Chicago Marsh through the period, either along Artesian (Mallard) Slough or on the ponds at State and Spreckles, generally one or two birds (m.ob.). Three males and two females were seen on Pond A3W on 22 Feb (SW), and a couple of Blue-wings were seen there again or nearby into March (v.ob.). Single birds in inland locations included a female on Thompson Creek above Tully Road on 1 Feb (JPa, KBu) and a male in a channel along Hwy 101 near Cochrane Road on 7 Feb (MMR, NM). The numbers of **Redheads** seen in March are usually in single digits so those remaining on Pond A3W this year were a surprise. From 100 to 190 birds were found through the period; 190 there on 3 Feb (RFu), 100+ on 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM). The continuing hybrid male **Bufflehead X Common Goldeneye** was seen on Shoreline Lake again in early March (v.ob.). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** showed up at Shoreline Lake on 20 Feb (JTh) and has stayed through

the end of the period (m.ob.). A 1st-winter **Red-throated Loon** was found on Shoreline Lake on 22 Mar (GL, PLD) and has remained through the end of the period (m.ob.). A **Red-necked Grebe** was found on 22 Feb (BWh *fide* GZ) and was seen once again on 25 Feb (PDu), our first record since 2006. An **American Bittern** has been found more or less regularly near the entrance channel of the Mountain View Forebay over the period (m.ob.). Surprisingly, a second bittern has been seen there, once on 14 Feb (PLaT) and another time on 12 Mar (JMa).

## Eagles through Swallows

The nesting pair of **Bald Eagles** on the west side of Calaveras Reservoir are using their

*A Red-necked Grebe, a Swainson's Hawk, a Townsend's Solitaire, and a plethora of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers highlighted the period*

lower nest this year, first recorded 17 Feb (RGJ). Other nesting pairs have been seen where they have nested in the past but no breeding activities have been recorded. A light morph **Swainson's Hawk** was seen flying north through Ed Levin CP on 24 Mar (ViT), a spring migrant. The adult and juvenile **Ferruginous Hawks** in the Coyote Valley were last seen on 14 Mar (RPh). Single Ferruginous were seen along Coyote Ridge on 13 and 16 Feb (CE). A rufous morph was seen at Ed Levin CP on 15 Mar (PDu). Flatlands **Prairie Falcons** seen in Coyote Valley on 20 Feb (LMy) and over Chesbro Reservoir on 10 Mar (AV) may be the same wintering bird. One along the Pajaro River at the county line on 1 Mar (AR) is from an area with few previous reports. The absence of **Snowy Plovers**

in the South Bay this winter may be related to high water levels from the December rains. At least two birds were heard near Moffett Field on the night of 23 Mar (RFu, MMR), the first this year. Single **Lesser Yellowlegs** included one over the Alviso EEC on 10 Feb (RFu) and another nearby at the ponds next to State and Spreckles on 31 Mar (MDo). Thirty-seven **Sanderling** was a good count in Pond A14 on 2 Mar (MMR, MJM), smaller numbers were seen in nearby ponds during the month (v.ob.). It has been a poor winter for seeing **Glaucous Gulls**, the only one during the period was a 1st-cycle bird at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 16 Feb (AME). A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen on the alluvial soils of Pacheco Creek northeast of Casa de Fruta on 10 Mar (DLSu). Another roadrunner continued to be seen on private lands in the Santa Teresa hills and it was heard cooing on 24 Mar (JPa). **Short-eared Owls** found during the period included one at the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 6 Feb (PDu), at least one bird in Coyote Valley 22 Feb through 12 Mar (RWR, FV, v.ob.), possibly a lingering bird in the Palo Alto FCB on 1 Mar (T&CS), and one near the Twin Creeks sports complex in Sunnyvale on 10 Mar (RFu). Six male **Rufous Hummingbirds** at Ed Levin CP on 10 Mar (RFu) were the first of these migrating gems. Other migrating Rufous were found at five other locations during the period. The first male **Allen's Hummingbird** was seen along Coyote Creek near Sycamore Drive in Milpitas on 12 Feb (PDu). This species is now a rarely observed breeder so a female building a nest at the Arastradero Preserve on 19 Mar (MB) was a great find. Three **Lewis's Woodpeckers** in San Antonio Valley on 3 Feb (GHa) were in an area where they nest each year, but one in Deer Valley in Joseph Grant CP on 10 Feb (MO'B, DR) was in the western Diablo where seldom found. It has been an exceptional winter for **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**. Two 1st-winter males continued in the period with the Ed Levin CP bird seen through 15 Mar (MDo, m.ob.) and the Stevens Creek CP bird found through 12 Mar (JPa et al., m.ob.). Adding to these was an adult female near Thompson Creek at Quimby on 3 Feb (AV) and an adult male at Arastradero and Page Mill roads on 10 Mar (SEM). The **Eastern Phoebe** wintering at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds was last seen on 5 Mar (AV). An early migrating male **Purple Martin** in western Morgan Hill on 26 Mar (SCR) was a surprise.

