

THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May-June 2014

Open Space and Nature: A Chance To Make a Difference

by Stephanie Ellis, Executive Director

Does this sound good to you? A funding measure from the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District has been placed on the June ballot in Santa Clara, San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties. The measure will be used to:

- Expand public access to protected land
- Save local redwood forests
- Provide clean air and water by restoring land that feeds our lakes, streams, ponds and waterways
- Preserve agriculture along the San Mateo Coast
- Restore native vegetation to create a healthy habitat for wildlife and preserve biodiversity.



The SCVAS staff and Board of Directors believe this measure will benefit our native birds and their ecosystems, and has endorsed the measure. We're happy to support the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District's (MROSD) conservation and public access work as partners and supporters for the past 40 years.

MROSD has permanently preserved nearly 62,000 acres of ridgeline, foothill, and bayland open space, creating 26 open space preserves in our region. This open space – carefully stewarded and gently enhanced by MROSD – provides habitat to a great diversity of birds and other native wildlife, provides us with access and opportunities to enjoy birding in these natural areas, secures clean air and water and significantly enhances our quality of life.

We treasure the natural legacy offered to us by MROSD, but our partnership with MROSD is deeper and encompasses all of our mission elements: we celebrate birds together in the Wingding Festival, we educate children together in summer camps and education programs, we advocate together against use of deadly rodenticides, and we work together to enhance nesting sites for rare birds (such as the Purple Martins of Mt. Umunhum).

SCVAS endorses the District's initiative and vision of preserving more open spaces and wildlife habitats. We urge our members to vote for this ballot measure on June 3rd, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the District for decades to come! Read more: http://www.openspace.org/news/bond_measure.asp

General Membership Meeting Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1

Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Roads

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Wednesday, May 21st

“Birds, Birding and Birders
of the Southern Cone”

with Alvaro Jaramillo



Thorn-tailed
Rayadito



Torres del Paine
National Park

The Southern Cone? An Ice Cream place in Georgia? Nope, it's the triangle-shaped southern section of South America, comprising Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and the southern bits of Bolivia and Brazil. What makes it special is that there are so many unique habitats, such as the Pampas, Patagonia, the Matorral, the Humboldt Current, Iguazu Falls, the Yungas, and the Chaco! It is the land of Rheas, penguins, horneros, seriemas,

as well as Southern Right Whales, Marine Otters, Viscachas and Vicunas. This stunning area also includes snow-capped volcanoes, huge granitic spikes, and coastlines that are perhaps only rivaled by California for their beauty.

Come enjoy an evening exploring a gorgeous part of the world and its equally fantastic bird and wildlife through the eyes of a birder-biologist who has an unbridled passion for this part of the world.

(Additional information and detailed directions available at www.scvas.org or by calling the SCVAS office)

Photos ©
Alvaro Jaramillo

☞ *Special Events at McClellan Ranch for Volunteers, Birdathon Participants, Members*
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☞ *Summer Classes & Adventures for Adults*
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☞ *A Brandt's Cormorant Delights in March*
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☞ *Young Audubon Summer Adventures Are Almost Here!*

— Page 10

Join Us for Our
Annual
June Meeting
and Potluck!

Wednesday June 18, 6 PM
McClellan Ranch Preserve

See Page 7 for details

May-June '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 May 3, 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 4, 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 approx. 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 7, 12:00 PM

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leaders:** Freddy Howell and Allen Royer. No RSVP necessary, but contact the landfill coordinator, Silviana Ruiz, at (408) 730-7545 with questions. **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.

Saturday May 10, 8:00 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right towards the Model Airplane Park (street is unnamed). Follow the road for 1/4 mile and park in the gravel lot at

the first bend in road (meet at the gate if the entrance is locked). **RC**

Sunday May 11, 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 approx. 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**

Wednesday May 14, 8:30 AM

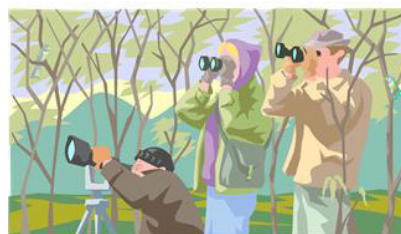
Rancho Canada Del Oro OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser 408-569-9264. **Directions:** From 101 exit west at Bailey Ave. Turn left onto McKean Rd. proceed 2.38 miles, then right on Casa Loma Rd. to 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. 6+ miles. Turn right onto Casa Loma Rd. 1.6 miles to OSA parking. **Highlights:** We'll bird along the Serpentine trail to the Longwall trailhead and look for breeding birds on this level open trail. **Difficulty Level:** Easy walking. **Notes:** Bring water, limited facilities. **LO**

