

THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

July-August 2014

Reversing the Trend: When Conditions Are Right, Burrowing Owl Populations CAN Bounce Back

By Shani Kleinhaus, SCVAS Environmental Advocate and Stephanie Ellis, SCVAS Executive Director

The Western Burrowing Owl was once considered “sacred” by the Native American Hopi Tribe. It was referred to as “Ko’ko,” a protector of the underworld, and all things that grew in the earth. Unfortunately, the Burrowing Owl has since lost its sacred status, and for many years we have been witnessing the decline of our valley’s burrowing owl population - sadly, to the brink of extirpation. SCVAS has not been a passive witness to this decline. For decades, we have vigorously advocated for the owls in the effort to protect this charismatic species and its diminishing habitat.

We have engaged in public outreach efforts (recall our award winning video, “Reversing the Trend”, by Caroline and Jonathan Armer, and our partnership with Cavalia), and advocated with Cities and Government Agencies throughout the county. Our work bore fruit in 2012, culminating in the creation of Burrowing Owl preserve areas, and the ongoing implementation of the Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan for Shoreline at Mountain View. In 2013, after a decade of effort, the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan was adopted by several Government Agencies in Santa Clara County. The Plan includes a comprehensive Burrowing Owl Strategy aimed to protect and recover the species in our region. Implementation of the plan has just recently begun, and our staff and volunteers are actively engaged in Burrowing Owl surveys throughout the South Bay.

But the largest remaining open space in North Santa Clara County, and the largest population of Burrowing Owls – are both in San Jose. This is why SCVAS has consistently focused in-

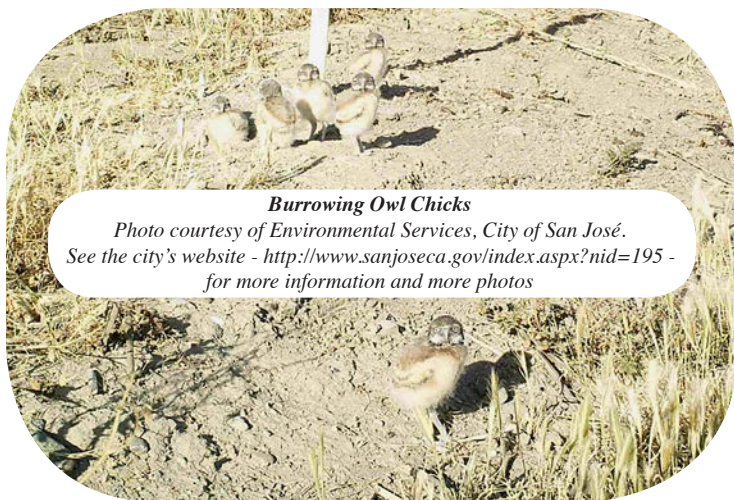
tense advocacy efforts there. Beginning in 2011 we found a partner in San Jose’s Environmental Services Department (SJESD). The Director and staff of SJESD have championed Burrowing Owls within the City, and aim to increase habitat value, along with the Burrowing Owl population within the buffer lands of the San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (Previously known as WPCP).

Last year, The City of San Jose adopted a Master Plan for the Wastewater Facility. The Master Plan allocated 180 acres to habitat for Burrowing Owl and other at risk species. SJESD proceeded to formalize SCVAS’s ongoing habitat management at the bufferlands into an official partnership. This allowed us to hire Josh McCluskey as a Burrowing Owl Project Manager. Josh is organizing volunteers in population and breeding surveys, habitat management and enhancement, and remote photography.

Our partnership with San Jose has taught us that it is possible to reverse the declining trend. When conditions are right, Burrowing Owl populations CAN bounce back. In 2010, grazing sheep had eliminated nearly all vegetation, and compacted the soil of the buffer lands. Ground squirrels then became rare, and only one owl was observed during the 2010 breeding season. In 2011, at SCVAS’s recommendation, SJESD removed the sheep and hired Dr. Lynne Trulio along with Phil Higgins to prepare a Burrowing Owl Management Plan for the buffer lands. In 2012,

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Burrowing Owl Chicks

*Photo courtesy of Environmental Services, City of San José.
See the city’s website - <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?nid=195> -
for more information and more photos*

July-Aug '14 Field Trips

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

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

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

Saturday July 12, 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 9, 8:30 AM

Año 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. **Highlights:** Possible birds include Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet and early returning shorebirds. **Notes:** Bring a scope, lunch, liquids, and dress in layers. There is a \$10 per car parking fee. LO

Saturday August 16, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see the write-up for July 12th.



Don't let the construction taking place at McClellan Ranch deter you - the SCVAS Nature Shop is still OPEN for business!

We hope to see you soon!



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NUTTALL ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

SCVAS Executive Director Stephanie Ellis Accepts Position of Council Member for the Prestigious Nuttall Ornithological Club.

Founded in 1873, the Nuttall Ornithological Club was the first organization in North America devoted to ornithology. During the Club's 125 years, its members have included the premier names in the field of ornithology, such as Ludlow Griscom, and Roger Tory Peterson. Stephanie will attend meetings, which are held at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA, via phone. Stephanie was honored to be offered this position. "This is a great networking opportunity for SCVAS, connecting us with some of the most prominent ornithologists in the United States, and providing SCVAS an opportunity to learn more about avian research studies all over the world, and how they relate to our local populations."