## Nuthatches through Sparrows

The **Red-breasted Nuthatch** flight year continued with birds lingering in the Diablo Range and the flatlands. The high count in the yellow pines in Henry Coe SP was 10 on 21 Feb (WGB) while flatland birds were all singletons (m.ob.). A surprise in this flight year was a single **Pygmy Nuthatch** in Henry



Red-necked Grebe  
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

## Field Notes *cont'd*

Coe SP on 13 Mar (H&GW), likely a Sierran bird rather than one of our sedentary coastal birds. A **House Wren** wintering near Hicks and Alamitos roads was seen again on 2 Mar (JPa). Similarly, two **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** along the Stile Ranch Trail in Santa Teresa CP on 3 Feb (GHa) are considered wintering birds. Single **American Dippers** were seen in Stevens Creek Canyon on 1 and 17 Mar (MJM, LCr, FV). A pair was seen along Los Gatos Creek above town on 12 Mar (JPa et al.). A female **Golden-crowned Kinglet** in Rancho Canada del Oro OSP on 19 Mar (JPa) was likely on the move; a bird along Page Mill Road in Monte Bello OSP on 27 Mar (BM) may be a local resident. It's been a couple of winters since we've found **Townsend's Solitaire**. There was a delayed report of one on Mt. Hamilton on 2 Jan (KHo et al.). Another was found on the Center Flats Trail in Henry Coe SP on 3 Mar (JY). A male **Phainopepla** was found along Roop Road across from the Mendoza Ranch entrance on 11 Feb (JTh et al.) and 13 Mar (JJo et al.). The will-o-the-wisp **Northern Waterthrush** was found only three times in the Charleston Road marsh: 24 Feb (SCT), 23 Mar (BalS), and 31 Mar (RGJ). The **Cape May Warbler** found in January along San Francisquito Creek was last seen 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM, m.ob.) for a two-month stay. By the end of February it had developed its chestnut cheek patch and had replaced most of the stained and matted feathers next to its bill. The **Yellow Warbler** wintering in the Palo Alto Baylands was seen again on 14 Feb (MDo) and 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM). Another wintering bird was found along Artesian (Mallard) Slough on 26 Mar (JTh). The continuing **Palm Warbler** in the Sunnyvale Baylands Park was seen again on 23 Feb (WGB) and 3 Mar (RGJ et al.). A different Palm was found in the Charleston Road marsh on 2 Feb (DPe). A wintering **Hermit Warbler** was seen in La Rinconada Park in Los Gatos on 13 Mar (GZ), the third this winter. Three **Chipping Sparrows** at Jeffrey Fontana Park on 6 Mar (JPa) may have been part of wintering flock seldom found this winter. Two **Grasshopper Sparrows** seen in Ed Levin CP on 10 Mar (SEM) were part of an