Saturday May 17, 8:30 AM

Mt Madonna County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey (408) 966-3860. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Gilroy take Hwy 152 West (Hecker Pass Hwy). After approximately 6.4 miles turn right into the Sprig Lake parking lot. **Difficulty Level:** This half-day birding walk, climbing on the way out and descending on the return trip, begins in mixed oak woodlands but in short order passes through



grasslands, chaparral and, finally, coastal forest where Redwood and Douglas Fir dominate the landscape. **Notes:** Be sure to bring liquids. **LO**

Sunday May 18, 8:15 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 on 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:** A vehicle entry fee will be required. **LO**

Saturday May 24, 8:00 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**

Sunday May 25, 8:15 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. **Notes:** Bring extra layers of clothing in case it's foggy and cold. **Highlights:** Possible Grasshopper Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting. **NF**

Saturday May 31, 8:00 AM

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** Meet at the northeast 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 1, 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

Field Trips *continued*

Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on Mt Hamilton Rd. and 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 4, 12:00 PM City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leaders:** Freddy Howell and Allen Royer. No RSVP necessary, but contact the landfill coordinator, Silviana Ruiz, at (408) 730-7545 with questions. See directions from May 7th.

Saturday June 7, 8:00 AM No trip - Palo Alto Summer Bird Count.

Sunday, June 8, 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*

Wednesday June 11, 8:30 AM Vasona Lake County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser 408-569-9264. **Directions:** From Hwy 17 exit at Lark Ave., go west to University Ave. Turn left onto Blossom Hill Rd. and use main entrance. Turn into first parking lot on your left after kiosk. **Highlights:** We'll bird the south end of this popular Los Gatos Park looking for breeding birds. **Difficulty Level:** Easy Walking. **Notes:** Parking fee of \$6 or use your Santa Clara County park pass. *LO*

Saturday June 14, 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:** Looking for Swainson's Thrush, Pacific Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and Woodpeckers. **Notes:** Be prepared for variable weather, dress in layers.

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.



Just In:

SCVAS has new logo
denim shirts for sale!

SCVAS Events Calendar

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

Bay Area Bird Photographers

Lucy Evans Nature Center, Palo Alto

Topic: "African Birds of Prey" with

Doug Cheeseman

Go to www.scvas.org/babp for details

Tues. 5/13 & 6/10; 10:00AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group

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

Topic 5/13: Bird's Sense of Smell

Topic 6/10: Annual picnic. Everyone welcome - please bring something to share. Birds for 2014/2015 discussions will be decided. **NOTE:**

The picnic will start at 11:00AM.

Wed. 5/14 & 6/11; 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.

See www.scvas.org for more details.

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Special Events

at McClellan Ranch Preserve
(see SCVAS website for directions):

Thur. 5/1; 4:30PM (Birdwalk);
6:30PM (Dinner)

Volunteer Appreciation

Dinner & Birdwalk

RSVP to 408-252-3740



Tues. 6/10; 6PM

Birdathon Awards Dinner

RSVP to 408-252-3747.

www.scvas.org/birdathon for details

Wed. 6/18; 6 PM

Annual Potluck Dinner & Board Elections

No RSVP necessary, but see page 7 for details



Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

Burrowing Owl Conservation in San Jose: The City of San Jose, Department of Environmental Services, has granted funds to SCVAS to maintain and improve Burrowing Owl habitat on 180 acres at the Water Pollution Control Plant. Over the next two years, we will be surveying, monitoring, and working to improve Burrowing Owl habitat at the site. Please email owls@scvas.org to join our volunteer list and learn more about this project.