SCVAS Events Calendar:

Wed. 7/9 & 8/13; 3-4:30PM

Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws
McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino
Free workshops for all ages! No RSVP required, but please be on time. *Go to our website, www.scvas.org, for more details.*



Bird Sketch
© John Muir Laws

Young Audubon Program: Summer Adventure Series

(see the SCVAS website for more details and how to register)

Mon-Fri 7/21-25; 9:00AM-3:00PM

SCVAS/MROSD Present:

Summer "Nature Days" Day Camp

Fun days to get outside and explore! Locations vary as we enjoy some of our beautiful local open space areas.

For all children entering grades 2-6.

Sat. 8/16; 8:00-10:00AM

Bird Banding with SFBBO

Coyote Creek Banding Station, Milpitas.

For families and children ages 7 and up.

Sat. 8/30; 10:30AM-1:30PM

Whale Watching in Monterey

A great activity for children and families of all ages. Summer highlights may include Humpback and Blue Whales, and of course - sea birds!



Sat. 9/27; 7AM-4PM

Stevens Creek 50K/SCVAS

Benefit Run

Runners and Volunteers are needed to participate in this fun event through the Santa Cruz Mountains. Runners are asked to donate a small registration fee, the proceeds of which go to benefit SCVAS' education and conservation programs. Go to the event website - stevenscreekstriders.com/scsraces - for more details about the race, how to register as a runner, or how to help as an event volunteer.

Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

Ulistac Natural Area

Recently, we saw several encouraging signs in the fight to Save Ulistac Natural Area and its richly restored valley floor habitat from the bulldozers:

1) A City sponsored survey of Santa Clara residents showed clearly that the public prefer to focus and spend funds on natural open space and trails. A “new youth sports park to provide more soccer fields” was the least favored option. Furthermore, of several proposed soccer field sites, Ulistac Natural Area was the only site that received more opposition than support.

2) An Ad Hoc Committee on “Additional Soccer Fields” found Ulistac Natural Area unsuitable for the building of sport fields in the near future.

3) Dozens of (including several SCVAS representatives) attended a recent Parks and Recreation Commission to oppose a proposed recommendation favoring soccer fields at Ulistac Natural Area. As a result, the motion to do so found no support, and the Parks and Recreation Commission did not make this recommendation to City Council.

So this is all good news. However, we must remain vigilant and continue to advocate. While most Park and Recreation commissioners, as well as the City Council’s Ad Hoc Committee, seem to agree that Ulistac cannot provide a “short-term” solution, Ulistac does remain on the list of “long-term” sites for a new Youth Soccer Park.

With other environmental groups, Santa Clara Valley Audubon sent a letter asking that the City Council preserve Ulistac Natural Area as natural open space and habitat, and not destroy this unique site in order to build new soccer fields. It is time to remove Ulistac from the list of potential sites for new soccer fields or a sports complex.

The Egrets of Shorebird Way

This year, the egret colony of Shorebird Way is receiving wanted attention. With Google’s enthusiastic support, the City of Mountain View closed the road to traffic at the end of May, and egrets no longer get run over or hit by vehicles. The buildings nearby are now occupied, and Google employees are enjoying the egrets’ beauty and the sounds of the rookery. We continue to communicate with Google and the City, to ensure the safety of the birds.

Searsville Dam Alternative Study

SCVAS continues to engage in an Advisory Group that reviews information and provides input to Stanford as the university considers alternatives for Searsville Dam and Lake. There are many considerations in the process that would eventually lead to a preferred alternative, and many interests - often conflicting. The university benefits from a long-term research station at Jasper Ridge, and draws water from the lake. But the lake is filling with sediment, and so both sediment and flood management are very important considerations. The biology of the watershed is also complicated – the dam is a barrier to fish migration, but the lake and the vast wetland upstream support countless species of birds, bats, and insects.

To select an optimal alternative, Stanford assembled 1) a steering committee composed of some of the university’s best environmental faculty and senior administrators, 2) a group that is working with the consultants to garner necessary information to make an informed decision, and 3) an Advisory Group composed of various interests and stakeholders in the watershed and beyond that have strong interests or are potentially impacted by any decision. SCVAS is part of this third group. The Searsville alternatives study is planning for an open, public meeting in the fall.

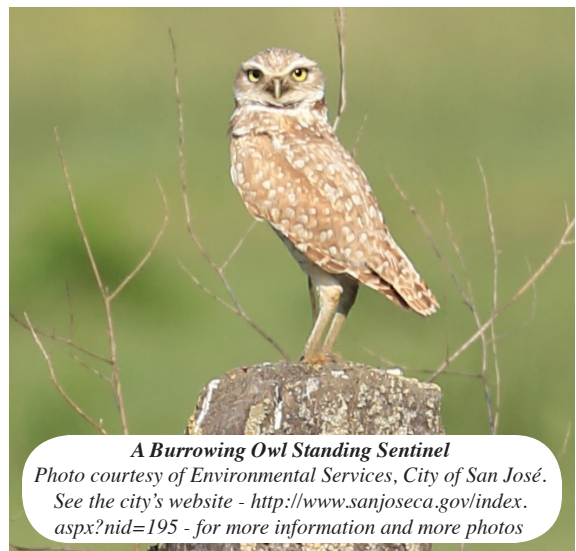
Call for Volunteers: Fourth of July

On the fourth of July we need volunteers to help protect burrowing owls at Shoreline Park before and during the Fireworks display, and to monitor egret colonies in Mountain View and on Almaden Lake. If you can help, please contact owls@scvas.org.

