

# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May-June 2015

## The Egret Rookery of Shorebird Way: A Partnership that Works

by Shani Kleinhaus, SCVAS Environmental Advocate

In the late nineteenth century, egret feathers were used commercially for decorating hats and other clothing accessories, and these beautiful birds were hunted nearly to extinction. This decimation of the populations of both Snowy and Great Egrets motivated the conservation community. Led by the National Audubon Society, these efforts helped to create some of the first laws to protect birds in the United States.

Today, populations of egrets in the United States face different challenges, such as habitat loss. As a result, new partnerships of conservation-minded businesses and organizations are being formed to address these issues. One such partnership is comprised of Google, the City of Mountain View, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS), and others.



Great Egret Chicks  
©Tom Grey

The Google campus, located near areas of historical wetlands, is home to one of the largest egret rookeries (nesting colony) in the Bay area. Every year, dozens of egrets return to nine trees on Shorebird Way to reconstruct nests, mate, argue with neighbors over choice twigs and branches and, eventually, raise a family in a noisy cacophony.

In recent planning efforts, the City of Mountain View proposed to protect and enhance remnants of that wetlands ecosystem, and preserve sensitive species. The Mountain View 2030 General Plan envisions that “sensitive species of Shoreline at Mountain View Regional Park remain and thrive; that Shoreline at Mountain View, the Stevens and Permanente Creeks, Charleston Basin wetlands, and the Stevens Creek Trail remain unique and defining features of the area.” In an intriguing strategy, responsibility

for implementing this vision has been placed into the hands of North Bayshore employers who are tasked with both respecting, and actively working to enhance the nearby wildlife, wetlands, trees and habitat areas that make the area unique. This directive includes

(continued on page 9)

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

Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Rds  
Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Wednesday, May 20th

“A Photo Tour of Bird Behavior”

with Steve Zamek



Can a snake strangle a heron? Why would a nuthatch feed bluebird chicks? Answers to these questions, and more, can be found in the photos presented by local bird photographer Steve Zamek.

The images shared will include a wide variety of bird behavior, including courtship, mating, tending young, hunting, territorial defense, and nest building. Come enjoy the fascinating world of bird behavior, from the mundane to exciting, endearing to violent, commonplace to unexpected.

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

Above Left: Blue-crowned Motmots; Above Right: Western Grebes' Mating Dance.  
Photos courtesy of Steve Zamek



### Join Us for Our Annual June Meeting and Potluck!

### Wednesday June 17, 6:00 PM McClellan Ranch Preserve

See Page 5 for details

### Additional Highlights This Issue:

🦋 *Special Events at McClellan Ranch for Members, Volunteers, Supporters, and more!*

— Page 3

🦋 *A Black-throated Blue Warbler Gives Quite the Thrill this Season!*

— Field Notes, Page 6

🦋 *EAC Chair, Lisa Karpinski, Goes Abroad.*

— Page 8

🦋 *Family Nature Fun this Spring and Summer.*

— Page 10

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# May-June '15 Field Trips

(Full details for all of our Field Trips are also available online at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org))

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

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

## Saturday May 2, 8:30 AM

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

Full day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. We'll start this trip in Del Puerto Canyon working our way west to San Antonio Valley. **Directions:** 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:** Hoped for highlights include possible Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch. **Notes:** FRS radios tuned to channel 11 will be especially useful during the driving portion of this trip. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch and liquids.

## Sunday May 3, 8:00 AM

### Pescadero Marsh and Vicinity

Half day. **Leader:** Garth Harwood (650) 949-8643. **Directions:** Meet at first parking lot south of the bridge over Pescadero Creek on Hwy 1. **Highlights:** Seabirds and ducks are always to be found around the Marsh but at this season, the action swings toward songbirds as well. Many shorebirds have departed, but those that linger into the first days of May often display breeding plumage. **Notes:** Don't forget to bring that spotting scope. **RC**

## Wednesday May 6, 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 9, 7:30 AM

### Skyline Ridge OSP, Horseshoe Lake

Morning only. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** Meet at the Christmas Tree Parking Lot for Horseshoe Lake located to the left of the entrance off Skyline Blvd. (Hwy. 35). **Difficulty Level:**

This is will be an easy 1.5 hour bird walk with little 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 May 10, 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 13, 8:00 AM