Threat to Ulistac Natural Area (UNA), City of Santa Clara: For months, we have been following the efforts of the City of Santa Clara to develop sport facilities at Ulistac Natural Area. Many SCVAS members sent letters to the Santa Clara City Council urging that Ulistac Natural Area remain untouched, and encouraging funding of Phase II of the UNA master plan, which would allow restoration of additional valley floor habitat. Instead, planning is in the works for a new Youth Sports Complex for existing and emerging sports, and the Council has recently allocated \$2 million from land reserve funds towards a study to add additional soccer fields to UNA as soon as possible. The Ulistac Natural Area is the single remaining natural open space in Santa Clara, and the only native valley floor habitat in the valley. SCVAS will continue to advocate with the city on the value of these riparian upland grasslands, oak savanna, live oak woodlands, deciduous oak woodlands and native flora at UNA, as well as the wildlife that use them...including us! To help us save UNA, please send an email to shani@scvas.org with the subject "Ulistac." See http://www.santaclaraweekly.com/2014/Issue-15/wildflowers_in_bright_bloom_at_ulistac_natural_area.html for an article highlighting springtime blooms at Ulistac.

Development in San Jose Will be Safer for Birds: For some time, SCVAS has been advocating for bird friendly building and landscape design on the Peery-Arrillaga 2-million-square-foot project on Brokaw and North First Street (ten towers, seven-stories each) in San Jose. At our request, developers agreed to change several of the proposed design features in order to reduce potential bird mortality. Instead of highly reflective, transparent glass walls around a central court, and in above-grade walkways, they will install "material that is more bird-friendly, e.g. non reflective patterned glass or metal railings". They also agreed to revise the landscape plan "to be sensitive to bird flight patterns and further promote bird friendly design". The glass on the buildings themselves is non-reflective. We are very satisfied with this result, and hope the birds will be too!

Palo Alto is Making Progress: In the City of Palo Alto, SCVAS is making progress in shaping the City's Urban Forest Master Plan to include habitat, bird friendly goals, policies and programs. This is an ongoing effort to encourage this city to consider nature and birds in its green vision and sustainability plans and programs. In addition, the Council has dedicated a 7.7-acre addition to Foothills Park (Page Mill Rd.) as parkland.

Please contact us at shani@scvas.org if you are interested in learning about these or any of our other projects.

Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg, Programs Coordinator

Planning events, leading field trips, processing membership data, greeting visitors to the ranch, building and monitoring nest boxes, fundraising, managing finances, protecting Burrowing Owls, public speaking, letter writing, connecting with the community at outreach events, teaching, and of course - birding! What do all of these activities have in common? These are just a few examples of the many things that SCVAS volunteers participate in.

Even though our office staff has grown over the last few years, we are still frankly astounded by how much our volunteers do every year, every month, every week and every day – the list is broad and wide. And the best part is that our volunteers always participate with a smile, a hug, and a friendly check-in. Because of all of these wonderful people, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is truly a great place to be!

Of course, there are always lots of different opportunities for new, equally wonderful folks to get involved. 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.

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. 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.

Community Outreach Volunteers - Each year, especially in the Spring and Fall, SCVAS is invited to participate in numerous community festivals and fairs. These fun events are a great chance for us to recruit new members, let people know about *our* upcoming events, and just share what it is we love about Audubon with those around us. Interested volunteers should be comfortable talking to people in an informal setting about SCVAS' programs.

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.

Summer Wish-List

Looking for a way to support SCVAS in a unique way?
Consider helping us fulfill some of our wish-list needs:

Recent model laptop computer(s) to use for presentations and off-site projects

Office Chairs! Ours have definitely seen better days, and our backs are letting us know...

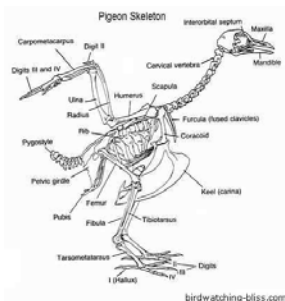
Contact the SCVAS office at 408-252-3747 if you'd be interested in making an in-kind, tax-deductible, donation.

Adult Education Classes & Seminars 2014

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

Know Your Birds Inside And Out! Avian Anatomy and Physiology with Stephanie Ellis, SCVAS Executive Director

This interactive presentation will uncover “how a bird works,” with an overview of the avian skeleton, as well as the basics of the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, and reproductive systems as compared to mammals. Participants will also be introduced to adaptations of birds that enable a specific life style (such as salt glands in seabirds), how a bird responds to heat and cold stress (i.e., counter-current exchange blood flow in the legs), and the significance of bill shape, toe arrangement, feather structure, leg placement, and more!



Date: Thurs, 5/22; 6:30-8:30PM
Location: McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino.
Fee: \$25 members; \$45 non-members
Limited to 15 participants

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://alvarosadventures.com/farallon-islands/>. Please note, however, that you should register for this particular trip 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

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. Proceeds from this workshop support SCVAS' Education and Conservation Programs.