Reversing the Trend *cont’d from page 1*

SCVAS joined the City and brought volunteers to install soil mounds, berms and artificial burrows in order to attract ground squirrels, who would then attract Burrowing Owls. The response was immediate – in 2013 we observed six pairs of owls, and 10 chicks fledged at the site. This year, there are 7 pairs, and as of June 1st 13 chicks have emerged. Motion triggered cameras are capturing the secret life of Burrowing Owls as they mate, capture and share prey, fight intruders (crows), raise young, or just stand vigil at their burrows. Tireless efforts by SCVAS staff and volunteers, and by SJESD have shown that we CAN reverse the decline of the burrowing owl, by working together to create the right conditions.

To help our advocacy for owls, surveys or habitat work, please email Josh at owls@scvas.org.



A Burrowing Owl Standing Sentinel

Photo courtesy of Environmental Services, City of San José.
See the city's website - <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?nid=195> - for more information and more photos

Volunteer Ventures

by *Toby Goldberg, Programs Coordinator*

As the summer starts, and the crazy schedules start to calm down a bit, the SCVAS staff gets a chance to reflect on how we actually managed to survive the past 6 months of insanity. Frankly, we can sum it all up in one word: Volunteers!

Simply put, without the phenomenal support of the many volunteers who do so much, we wouldn't be able to accomplish even a fraction of what we achieve every year. Between the advocacy, conservation, office, fundraising, membership, education, community, and of course, birding programs running all year long - have I mentioned that we stay *busy*?! - we amaze even ourselves sometimes! This, of course, is one of the reasons we select a few volunteers for special recognition each year - they, and others like them, are what allow us to tout the accomplishments of our chapter. Here are the exceptional volunteers who we recognized at this year's annual June Potluck Dinner:

Laurie Bechtler – Environmental Action Committee Co-Chair

Laurie can do things that many of us cannot, and she does them quietly and perfectly. In the 4 years that Laurie has volunteered her time on the Environmental Action Committee, she has contributed her unique research, database management and communications abilities and talents to a myriad of projects. She helped identify environmental organizations to partner with in opposition to the development of a solar farm at Panoche Valley, and advocate against this development. She spent quality time educating the public about the owls at several Cavalia shows and many tabling events. She prepared a database of burrowing owl locations and observations to help our conservation program find and monitor the owl population. And she has participated in many burrowing owl surveys and habitat restoration events. In her hometown of Mountain View, Laurie persevered through many committee and council meetings and even candidate forums - eloquently advocating for ecologically sensitive development and for the approval and implementation of a Burrowing Owls Preservation Plan. Most recently, Laurie took on the position of Co-Chair of the Environmental Action Committee. With her pleasant and friendly yet quiet demeanor, Laurie exemplifies the proverb "Still waters run deep" – she is an amazing woman, and a very valued volunteer.

Grace Yuan Zweig and Sharon Hudak – Cavity Nesters Recovery Program Monitors at McClellan Ranch Preserve

If you walk the creek trail at McClellan Ranch on any given Wednesday morning in the spring, you're likely to bump into a couple of cheerful ladies carrying some strange looking equipment. No - they're not fishing or trapping anything; instead, they're carefully and diligently monitoring the native cavity nesting bird species on the Preserve. Not for the faint-of-heart, this activity requires lots of patience, good observational and notetaking skills, perseverance in the face of nesting tragedies, a willingness to endure heat and ticks (and some other surprising critters), and some serious upper-body strength. And not only do Grace and Sharon bring these skills to this important conservation activity, but they always do so with a smile. We're grateful to have them as a part of this program.

Renee Polizotto and Julio Mulero - Birdathon Committee

Renee and Julio are a husband-and-wife volunteer tag-team for SCVAS! A former member of the SCVAS Board of Directors, Julio and Renee currently serve on the SCVAS Birdathon Committee, with Renee as Chair. The depth of their involvement with our Birdathon and SCVAS' programs, as well as Julio's talent for photography, have been a true asset to SCVAS!

Carolyn Banbury - Office and Nature Shop Assistant

Talk about someone diving right in - Carolyn began working with us in the Nature Shop just this past February, but already we can't imagine life without her! With her background in office management and accounting, she has proven to be an invaluable resource for our nature shop. Friendly and gracious to everyone she meets, Carolyn's smile brings a wonderful lift into the office whenever she's around.

Jim Meikrantz - Wetlands Discovery Program Docent

Sometimes, there truly is a volunteer match made in heaven! When Jim began with the Wetlands Discovery Program last fall, he said something along the lines of he wasn't sure what his skill level was, but that he'd try to do whatever we needed. Well, within just a few weeks, it was obvious that the Wetlands Discovery Program had scored itself a priceless gem! His knowledge, enthusiasm, and perpetual eagerness to learn new things has truly been an inspiration to new and veteran docents alike. And his willingness to step in wherever and whenever needed has been a particular blessing to the SCVAS staff as we plan our increasingly hectic schedules. We are looking forward to many more wetlands programs with Jim by our side!

If you've been inspired by these volunteers, please check out just a few of the many available opportunities to help out listed below, and contact the Programs Coordinator at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org. We'd love to help you find the right match for your time, talents, and interests! You may also view the most current (and most pressing) volunteer positions online at www.scvas.org.

Wetlands Discovery Program Docents (Fall 2014) – You see this one on our "Volunteer Opportunities" list a lot, because it is one of our most visible, vital and volunteer-intensive activities - but so worth it! This program shares the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with 3rd-6th graders throughout Santa Clara County. Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat both in the classroom and out in the field. This program is rewarding for our volunteers and for the hundreds of South Bay children who participate (almost 1500 this year!). No experience is necessary, as we will provide training for both field and class sessions. All a potential docent needs is a love of nature and a desire to share it with children.