Townsend's Solitaire  
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

unusually early vanguard, the median arrival date is 22 Mar. Six **White-throated Sparrows** were found during the period. A bird wintering at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park was seen again on 5 Feb (RWR, FV) and 23 Feb (WGB). This bird has been found again in April. Two birds were at the Ulistac Natural Area on 23 Feb (JPa et al.) and one was there 3 Mar (DNi, JB). A fourth bird was found along San Francisquito Creek below Hwy 101 on 11 Mar (JMa) and was seen again on 18 Mar (WGB). One was along Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 on 23 Mar (RFu, MMR, NM) and another was singing on Miranda Avenue in Palo Alto on 31 Mar (RFu).

### Tanagers through Evening Grosbeaks

A wintering **Western Tanager** was seen at Vasona CP on 12 Feb (GZ) and one was heard along San Francisquito Creek below El Camino on 15 Mar (CBa). A 1st-winter male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** found at a Los Gatos feeder in December was last seen on 10 Feb (LSu). **Great-tailed Grackles** were particularly numerous around Lake Cunningham in February with a peak count of 19 on 2 Feb (AV). Four to 12 birds were at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 24-26 Mar (KHo et al., MJM). Single males have been near the Lockheed Martin ponds 11-27 Mar (PBr, BM) and at Cottonwood Lake 13-14 Mar (MJM). A wintering 1st-winter male **Bullock's Oriole** was found in the Ulistac Natural Area on 2 Feb (KBu, JPa) and it is likely that the same male was seen there again on 3 Mar (DNi). The female **Baltimore Oriole** found along San Francisquito Creek in January in the same area as the Cape May Warbler was found again on 26 Feb (SK) and remained at least through 17 Mar (ChW, m.ob.). Wintering **Red Crossbills** in Henry Coe SP were seen again on 21 Feb (WGB) and 7 Mar (BH, CL), with 40 counted on the latter date. A single bird was found east of Mt. Hamilton on 3 Feb (GHa). The **Pine Siskin** winter flight has continued with large numbers in February (200 on Mango Avenue in Sunnyvale about 2 Feb, LWR), but has started to taper off in March (31 in Charleston Road marsh on 13 Mar, WGB). A single male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was last reported at a Hidden Villa feeder on 8 Feb (GHa). The first influx of flatland Lawrence's were nine along San Felipe Road, a male singing at Gavilan College, and another male singing in a Morgan Hill yard, all on 16 Mar (SCR). The winter flight of **Evening Grosbeaks** started to peter out during the period as they consumed their Chinese pistache berries. There were no reports from Mountain View and Los Altos, and 17 birds at HP on Page Mill Road on 6 Feb (FT) were the last reported from that area. But birds did continue in Sunnyvale (MSa, MMR, v.ob.), mostly on Mango and Knickerbocker avenues. Thirteen were sighted on 18 Feb (MSa), 15 tallied on 8 Mar (KJo), and 14 nearby on Molino and West Olive on 13 Mar (MMR). The last report was



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Photo courtesy of Peter LaTourrette

of two on 22 Mar (MMR). Elsewhere, small numbers were seen along San Francisquito Creek below Hwy 101 with two there on 28 Feb (FT), one on 2 Mar (SCR et al.), and 12 flying over on 22 Mar (RFu).

Observers: Charlie Bacon (CBa), John Blake-lock (JB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Patty Brown (PBr), Karen Burnson (KBu), Lea Crisp (LCr), Helen Daley (HD), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PLD), Pete Dunten (PDu), Craig Edgerton (CE), Al Eisner (AME), Rob Furrow (RFu), Beth Hamel (BH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Kirsten Holmquist (KHo), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Jim Johnson (JJo), Kent Johnson (KJo), Sandy Koonce (SK), Caroline Lambert (CL), Pete LaTourrette (PLaT), Garrett Lau (GL), Nateri Madavan (NM), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Juliana Manoliu (JMa), Brooke Miller (BM), Steve Miller (SEM), Lisa Myers (LMY), David Nickerson (DNi), Matt O'Brien (MO'B), Janna Pauser (JPa), Don Pendleton (DPe), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Laurie West Roberts (LWR), Dave Rocha (DR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Mike Sabin (MSa), Bilal al Shahwany (BalS), Tate & Curtis Snyder (T&CS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Jim Thomas (JTh), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Francis Toldi (FT), Steve Tracey (SCT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Hanny & Geert Waarts (H&GW), Bryan White (BWh), Shane Wilson (SW), Chris Wolfe (ChW), James Yurchenco (JY), and Gena Zolotar (GZ).