Limited to 10 participants



Hudsonian Godwit
Photo © Tom Grey

Just one of the many species sure to delight at the Cape!

Field Notes

(February - March, 2014)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Rails

The only **Snow Goose** of the period was an immature at the Coyote Creek GC on 26 Feb (DWe). A will-o-the-wisp **Ross's Goose**, probably present since December, was seen again on 22 Feb (MDO et al.) and 28 Feb (WGB, MSm). **Eurasian Wigeon** along the Bay included one to two males in the Alviso ponds 15 Feb (SCR, MMR) and 16 Mar (MHo), three males in Pond A16 on 15 Feb (SCR), a male on Pond A3W on 2 Mar (BM), a male in outer Charleston Slough on 6 Mar (WGB), and a male in the Palo Alto estuary on 18 Mar (DJ). Four male and a female **Blue-winged Teal** were in Artesian (Mallard) Slough in Alviso on 4 Feb (JPa et al.). Single males were seen in the slough on 23 Mar and also in the Lockheed Martin ponds the same day (both RCP et al.) and two males were in the nearby Sunnyvale WPCP west pond on 28 Mar (WGB). Only small numbers of **Redhead** were found earlier in the winter, but 190 on Pond A3W and the nearby Sunnyvale WPCP ponds on 12 Feb (WGB) and at least 157 on Pond A18 in Alviso on 15 Feb (SCR) brought us back to more typical numbers. A pair of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** remained on Shoreline Lake at least through 1 Mar (m.ob.). A **Red-throated Loon** found on closed refuge ponds on 17 Mar (JStP) may have been the same one seen there in mid-January. A **Brandt's Cormorant** on the Pond A13/A15 levee in Alviso on 18 Mar (JGo) was a surprise. Except in two recent invasion years, this coastal cormorant is very rare in the county. The Mountain View Forebay **American Bittern** was seen again in late February and most of March (v.ob.). An adult **Bald Eagle** was at a nest at Coyote Reservoir on 13 Feb (MJM, LCr). An incubating bird was at its nest west of Calaveras Reservoir on 14 Feb-26 Mar (CVR, MJM, v.ob.). A **Broad-winged Hawk** was seen along Skyline Boulevard on 16 Mar (*vide* NZ). This is the earliest spring record we have in the county. At least two **Ferruginous Hawks** remained in the Coyote Valley through 8 Mar (m.ob.). Other birds included an adult along Marsh Road on 2 Feb (DWe) and one along Metcalf Road on 16 Mar (MHo). Eight calling **Black Rails** were heard along Alviso Slough



Brandt's Cormorant
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

15-17 Feb (SCR, v.ob.). This is an area where we had calling birds last summer, so perhaps they will nest.

Shorebirds through Hummingbirds

Fourtoeight **Snowy Plovers** were found on the unnamed panne north of Crittenden Marsh on 15-27 Mar (FV, RFu, v.ob.), the first in the county since mid-December. They nested in this panne last summer. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** near Pond A13 in Alviso on 16 Mar (MHo) was the only report of the period. A 2nd-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was tantalizingly close on San Felipe Lake in San Benito County on 8 Feb (SCR, DLSh). **Glaucous Gulls** commuting to the Kirby Canyon landfill continued to be seen on the Ogier Avenue ponds through at least 18

Among other rarities, a Brandt's Cormorant, a Lark Bunting, and a Baltimore Oriole stood out.

Mar (m.ob.). At least three birds were there on 8 Feb (SCR), two 1st-cycle and a 2nd-cycle. A 1st-cycle Glaucous was feeding in fields near Bloomfield and Hwy 15 on 8 Feb (SCR) and another was seen flying from San Felipe Lake into the county the same day (SCR, DLSh). An immature bird was at the Newby Island recyclerly on 7 Mar (JStP). Another 1st-cycle bird was on Pond A16 on 29 Mar (MMR, MJM, LCr). Numbers of **Black Skimmers** began to increase at Charleston Slough during the period with five there on 21 Feb (CL), building to at least 14 on 21 Mar (GL). Three to four **Greater Roadrunners** were seen, all at the western edge of the Diablo Range. One was northeast of Hellyer Avenue on 11 Mar (MJM). The next day another was seen east of the Metcalf Road summit running on the road (CEd). A singing bird was found about a mile up Metcalf Road on 14 Mar (RWR, FV) and perhaps the same bird was on the other side of the road on 25 Mar (MHo). At least some **Common Poorwills** overwinter, one was heard off Del Puerto Road at the county