Stevens Creek 50K/SCVAS Benefit Run – Volunteers are needed on Saturday, September 27th to help with a fun event for local runners that also helps raise money for SCVAS' many educational and conservation programs. Volunteer tasks will include course marking, staffing First Aid stations, and more. Please go to <http://stevenscreekstriders.com/scsraces> for more details about the race, and for how you can help. Volunteer registration page to be posted online shortly.

Adult Education Classes - Summer 2014

The following classes are sponsored by the SCVAS Education Committee. To register please call the office at (408) 252-3747. All cancellations - except where noted - require 72-hour prior notification for refunds. Information about our upcoming classes is also available on our website at www.scvas.org.

Birds of the Farallones with Alvaro's Adventures

A summer trip to the Farallones conjures up images of Great White Sharks and Humpback whales. While we hope to encounter the entire breadth of ocean life the islands have to offer, we'll be going for nesting seabirds. The islands are teeming with nesting birds and our timing adds seabird migration to the mix. Join us for an unforgettable experience.

This is an approximately 10-hour trip, with a deep-water visit off the Continental Shelf on the return. For more details about this trip, see: <http://alvaroadventures.com/farallon-islands/>. Please note that registration for this trip is through SCVAS. **Guides:** Al Jaramillo, Matthew Dodder, Bob Power.

Date: Sat. 8/9; 7:00AM to approx. 5:00PM. Location: Half Moon Bay (Princeton Harbor).

Fee: \$130 members; \$150 non-members.



Tufted Puffins roosting on the Farallon Islands
Photo © Tom Grey

Last Chance To Sign Up!

Audubon Field Workshop: "Shorebirding on Cape Cod" with SCVAS Executive Director Stephanie Ellis and Jim Sweeney (from South Shore Bird Club and MassAudubon)

Cape Cod is a magical oasis of sand, nestled between the Atlantic Ocean, Cape Cod Bay and Nantucket Sound. Because of its location 30 miles out to sea, the outer shores of Cape Cod are an important migratory stopover for shorebirds, warblers and whales in the fall. The fall shorebird migration route, through the Arctic and East Canada, takes birds south along this "outer coast" flyway, covering all of outer Cape Cod from tip to "elbow." And this trip will see it all!

Habitats covered will include ocean, barrier beach, Pitch Pine forest, fresh and saltwater marsh. We will also visit an enchanted Beech Forest, nestled between windswept dunes and natural cranberry bogs - a migrant hotspot for eastern fall warblers.

A 4-hour pelagic trip to the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary out of Provincetown will provide us with sightings of Northern Gannet, several species of shearwater, Common Eider, Wilson's Storm Petrel, early arriving alcids, and North Atlantic Right Whales (a critically endangered species).

Noted for its beautiful coastline, coastal dunes and fresh local seafood, this Cape Cod trip will provide a rich combination of eastern birds, diverse marine life and extraordinary landscapes.

Dates: Sun. 9/7 - Sat. 9/13 (2014). **Fee:** \$2,200 per person, double occupancy. Deposit of \$500 required to hold space.

Please note: fee covers Cape Cod birding expenses and accommodations. It does not cover airfare or personal purchases. **Limited to 10 participants**



Hudsonian Godwit
Photo © Tom Grey

A Fun Twist on Birding

by Steve Patt, Stevens Creek Striders Club

This year marked the first ever offering of a "Birding for Trail Runners 101" class at the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, jointly offered with the Stevens Creek Striders running club. On a Wednesday night in April, a talk and slideshow introduced a group of runners to the local bird life. The following Saturday, they were then introduced to the fine art of birding while running [tip: breathe out of the side of your mouth if you're panting to avoid fogging up the



Photo courtesy of Steve Patt

binoculars!] for 7 miles on the trails of Stevens Creek County Park and Fremont Older Open Space Preserve. Final total: 40 species, of which 34 were seen by one or more members of the group (the others "heard-only").

All in all, a very productive and educational day. Much thanks to my able assistant Deborah Jamison who was invaluable in helping to spot birds and supplying key information (like how to properly focus binoculars).

A complete species list and a map showing the location of all the sightings is here: <http://goo.gl/maps/Y1HAX>

Field Notes

(April-May 2014)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Rails

Few **Greater White-fronted Geese** linger past mid-April, so a single bird along Adobe Creek on 9 and 13 May (JL, JHa) was unexpected. **Ross's Geese** sometimes are seen well into May, so a bird lingering at Lake Cunningham until 26 Apr (MMR, MJM, v.ob.) was less surprising. The last of the wintering **Eurasian Wigeon** was a male in the Alviso ponds on 20 Apr (MHo). **Blue-winged Teal** continued in Artesian (Mallard) Slough with three there on 2 Apr (RFu), single males on 9 Apr (MJM) and 26 Apr (MMR, RGJ), and a female on 21 May (WGB). A female-plumaged **White-winged Scoter** was seen on closed refuge ponds on 26 May (MMR, MJM) and is likely the same bird found nearby in February. Few **Horned Grebes** remain after the third or fourth week in April, so a bird in alternate plumage in Artesian Slough on 31 May (AME) was unusual. A **Cattle Egret** was seen at the Newby Island landfill on 4 Apr (JStP). Our only spring movement of **White-faced Ibis** was of single birds at New Chicago Marsh on 30 Apr (BM), the SCRWA (Gilroy) treatment ponds on 15 May (CL), and over the Mountain View Forebay on 16 May (AB et al.). The pair of dark-morph **Swainson's Hawks** that nested in the Coyote Valley last year returned on 5 Apr, were re-furbishing their nest on 6 Apr, and were incubating on 22 Apr (all RPh). Migrating birds seen in Coyote Valley were not always described, but it appears that at least six birds were present from 6 Apr-1 May (v.ob.). A pair of dark morph birds seen on 30 May (RPh) were different from the nesting pair and may also attempt a nest near the valley. Migrants seen elsewhere included one over Ed Levin on 29 Apr (RFu et al.) and the SCRWA (Gilroy) treatment ponds on 9 May (GZ). **Black Rails** were heard calling again in Alviso during the period, all during late morning. One was heard southwest of Pond A17 on 4 May (PDu) and possibly the same bird on 21 May (GZ) and 22 May (MJM). Likely a different bird was heard on Alviso Slough on the south side of Pond A10 on 25 May (BM). Interestingly, a **Northern Mockingbird** at the Alviso EEC was imitating two of the Black Rail's typical vocalizations on 30 May (SCR).