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

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## Education Committee Update

by Elaine Gould, Education Committee Member

The SCVAS Education Committee met in January to make plans to build and expand upon the many activities which were so successful in 2012. Here are some of the highlights:

Our flagship enterprise has always been the Wetlands Discovery Program, which is now in its 24th year and will have served 10 schools this spring. Many enthusiastic and dedicated SCVAS docents, as well as our two paid, indispensable interns, have been added to the seven schools in the fall 2012 program. By the end of this school year, this program will reach 1,800 students in their classrooms and on field trips to Charleston Slough, including a new program for all 6th graders in the Mountain View-Whisman School District, in collaboration with other local organizations. The cost of the entire program, including a majority of the bus transportation, is paid for by contributions to SCVAS.

The annual Young Audubon Whale Watch trip in late winter was replaced this year with a Young Audubon National Day of Service on Martin Luther King Day. Many families signed up to work a variety of tasks at McClellan Ranch. February activities included popular trips on Presidents Day for Audubon families to Ano Nuevo State Reserve. Using funds from the Volunteer Memorial Fund (originally created to honor the memory of long-time volunteer Norman Watenpaugh) we were able to send two deserving South Valley Middle School (Gilroy) students to the Yosemite Institute for a week in February (*see excerpts from the*



Children explore it all - plants, birds, insects, mud, and more - during our Summer Nature Days camp

*students' reports about their experiences on page 11)*

Last year's Wingding Family Fest, a celebration of all things bird-y and spring-y, was such a success that it will be held again on May 4th at Skyline Open Space Preserve in conjunction with our partner, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (see page 10).

And finally, with the assistance of paid college counselors, high school volunteers and Education Committee leaders, we feel we have finally attained an excellent blueprint for an exciting summer camp program. A summer camp has been a longtime goal for the Education Committee and we are gratified to see this come to fruition over the last three years. In July 2013, we are expanding to a full five-day summer camp program, in collaboration with SCVAS and MROSD. This year we are adding Shoreline at Mountain View to our collaboration to expand our experiences. From July 22nd to July 26th the camp will be held at Shoreline-Mountain View Park, Pichetti Ranch OSP, two days at McClellan Ranch and the final day at Skyline Ridge OSP.

Our next major, long-range goals are to develop robust educational programs for schools in the South Valley centered on the beautiful natural areas in that part of the county, as well as a summer program for High School students. Accomplishing either of these, however, would require an increase in both educational staff and volunteers.

Members of the Education Committee are: Ginny Kaminski (Chair), Melanie O'Brien (Board), Toby Goldberg (Staff), Freddy Howell, Elaine Gould, Jim Liskovec, and Allen Royer.

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## Leaving a Legacy: My Father's Story

by Ashok Khosla, SCVAS Board President

My father passed away recently. He was born the youngest of 13 children and grew up in poverty in the jungles of East Africa. Through the kind efforts of the local "Khan," he managed to get a scholarship to study medicine in Great Britain. The rest, as they say, is history.

Dad wanted to ensure that he could repay the kindness people had shown him, and so he set up the Khosla Foundation as his legacy. The foundation's giving approach is modeled on the SCVAS Legacy Fund—providing seed money for major long-term initiatives such as our recent environmental advocate program.

Dad believed in the research that shows a key element of happiness is giving back. You too can give back by taking advantage of a very special opportunity to grow the SCVAS Legacy Fund using your IRA.