line on 16 Feb (JGa). A bird in Morgan Hill on 29 Mar (SCR) was likely a migrant as we have few records of flatland birds. A strong low pressure system with a good amount of rain came through the evening of 27 Feb and remained into 1 Mar. Perhaps related to this, on 1 Mar we had a **Vaux's Swift** over the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds (LMY et al.), one over the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) ponds (AV), and perhaps the same bird over Almaden Lake (JPa). The next day, two were seen along the San Francisco Bay Trail near the Sunnyvale WPCP (BM) and one over Los Gatos (MHo). No more were found until the first seasonal arrival in Alviso on 29 Mar (MMR, MJM). A male **Costa's Hummingbird** showed up at a south Los Altos feeder on 21 Mar (ATE, AHe). The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the season was a male in the Ulistac Natural Area on 1 Mar (L&MR). Additional males were found in at least six other locations in March, most on the west side of the valley. The first male **Allen's Hummingbird** of the seasons was seen along Coyote Creek near Sycamore Drive in Milpitas on 31 Jan (PDu). A few more have been found in this period, but no evidence of nesting.

Woodpeckers through Warblers

A wintering **Lewis's Woodpecker** was found again along Roop Road 16 Feb to 29 Mar (JPa, CHu, RWR, v.ob.). The wintering adult **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Ed Levin CP continued during the period through at least 9 Mar (DWe, v.ob.). A second adult was discovered at the end of Geng Road in Palo Alto on 7 Mar (JMa) and has remained at least through 21 Mar (v.ob.). It has been a remarkable winter for **Red-naped Sapsuckers**, less common than the Yellow-bellied. A female found at the SCVWD ponds in January was rediscovered on 5 Mar (BM, KBu) and has remained at least through 16 Mar (v.ob.). Another female, quite pale, was found in the Ulistac Natural Area on 4 Feb (JPa, Eba et al.) and photos taken on 15 Feb (K&SB) convincingly supported the id. This bird remained at least through 5 Mar (m.ob.). Flatland **Prairie Falcon** reports included one at the Jubilee Christian Church in Alviso on 1 Feb (MHo) and another in the Coyote Valley OSP on 8 Mar (RWR et al.). A **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Lake Cunningham on 16 Feb (PDu et al.) and 22 Feb (MDO et al.) was likely wintering and the same bird found there in late November (JPa). **Say's Phoebes** are again nesting in outbuildings northeast of Hellyer Avenue, a pair was seen carrying nest materials there on 24 Feb (JPa). Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were heard along the John Nicholas Trail in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 22 Mar (GZ), the only ones during the period. Single **American Dippers** were found along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road throughout the period (v.ob.).

Field Notes *cont'd*

The male **Golden-crowned Kinglet** wintering at Graystone Park in the Almaden Valley was seen and enjoyed by many in February and remained at least to 14 Mar (JPa). A flock of at least six kinglets was seen near Hobbs Road in Henry Coe SP on 25 Feb and 4 Mar (both CL). At least two birds were heard along Skyline Boulevard south of Page Mill Road on 25 Feb (RFu). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was seen along the Fish Trail at Coe on 4 Mar (CL), an excellent find. The **Northern Waterthrush** in the Charleston Road marsh has been particularly secretive this winter, but was found on 13 Feb (PLaT). Two wintering **Nashville Warblers** have been a treat, one at the SCVWD ponds on 15 Feb (MHo) and another at Graystone Park on 16 and 18 Feb (AV, JPa). A second **Yellow Warbler** for the winter was one along Coyote Creek at Sycamore Drive on 15 Feb (DWe). A wintering **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was seen at the Ulistac Natural Area 23-24 Feb (GZ, v.ob.). One singing in Stevens Creek CP on 4 Mar (BM) was likely a bird that wintered nearby as our returning summer birds usually turn up a month later. An immature male **Hermit Warbler** was found at Graystone Park on 4 Feb (WGB) and was seen regularly through the end of the month (m.ob.).