Shorebirds through Hummingbirds

Snowy Plovers remained in the triangular panne north of Crittenden Marsh during the period (m.ob.) with a

high count of 11 on 4 May (MMR, MJM, RGJ). On that date, three birds were on nests, but not afterwards. Five birds remained on the panne on 26 May and two had moved to Crittenden Marsh (MMR, MJM). The only **Snowy Plovers** found away from there were two in Pond A13 in Alviso on 25 May (BM). They could not be found the next day (MMR, MJM). The spring passage of **Solitary Sandpipers** was marked by one to two birds in the drawn down Campbell percolation ponds 26 Apr-3 May (LMY et al., MHo) and a single bird along Llagas Creek along Old Oak Glen Avenue on 30 Apr (PDu). One to four **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found at the end of Gold Street in Alviso

on 5 May (GHa et al.), we have only one earlier record for this spring migrant. After the curious fallout of **Vaux's Swifts** in early March, their arrival and passage in April and May seemed normal, the high count was of 19 birds flying over the lower saddle on Loma Prieta Avenue on 23 Apr (JB). It has been an exceptional spring for **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** with birds found widely. A female arrived at Morgan Hill feeders on 12 Apr and a male the next day (SCR). Two displaying males were seen at Kelly Park on 22 Apr (PDu), one appeared paired. Through 1 May at least three females and nests were found (v.ob.). Migrants were found in Ed Levin CP 25-26 Apr (PDu et al.) and another was nearby on Old Calaveras Road on 29 Apr (RFu et al.).

Perhaps the biggest surprise was the number of birds found at Willow Glen feeders and along the Los Gatos Creek Trail. At least two males and a female were at one set of feeders 29 Apr-21 May (BM). A single male was at another feeder, but not seen in prior years (AY). The discovery of additional Black-chins along the Los Gatos Creek Trail between Meridian and Leigh on 7 May (BM) provided many observers close observations. Elsewhere, a female and nest was found along the Coyote Creek Trail below Silver Creek Valley Road on 3 May (JPa) and a female was seen along the Guadalupe River below Curtner on 4 May (AV). **Calliope Hummingbirds** were found in Ed Levin CP with a female seen on 26 Apr (PDu) and a male and female the next day (m.ob.). The last observation was a female on 3 May (MDo, EG).

Woodpeckers through Warblers

The **Lewis's Woodpecker** wintering along Roop Road was last seen on 25 Apr (JStP). Single birds were reported from San Antonio Valley on 3 May (RWR et al.) and 9 May (MMR, NMa). A **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen feeding at least one nestling near Sanborn-Skyline CP on 28 May (JJo), the only nest record reported in the period. A **Willow Flycatcher** was heard singing along the Pajaro River above Pescadero Creek on 26 May (WGB) and another one was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 31 May (SCR). The spring

passage of **Hammond's Flycatchers** was slightly above average. Birds were found at Smith Creek on 10 Apr (MJM), 17 Apr (JAC), and 9 May (MMR, NMa). Hammond's were also near Gilroy Hot Springs Road on 25 Apr (JStP), Stevens Creek CP on 4 May (BM), and one to three birds were present east of Mt. Hamilton 14-15 May (MHo). **Say's Phoebes** nesting northeast of Hellyer Avenue were apparently successful this spring (JPa, BJ). Elsewhere, two Say's were seen on 9 May (MMR, NMa) in San Antonio Valley where they nest regularly. One along the

A Continuing White-winged Scoter And A Spring Tropical Kingbird Were Unique Records For The Period.

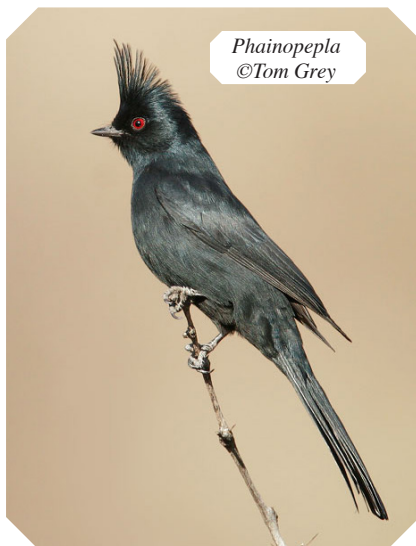
20-26 Apr (RCP et al., v.ob.). A single bird was in Pond A16 nearby on 13 May (MHo). Single **Ruddy Turnstones** were found in the Palo Alto Baylands on 23 Apr (SEM), along Pond A15 in Alviso on 30 Apr (JStP), and in the breeched Pond A6 on 4 May (MMR, MJM, RGJ). An alternate **Red Knot** was seen at Charleston Slough on 26 Apr (MMR, RGJ). Two spring passage **Black Terns** were in the entrance ponds at the SCRWA on 12 May (MHo). A male (and sometimes a female) **Greater Roadrunner** have been seen in the vicinity of the boat launch at Coyote Reservoir since last fall (PMcC). The male frequently calls. Observations during the period included one on 25 Apr (JStP) and 29 Apr (RSh). To the northwest, one was seen on Silver Creek Road on 17 May (GZ et al.). A single **Black Swift** was seen over Hidden Villa