Under the recently enacted Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, gifts from your IRA are an easy and tax efficient way to support SCVAS. Your gift counts toward your annual minimum distribution but is not considered taxable income. For your IRA gift to qualify for these benefits:

- You must be 70 1/2 or older.
- Your gift must be transferred directly from your IRA to SCVAS.
- The amount cannot exceed \$100,000 per year.
- Your gift must be outright, with nothing of material benefit given in exchange.

To donate from your IRA simply contact your IRA plan custodian/trustee/administrator and advise them that you wish to make an IRA rollover gift to SCVAS.

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund supports SCVAS in its efforts to foster public awareness of native birds and their ecosystems. The fund is dedicated to helping SCVAS meet future environmental challenges and undertake new educational and conservation initiatives in its fulfillment of this mission. Including the Legacy Fund in your estate planning is one of the best ways you can ensure that SCVAS remains a powerful advocate for birds and their habitats.



## 2013 Friends of SCVAS

*Gifts received between February 1st, 2013 and March 31st, 2013*

### \$1000-\$5000

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Doug and Gail Cheeseman  
Vivek and Leena Khanzode  
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### Special Thanks to Nancy Teater for her generous donation of the following prize to this year's Birdathon:

**Vacation home stay in The Sea Ranch, CA**  
Nancy, longtime dedicated volunteer and SCVAS member, donated seven nights at her vacation home in The Sea Ranch during July 1 to October 31, 2013 only. The Sea Ranch

is a rugged landscape dotted with distinctive homes that extends for about ten miles on either side of Highway One in Sonoma County, California. Its hallmark is the attempt to blend man-made structures with their natural setting,

and to live lightly on the land. Enjoy miles of hiking trails, tennis courts, heated swimming pools, golf course and nearby restaurants. Enjoy the beautiful scenery while finding some great birds and other wildlife. Sleeps four.

**SCVAS' Young Audubon Program for Families and Children:**



**Wingding Family Fest:  
A celebration of Birds and Spring!**



**Saturday, May 4th; 10:00am-3:00pm  
Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve**

Join SCVAS and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District for a FREE event for all ages at the beautiful Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve. No advance registration required, though some activities have limited space.

Highlights will include bird walks, geocache walks, arts-and-crafts, and some live bird guests!

\* \* \* \* \*

**AND**

**It's Not Too Late - Join Us This Summer for an Amazing  
Week of Adventure and Fun!**



**2013 Summer Nature Days  
Outdoor Day Camps for Children in Grades 2-6  
July 22nd-26th, 2013**



(in partnership with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Shoreline at Mountain View)

Come explore with us at McClellan Ranch Preserve, Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve, Shoreline Lake, and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve. Each day explores a different location with a different theme - for a week bursting with wonder!

**Space is limited - so don't wait to sign up!**

\* \* \* \* \*

***Full details - including driving directions to Wingding - and registration information for summer camp available online (go to [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) - click on "Kids' Corner")***

**PALO ALTO SUMMER BIRD COUNT**

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

Once again, we'll be counting every bird we can see and identify on the Palo Alto Summer Bird Count. As always, the count is held on the first Saturday of June (this year - June 1st), and anyone, regardless of their level of birding experience, is welcome to join in the fun.

This count is identical to the Christmas Bird Count, except the weather is a lot nicer, and we do pay special attention to signs of breeding. If you have participated in the past, please

contact your region coordinator. If you don't know who that is, or are new to the count, contact me. But don't delay, as I can't guarantee I can find you a spot during the week before the count.