Sparrows through Goldfinches

One to seven wintering **Chipping Sparrows** have continued at TJ Martin Park in San Jose (v.ob.). Three birds in Las Palmas Park in Sunnyvale on 6 Mar (GZ) suggest another group of urban wintering birds. A singing **Bell's Sparrow** was seen along Willow Ridge in Henry Coe SP on 22 Feb (JY, AL). Another was found in a chamise field on Del Puerto

Road on 19 Mar (MHo). A female-like **Lark Bunting** was found with Lark Sparrows along Marsh Road on 20 Mar (RFu) and has remained at least through 25 Mar (m.ob.). This is our 6th county record and the first in spring. A **Swamp Sparrow** at the Palo Alto Baylands was found again on 26 Feb (WGB). A new bird was seen along Stevens Creek between Crittenden Lane and Hwy 101 on 28 Feb-3 Mar (CL, MDo et al.). **White-throated Sparrows** were found at six locations plus four at feeders (m.ob.). Birds continued at the Ulistac Natural Area through the period with six counted on 2 Mar (DWe, GZ, AME). An adult, all-red tanager was briefly seen along Stevens Creek at La Avenida on 16 Feb (WGB), it was likely a Summer Tanager (we have no local records for Hepatic). A smattering of wintering **Western Tanagers** included two along Coyote Creek at Sycamore Drive on 1 Feb (MHo), one in Mountain View again on 27 Feb (MDo), and a bird heard at Stanford on 28 Feb (RFu). A 1st-winter male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at a San Jose feeder 1-19 Feb (JaJ), our second this winter. High counts of **Great-tailed Grackles** were 30 at the Coyote Creek GC on 26 Feb (DWe) and 30 more at Lake Cunningham on 28 Feb (WGB, MSm). The wintering 1st-winter male **Bullock's Oriole** was seen again 8-9 Feb (AV, MMR) near the SCVWD ponds. A surprise was the return of the male **Baltimore Oriole** to Vasona CP and its haunts on nearby University Avenue on 18-19 Mar (KBU, JPa). A few **Pine Siskins** were in Stevens Creek on 2 Mar (SEM), the only reports for the period. The only **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were a pair at a Morgan Hill yard on 22 Mar and a male over the Ogier Avenue ponds the same day (both SCR).



Baltimore Oriole
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

Observers: Ellen Bateman (EBa), Karen & Scott Black (K&SB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KBU), Lea Crisp (LCr), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Duntun (PDU), Craig Edgerton (CEd), Al Eisner (AME), Rob Furrow (RFu), Jim Gain (JGa), Jessica Gonzalez (JGo), Ann Hepenstal (AHe), Marcel Holyoak (MHo), Cait Hutnick (CHu), Deborah Jamison (DJ), Jane Jordan (JaJ), Caroline Lambert (CL), Pete LaTourrette (PLaT), Garrett Lau (GL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Juliana Manoliu (JMa), Brooke Miller (BM), Steve Miller (SEM), Lisa Myers (LMY), Janna Pauser (JPa), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Logan & Milly Rosenberg (L&MR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Debra Shearwater (DLSh), Marc Smits (MSm), Jason St. Pierre (JStP), Andrew Tey (ATe), Frank Vanslager (FV), Dave Weber (DWe), Ann Verdi (AV), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), James Yurchenco (JY), Nickie Zavinsky (NZ), and Gena Zolotar (GZ).

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



Annual Meeting and Potluck

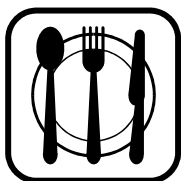
Wednesday June 19, 6 PM

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.



A Lasting Legacy: Former SCVAS Board President Ashok Khosla Moves on to Art and Travel

By Bob Hirt, SCVAS Board President

When Ashok joined the Board of SCVAS in 2007, it was clear to me that he would be an impact player for the organization. He came from a successful and entrepreneurial background and had great executive skills and vision. During his initial stretch he was burning the candle at both ends while working as CEO of his voice-recognition company, Tuvox. After he sold the company he went headlong into SCVAS causes. He became the driving force in fundraising, and introduced to the Board how it should be done. Working with a professional fundraiser, we set up a Fundraising Committee (Chaired now by Diane and Peter Hart) and a Membership Committee (chaired by Vivek Khanzode). As a background, Ashok and the Harts were introduced to the wonder of birds, wildlife education and habitat preservation by the adult education programs taught by Bob Power, our former Executive Director. While a fabulous photographer and artist, Ashok developed his passion for birds from these classes and field seminars.