White-winged Scoter
©Pete LaTourrette

Field Notes *cont'd*

East Fork of Coyote Creek in the middle of Coe Park on 18 May (MMR) was in an area where this species has not nested before. A **Tropical Kingbird** was seen in the Mountain View Forebay and Shoreline Lake on 14 May (FV), our first spring record for the county. A **Cassin's Kingbird** showed up on San Felipe Road on 14 Apr (MJM) and two birds have been there through the remainder of the period (m.ob.). They have apparently nested successfully in the blue gums there in recent years. At least four **Purple Martins** returned to the area of Summit Ridge near Loma Prieta on 7 Apr (AMR, CSc) and up to 10 birds were found in the vicinity through the end of the period (m.ob.). Birds were seen using nest holes on 22 May (BM, SM) and 31 May (WGB). Single migrants were seen over Calero Reservoir on 18 Apr (SCR), the Alviso ponds on 19 Apr (MHo), and Calaveras Reservoir on 20 Apr (RFu et al.). Four birds in the Sierra Azul OSP on 26 May (AV) may have been summer residents as well. Single **American Dippers** were found along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road throughout the period (v.ob.) and on Los Gatos Creek above Los Gatos on 2 Apr (RCP et al.). A single bird was also seen carrying food to a nest on Saratoga Creek at a private campground on 28 May (SPa et al.). There have been a number of dipper records over the last 20 years along the creek from the campground to the Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road, but this is the first evidence of breeding. Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were found at Smith Creek on 5 Apr (MMR) and multiple birds were along the John Nicholas Trail at Sanborn-Skyline CP on 15 Apr (BM). Up to five male and a female **Phainopepla** were seen in Santa Teresa CP 16-19 May (WGB, v.ob.). One or two males and a female were found in Alum Rock Park on 18 May (JJo et al.). Six birds were found in the center of Coe Park on Bear Mountain Road on 18 May as well (MMR).



Phainopepla
©Tom Grey

The spring passage of **Nashville Warblers** was off a bit, only six were reported. The first was one at Smith Creek on 5 Apr (MMR), followed by singles on Gilroy Hot Springs Road on 14 Apr (MJM), and the John Nicholas Trail on the next day (BM). Another Nashville was at the end of Gilroy Hot Springs Road on 25 Apr (JStP) and another at Rancho Canada del Oro OSP on 26 Apr (JPa). A late bird east of Mt. Hamilton was seen on 15 May (MHo). Passage was delayed slightly for our other rare western migrant warbler, **MacGillivray's**, but slightly more were found than in most years. Single birds were found at Rancho Canada del Oro OSP on 26 Apr, 30 Apr, and 13 May (all JPa), probably different birds. A singing bird was in Monte Bello OSP on 26 Apr (MMR, RGJ), one was east of Mt. Hamilton on 26 Apr (MHo), and the last of the passage birds was heard off Hicks Road on 26 May (JPa). Most of our spring **Yellow Warblers** are migrants with the first birds seen in mid-April. Two fledged young were seen along Coyote Creek near the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) waterbird pond on 31 May (SCR) while migrants headed farther north were still passing through in substantial numbers. At least 20 migrant **Hermit Warblers** were reported during the period (m.ob.), at least eight were found in Monte Bello OSP on 22 Apr (RFu et al.). A singing male near Indian Rock off Skyline Boulevard on 23 May (WGB) was in an area where the species nests. Likely migrant **Yellow-breasted Chats** included one along Old Oak Glen Avenue in Morgan Hill 29-30 Apr (AV, JPa), a singing bird along Llagas Creek above Bloomfield Avenue 6-12 May (WGB, GZ, MHo), one in an Almaden Valley yard 14-15 May (JPa), and a singing Diablo Range bird near Isabel Creek on 19 May (GZ, JZ).

Sparrows through Goldfinches

At least 16 **Black-chinned Sparrows** were singing along Bear Mountain Road in Coe Park on 18 May (MMR), the highest number detected on this fire recovery survey route. The **Lark Bunting** found on Marsh Road in late March was last seen on 3 Apr (SL). **White-throated Sparrows** were found at six locations plus two at feeders (m.ob.). The latest were three, all singing, at the Ulistac Natural Area on 4 May (JStP). An adult male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was seen at La Rinconada Park in Los Gatos on 14 Apr (GZ) and remained at least through 17 Apr (m.ob.). An adult male **Blue Grosbeak** found at the Oka percolation ponds on 13 Apr (OA) was the earliest spring record by six days. Another male was seen near Sargent Creek and the Pajaro River on 19 May (GZ, RWR) and a female was along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 31 May (SCR). Three pairs of **Great-tailed Grackles** were bringing food to nestlings at Cottonwood Lake on 31 May (SCR), a new breeding location. Understanding **Lawrence's Goldfinches** is never easy. In their Diablo Range strongholds they were notably scarce.