Jack Cole, Count Organizer  
408-996-0434  
snoyow1@yahoo.com



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# Changing a Life – One Nature Experience at a Time

by Toby Goldberg, SCVAS Programs Coordinator

Each year, the SCVAS Education Committee chooses two deserving students at South Valley Middle School in Gilroy to sponsor for a week-long trip to the Yosemite Institute. Using funds from the Volunteer Memorial Fund – originally established in honor of Norman Watenpaugh, the “birdman of Gilroy” – we work closely with the teachers to select two students who not only are experiencing financial need, but who also demonstrate leadership, hard work, and a commitment to science and nature. This year, we were pleased to be able to sponsor AnaPatricia Ochoa and Ryan Lampson. We asked them to share a little bit about their experiences while in Yosemite, and here are some excerpts from their reports:

*“I had one of the best and most mind-blowing experiences during my trip to Yosemite... On the bus, I got lucky enough to sit next to the window so I spent most of my time in “awe.” Because my parents never travel distances farther than San Jose, California I knew I was up for a great experience.*

*On Tuesday, we were taken to the Yosemite Falls Trails to go hiking. I got to see one of the nicest views I had ever seen. I had my breath taken away by the beauty of the park and the creatures that live in it. I also loved that I got to study and learn about things that I would have never known existed...*

*Overall, I had a great time in Yosemite! I learned so many new things about nature and teamwork... We acknowledge how paramount Earth, the environment and nature are, and we made the promise or commitment to dedicate more gratitude, adoration and time to it. Through this experience, my mind learned to appreciate good peers, wildlife and nature itself. Without your aid, none of these proceedings would have occurred. Thank you for your generosity.”*

- AnaPatricia Ochoa

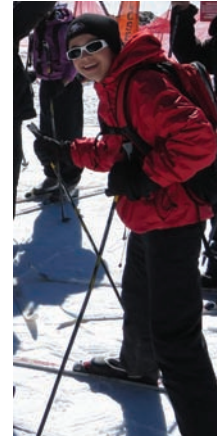
*“You have recently helped me pay for my trip to Yosemite National Park thank you for your help. I had the best time of my life thanks to you. The trip was great; I met some new friends and learned a lot of new ways to help the environment and how not to waste. During the trip I had time to think of ways to improve my life back home and how to lead a better one. I know you did not have to give the scholarship but you did so thank you. Over all you really helped me go to a beautiful place that not very many people get to enjoy...*

*Thank you for helping me make and see all these great memories I will never forget. If I had to put this in one sentence I would say the greatest week of my life.”*

- Ryan Lampson



*Students participating in the Yosemite Institute’s week-long program gain an experience they will not soon forget. They learn how to preserve their natural world and how to enjoy it safely - through activities such as hiking, camping, and skiing, as well as hands-on science activities. At left, the students help with general trail maintenance.*



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## Geared Grebes *(cont’d from page 1)*

disadvantage compared to driving? Maybe for the toll it takes on your body, but not for route. We had quite a few birds detected in relatively remote areas. As for timing, I suspect that later would be better, since we had very few wintering birds that will definitely be gone by mid-April. The duck abundance right now allows for quick bayside stops as opposed to the slow scanning that may be needed in two weeks.

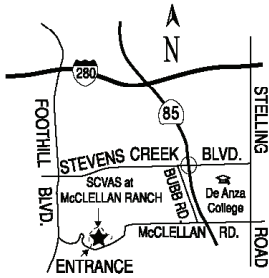
**Postscript:** On April 3rd, Rob, Josiah Clark, and Danny Karp beat this record with 176 species in Santa Clara County by bike. On April 7th, Mike Rogers and Richard Jeffers, rolling as the Fly-by-night Falcons, tied the Santa Clara County big day record with 177 species, by bike and automobile.

*Editor’s Note: for Rob’s complete story and a complete list of species, see Rob’s report on the south-bay-birds listserv archives for Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>.*

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Peter Hart

Tom Grey

Vivek Khanzode

'11-'14

'11-'14

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'11-'14

'13-'16

'11-'14

'12-'15

'11-'14

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

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### OFFICE HOURS

**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.

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

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*Come by the office to pick up your free copy of **Birding at the Bottom of the Bay**, and our **Breeding Bird Atlas** (if joining at the Burrowing Owl level or above).*

**Send this information, and make all checks payable, to: SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino, CA 95014**

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