When Ashok took over as Board President in 2012, he used his considerable talent and connections to create many fundraising events. During that time we created a Legacy Fund to facilitate bequests that could ensure the continuity of our conservation

and education programs. Our environmental advocate program has produced some amazing results. We've protected Burrowing Owl habitat, produced city regulations for bird-safe design of building, ensured nature-responsible growth and development, protected Panoche Valley, and saved many hawks and eagles at the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area.

Ashok's leadership and true desire for the organization to prosper and accomplish its conservation and education goals left behind a lasting legacy.

Ashok, as you pursue your love of photography, art, adventure and travel, we wish you and your family all the best. Your travel to Amsterdam to visit the amazing Rijks Museum this April is just the start of your many adventures planned for 2014 and beyond. Have fun and we thank you.



Photo Above: Ashok Khosla at Wildlife Education Day

Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers at our Annual Meeting on June 18, 2014

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, 2014. 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 2014-15	Bob Hirt
Vice President 2014-15	Diane Hart
Treasurer 2014-15	Pete LaTourrette
Secretary 2014-15	Joan Leighton
Director 2014-17	Morteza Danesh
Director 2014-17	Vivek Khanzode

Spring 2014 Birdathon Update

the SCVAS Birdathon Committee

Our Spring Birdathon runs from March 29th through April 27th and has gotten off to a great start. To date, we have 119 registered participants, 15 guided teams and several self-guided teams. A few teams have already gone out and have been sending us their findings. Among the highlights are:

- *Team Ultrabirders*, led by Steve Patt, was an intense dawn till dusk running/walking day of birding along the length of Stevens Creek with an extension to the Palo Alto Baylands (a total of 32.5 miles!). They tallied 100 species of birds during what must have been an amazing day.
- *The Bob-O-Links*, 7 years in the making, under the guidance of Bob Power, spent the day combing Santa Clara County for their 24 hour big day. Even though they missed some

of the "old favorites" they still managed to get 150 species and watched the sun set at the peak of Summit Road.

- Bird photographers are also joining in the mix. One of the bird photographer teams, the *Lens Loons* led by Caroline Lambert, photographed 79 species of birds in only 4 hours.

These teams, and the many others that are still preparing for their outings, are raising funds for the SCVAS education and conservation programs. We thank them all for their tremendous efforts.



Above: Stanford's Birding Logo. The Birdathon's "Big Game" has been a big hit this year with birders, alumni and sports enthusiasts alike!

2014 Friends of SCVAS

Gifts received between February 1st, 2014 and March 31st, 2014

\$1,000-\$5,000

Priya Balasubramaniam
Pete and Sue LaTourrette
Leighton Nakata
David Presotto and Caryl Carr

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Elizabeth Vincent
Steve Wright

Many Thanks for Donations Made in Honor of Retiring Executive Director, Bob Power:

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Corporate Matching Programs

We received the following generous matching gifts during this period:
Synopsys-\$100
HP-\$1,000

Your use of your company's matching program is of great help to our work and is sincerely appreciated.

2014 Spring Birdathon Prize Sponsors

SCVAS is pleased to promote our generous prize sponsors who help make our Spring Birdathon so successful in raising money for our youth environmental education and conservation programs. We have over 20 prize sponsors for the Spring Birdathon! Please visit www.scvas.org/birdathon for complete Birdathon information. Those participants that raise the most money win the best prizes!

Golden Eagle Sponsors

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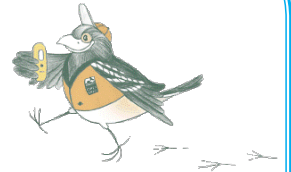


Correction from last Avocet issue: We'd like to thank Sachindev Shenoy (note corrected name) for participating in the San Jose Christmas Bird Count, with apologies for the error.

SCVAS' Young Audubon Program for Families and Children:



Wingding Family Fest: A celebration of Spring and All Things Winged!



Saturday, May 10th; 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!



2014 Summer Nature Days Outdoor Day Camps for Children in Grades 2-6 July 21st-25th, 2014



(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 - 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 7th), 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
snoyowl@yahoo.com



Looking for the Bittern

by Ann Davidson

Since he was four
my grandson knew
its striped neck
looks like tan-yellow grass.

At the baylands
we search through
my binoculars
and his toy red ones,
peering into tall reeds
where we know he hides.