Tropical Kingbird
©Tom Grey

On a survey in Coe Park on 18 May (MMR) only one was found, 'virtually non-existent.' Of six records in the range, the high count was of two birds in Joseph Grant CP on 17 May (AME). A number of birds were found in grapes along San Felipe Road with nest building on 7 Apr (MJM) and up to four or more birds there through 12 May (m.ob.). Three records from the Santa Cruz Mountains included a pair in Santa Teresa CP on 4 May (JTh), another pair in Arastradero Preserve on 25 May (OA), and a pair at Skyline Boulevard and Page Mill Road on 29 May (RSTh).

Observers: Ozzie Altus (OA), Jeff Bleam (JB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Andy Bradshaw (AB), Jack Cole (JAC), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDu), Al Eisner (AME), Rob Furrow (RFu), Eric Goodill (EG), John Harshman (JHa), Garth Harwood (GHa), Marcel Holyoak (MHo), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Jim Johnson (JJo), Bob Juhl (BJ), Caroline Lambert (CL), Jasen Liu (JL), Stephen Long (SL), Natari Madavan (NMa), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Patricia McCarter (PMcC), Sonny Mencher (SM), Brooke Miller (BM), Steve Miller (SEM), Lisa Myers (LMY), Janna Pauser (JPa), Steve Patt (SPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AMR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Christian Schwarz (CSc), Randy Shingai (RSh), Jason St. Pierre (JStP), Jim Thomas (JTh), Ron Thorn (RSTh), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Amy Yee (AY), Gena Zolotar (GZ), and Jeff Zolotar (JZ).

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

Another Birdathon Success!

By Debbie Thompson, SCVAS Birdathon Committee

The 2014 Spring Birdathon was another resounding success for our chapter both in fundraising and fun. All 163 participants on 26 teams turned in their best efforts to count birds and raise money for our critical conservation and education programs. We are proud to announce that the event raised over \$50,000!

We extend a special thank-you to our 2014 Spring Birdathon Prize Sponsors. These sponsors donate valuable prizes to entice individuals to raise more money. Big thanks go to our Golden Eagle Sponsors who donated over \$600 in prizes: Los Gatos Birdwatcher, Patagonia, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and Nancy Teater. We also thank our Great Egret Sponsors who donated between \$250 and \$600 in prizes: Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, David Presotto, and Hawaii Forest and Trail. Many other important prizes were donated by others; see scvas.org/birdathon for the entire list.

Sixteen participants raised over \$1,000 with Bob Hirt, Susan Bell, Steven Patt, Jim Liskovec, and Barry Langdon-Lassagne at the top, placing one through five respectively. Bob raised over \$4,000 and Susan followed closely on his heels with just under that amount. We are happy to announce that the top 39 individual fundraisers (except members of the SCVAS Board and Staff) were able to select a prize from our long list of desirable prizes.

Team fundraising totals were also impressive this year. In the four-hour category with eleven teams, in first place was the Cheeky Chickadees led by Debbie Thompson raising over \$5,900 and in second place was the Surf Scoters led by Susan Bell raising over \$4,900. For the 24-hour category with 13 teams, in first place was the Rocks Wrens led by Bob Hirt raising over \$5,500 and in second place was the Snipe Hunters led by Laurie Roberts raising over \$4,500.

The friendly competition to count the most bird species resulted in some competitive numbers. In the 24-hour category (any number of hours between four and 24) the Varied Twitchers led by Mike Rogers identified 166 species and in second place the



For the third year in a row, Team Fledglings has proven that you don't have to be an adult to make a huge difference! For an added twist, they participated in this year's Birdathon while learning about data collection techniques. It's nice to know that the future of conservation, education and birding is going to be in great hands!

Photo courtesy of Pati Rouzer



Left: The Snipe Hunters Team Scanning Calero Reservoir. One of the top teams for encouraging support for the Birdathon, the Snipe Hunters are also known for birding the length and breadth of Santa Clara County!

Photo courtesy of Edward Rooks

Bob-O-Links led by Bob Power identified 150 species. In the four-hour category the Cheeky Chickadees took this category too with an even 100 species and in second place the Rushing Thrushes led by Bob Power identified 95 species. The Big Sit category team Eagle Eyes, yet another team led by Bob Power, turned in 70 species and team Datasets led by our Executive Director, Stephanie Ellis, counted 66 species – both impressive numbers of species counted from one 30-foot circle.

We also continued our Photography Birdathon competition this year. In the four-hour category the Lens Loons led by Caroline Lambert photographed 81 species and the Oh-My Godwits led by Beth Hamel photographed 66 species. In the 24-hour category the Plover Exposures led by Steven Tracey photographed 119 species and the Jack Sparrows led by Barry Langdon-Lassagne photographed 107 species.

Special prizes awarded in the Photography Birdathon went to Steve Tracey for photographing the most Unique Bird, the White-throated Sparrow. Tom Grey captured the Most Artistic photo of a Great Blue Heron.

Team Fledglings entered the competition again this year with ten team members all between the ages of six and 16. Pati Rouzer led them in counting an amazing 54 species and raising over \$4,200 – earning third place in the 24-hour Most Money category. Hats off to these determined kids who set a high bar for the adults in our competition.

Most unique team honors go to The Surf Scoters led by Susan Bell. The team shoved off again this year aboard the historic tugboat, Sea Dive, with Captain Charles Bell at the helm to count 47 species in Alviso Slough.

Also deserving special mention was the private duel between Stanford and Berkeley. Our team, The Big Game led by Robert Furrow won with 76 species counted on the Stanford campus to Berkeley's 64.