Once, years ago,
a birder lifted him
to the eye of his scope,
the only time
we saw this elusive loner.



Today, en route to the café
at the end of the lake,
again we scan the marsh,
both of us doubting
we will find this recluse.



When he is grown,
and I am gone,
will he remember
this bond we share:
looking for the bittern,
laughing and hoping,
even though
we never see him.

1/24/14



An American Bittern at Shoreline Park in Mountain View
Photo courtesy of Tom Grey

TREE TRIMMING: Watching out for Wildlife

by Jackie Turner, Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley

Each year local wildlife rehabilitation centers receive large numbers of baby birds that have been injured or orphaned by tree trimming. Tragically many of them do not survive. Most of these patients arrive in the spring, which is the worst time to prune a tree both for the tree and for the wildlife living in it. By following a few simple guidelines you can help reduce the number of baby birds injured, orphaned, and killed by tree trimming.

In the past arborists believed the best way to maintain a tree was to cut out about a third of its interior branches every few years, ostensibly to let light into the canopy and to “tidy up” the tree. But then research in tree care showed that pruning can actually harm trees. Not only does it traumatize them, causing them to expend a great deal of energy to recover, but it also makes them susceptible to disease. **Arborists now recommend that you prune only to remove dead or diseased wood or branches that may injure the tree by chafing against each other.** For aesthetics, you may also cut branches that cross the center of the tree, but *otherwise, just leave the tree as Mother Nature intended.*

If you absolutely have to prune a tree, be sure to check the area for bird nests first - many are small and hard to find, especially hummingbird nests (about the size of eggcups), so just look for a dark spot tucked among the smaller branches. If you find a nest filled with eggs or babies, leave it alone. Moving a nest can severely hurt the babies’ chance of survival, and can actually be against the law. So to be absolutely safe, put off pruning until the babies have flown the coop.

Outside of California (where there are four bona fide seasons), arborists recommend pruning in the winter (when trees have the greatest reserves of energy stored in their tissues and can cope with the shock of pruning) or in the fall, just after deciduous trees have lost their leaves. In California, however, most trees don’t lose their leaves until December, so that’s generally accepted to be the best time to prune. **The worst time to prune a tree is in the spring.** That’s the height of the nesting season for most birds, and it’s also the time when a tree is directing all of its energy into producing new growth. Pruning in the springtime can not only impede a tree’s growth, but also increase its chances of becoming diseased.

As always, there are exceptions to the rule. Dead wood can be removed anytime of the year, and weak shoots that sprout out of existing limbs or old wounds should be pruned in the later summer, after the tree has finished its growth spurt. Just be sure to check the area for nests before you cut. Most fruit trees are pruned annually, but again the best time to do this is while they are dormant in the winter.

And for the sake of your trees and the wildlife living in them, **don’t cover the stubs of freshly cut limbs with those black wound dressings.** Birds can foul their feathers by brushing up against the goo, and the dressings can make your tree vulnerable to widespread damage by covering up early signs of bacterial infection. Just make a clean cut and leave it at that. Your trees will heal the cuts themselves and your wildlife will be healthier for it.

continued on back page



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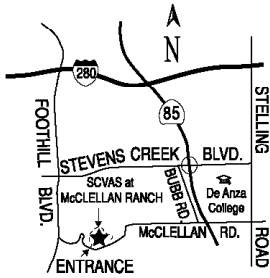
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TREE TRIMMING: Watching out for Wildlife (continued from page 11)

If the worst happens and you find baby birds on the ground either in or outside of their nest, don't panic. Wildlife rehabilitators have had great success reuniting babies with their mothers in recent years (contrary to the popular myth,

baby birds are not rejected by their moms if they "smell of humans"). Poke holes in a shoebox and place the babies inside on a soft cloth to keep them safe and warm. **Do not attempt to feed them or give them water.** Call your local wildlife center (such as Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley 408-929-WILD) and they will advise you on whether reuniting is possible and if so, how to do it. If the babies are injured, the

wildlife center will advise you on how to transport them to a rehabilitation facility.

Jackie Turner is a Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitator at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley and a Master Gardener.

With acknowledgements to Wildlife Rescue of Palo Alto/Peninsula Humane Society and Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, San Jose

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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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Avocet Editor: Toby Goldberg
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2014 Volume 61, Number 3

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

- | | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Song Sparrow (Student) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 American Avocet (Individual) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 California Quail (Family) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Burrowing Owl |
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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

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