Special kudos go to the Spring Birdathon Committee who worked tirelessly from fall through spring to make this a success: Renee Polizotto (Chairperson), Julio Mulero, Amy Sanchez, Bob Hirt, Beth Hamel, Debbie Thompson, and Stephanie Ellis. The committee wants to extend special thanks to Andy Bradshaw and Susan Bell who provided the daunting administrative support.

Lastly, we especially appreciate each and every one of our participants, both big and small fundraisers alike. We know raising money is not on everyone's list of favorite activities but without your concerted efforts our conservation and education programs would surely falter. We look forward to having you participate again in 2015!

Thanks To All Of Our Birdathon Teams And Their Many, Many Supporters For Another AMAZING Birdathon Year!

Almaden Eagles

John and Janice Green
Kirsten Holmquist
Richard Page
Leon and Janna Pauser
Michael and Alma Rogers
Ann Verdi

The Big Game

James Adams
Ellyn Bush
Thomas Davis
Mary Debyl
Karen DeMello
Brent Fitzgerald
Erin Fitzgerald
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Vivek and Leena Khanzode
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Sherri Weeks

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Sally Cedarblade
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Hilary Feldman
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Randall Sage
James Thomas
William and Shirley Walker
Dieter and Susan Walz

Cheeky Chickadees

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Renate Birwe
Vincent and Muriel Brennan
Doug and Gail Cheeseman
A.J. and L.M. Cortopassi

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Hazel Donaldson
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Roland Kenner and Patricia Kenny
Vivek and Leena Khanzode
Ann Leishman
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Thomas Grey and Barbara Babcock
Kathi Kendrick
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Pete and Sue LaTourrette
Michael Mammoser
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Doug and Gail Cheeseman
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Aarti Deshmukh
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Robin Winterlin

continued on page 10

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(cont'd)

Lens Loons

Peter and Sue LaTourrette
Nils Warnock
Caroline Lambert
Vivek and Leena Khanzode

Mean Green Machines

Cynthia Berg
Lucy Brock
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Robert Furrow
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Pete and Sue LaTourrette
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Oh My! Godwits

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Wayne Krill
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Walt and Teresa Ruzzo
Donna Sadowy

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(cont'd)

Two Towhees

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Sandy Johan
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Dorsey and Katherine Bass
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Christine Hildebrand
Robert Hirt
Vivek and Leena Khanzode
Barry and Ginger Langdon-Lassagne
Steve Patt and Debi Jamison
Rhonda Patt
Ruth Patt

Ruth Troetschler
Charles Wilson

Varied Twitchers

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Wrong Terns

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Stanley and Elaine Gould
Gary Govola
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Lillian Simon

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Gifts received between April 1st, 2014 and May 31st, 2014

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Marcia White

SCVAS Legacy Fund Update

by Diane Hart, SCVAS Board Member

Two years ago, the SCVAS Board of Directors created the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund to encourage members to include bequests to SCVAS in their estate plans. Since that time, the fund has grown substantially thanks to gifts both large and small.

Your Board views gifts to the Legacy Fund as investments in the long-term sustainability of SCVAS and its mission. Income from the Fund has been used to expand SCVAS's Summer Nature Adventures program for children with the goal of educating a new generation of enthusiastic environmentalists.

The Board is also investing in the professional development of SCVAS's new Executive Director Stephanie Ellis. Since joining us in January, Stephanie has made time for training in finance, fundraising, and grant-writing in her busy schedule, and is currently enrolled in a non-profit mentorship program with the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Stephanie has also applied to Stanford University's competitive Executive Program for Nonprofit Leadership (EPNL). Both Stephanie and the Board are dedicated to the success of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

Looking ahead, the Board anticipates tapping the Legacy Fund to jumpstart a new Youth Environmental Leadership Program. This program will be aimed at helping high school students prepare for college majors and employment in the fields of environmental

education and conservation. Stay tuned for more about this investment by SCVAS in the next generation of environmental educators, scientists and conservationists.

SCVAS' **Friends of the Legacy Fund** includes those who have made bequests to SCVAS in their estate plans, both past and present:

Marianne Dieckmann	Peter and Suzanne LaTourrette
Janet Fischer	Albert Martel
Diane and Peter Hart	Earl Menefee
Bob Hirt	Julio Mulero
Carol Bartle Hughes	Bob and Amy Power
Richard and Christine Jeffers	Carol Straub
Ashok Khosla and Susan Bodenlos	Deborah and Steve Thompson
Antoinette Koenen	

If you have included SCVAS in your estate plan, please let us know. We would like to list you as a Friend of the Legacy Fund.

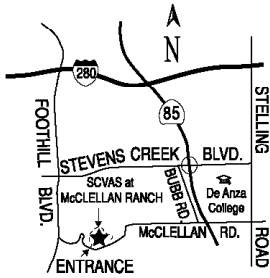
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund Statement of Purpose

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund supports the 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. Your bequest will create an enduring gift so that future generations are able to enjoy the natural beauty of the Santa Clara Valley area.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
 22221 McClellan Road
 Cupertino, CA 95014

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 Fax: 408-252-2850
 E-mail: scvas@scvas.org
 www.scvas.org

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We were extremely saddened to hear of the passing of Palo Alto resident,
Barbara Foster, on June 8th.

A long-time and committed supporter of this chapter, Barbara's passion, intelligence,
 warmth and love of learning will be sorely missed by all of us at SCVAS.

Our thoughts are with her family.

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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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Chapter Members in the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) receive the SCVAS newsletter, *The Avocet*.

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