### Rancho Canada Del Oro Open Space Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser; (408) 569-9264 or [jannapauser@gmail.com](mailto:jannapauser@gmail.com). **Directions:** From 101 take Bailey Ave. exit west. Turn left onto McKean Rd. Turn right onto Casa Loma Rd. Staging area 1.6 miles on your left. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south to Harry Rd. go right one block then left on McKean Rd. 6+ miles. Turn right onto Casa Loma Rd. 1.6 miles to OSA parking. We'll bird along the Longwall trail to OSA's gate and look for breeding birds on this level open trail. **Notes:** Bring water, limited facilities. **LO**

## Saturday May 16, 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 17, 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 23, 8:00 AM

### Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. **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**

## Sunday May 24, 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 30, 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 May 31, 8:00 AM

### Smith Creek/Twin Gates

#### "Birding by ear" field trip

Half day. **Leader:** Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. **Directions:** From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on

## Field Trips *continued*

Mt Hamilton Rd. go past main entrance to Grant Ranch County Park (approx. 9 miles). Continue uphill another two miles to Twin Gates parking lot on the left. **Highlights:** Probable birds include Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, woodland and riparian breeding birds. **Difficulty Level:** This is a moderately strenuous hike over rolling hills.

### Wednesday June 3, 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 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Saturday June 6

No trip - Palo Alto Summer Bird Count

### Sunday June 7, 8:00 AM

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

Half day plus. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Difficulty Level:** Take Hwy 17 to Santa Cruz, and then go north on Hwy 1. Meet at the beach parking area alongside Highway 1 just north of the Waddell Creek

Bridge (at MP 36.30; which is 2 miles south of Ano Nuevo State Reserve and seven miles north of Davenport). **Difficulty Level:** This is a moderately long but fairly level hike along the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail. **Highlights:** Possible Swainson's Thrush, Pacific Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and Woodpeckers. **Notes:** Be prepared for variable weather, dress in layers

### Wednesday June 10, 8:00 AM

Almaden Lake and Alamos Creek trail Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser; (408) 569-9264 or jannapauser@gmail.com. **Directions:** From Hwy 85 in San Jose take Almaden Expwy south .8 mile then left onto Coleman Rd. Turn right onto Winfield and park either on street or in parking lot. Meet near blue bathrooms on the east side of the lake. **Notes:** There is a \$6 parking fee for parking in the lot. **Highlights:** Breeding birds. **Difficulty Level:** Easy walking. **LO**

### Saturday June 13, 8:15 AM

#### Arastradero OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. **Directions:** From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west; turn right on Arastradero Rd. and meet in the parking lot about a half-mile on the right. **Difficulty Level:** Trip involves moderately strenuous hiking. **RC**

### Saturday July 11, 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 8, 8:30 AM

#### Ano Nuevo State Reserve

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

### Saturday, August 15, 8:00 AM

#### Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see the write-up for July 11<sup>th</sup>.

## SCVAS Events Calendar

Wed. 5/6; 7:30-9:00PM

### Bay Area Bird Photographers

Lucy Evans Nature Center, Palo Alto

Topic: "Australia and Papua New Guinea – Birding Down Under" with Pati Rouzer

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

Tues. 5/12 & 6/9; 10:00AM\*\*

**Eve Case Bird Discussion Group** - meets at the home of Rosalind Roberts, 100 Kathy Ct., Los Gatos. (408) 395-6631.

Topic 5/12: Blackbirds

Topic 6/9: Annual picnic. Everyone welcome - please bring something to share. Birds for 2015/2016 discussions will be decided. **\*\*NOTE: The picnic will start at 11:00AM.**

Wed. 5/13 & 6/10; 3:00-4:30PM

### Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

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

## You're Invited: Special Events at McClellan Ranch Preserve

(see SCVAS website for directions)

*Volunteer Appreciation Dinner & Birdwalk.*

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

RSVP to 408-252-3740



*Birdathon Awards Dinner*

Tues. 6/9; 6:00PM

RSVP to 408-252-3747.

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

for details



*Annual Potluck Dinner & Board Elections*

Wed. 6/17; 6:00PM

No RSVP necessary. See page 5 for details



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# Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

We are excited to announce that the **City of San Jose** has implemented Bird Friendly Building Guidelines to reduce the risk of bird collision with glass windows and building facades. We thank the City for recognizing that birds are an important part of our livable future and are valued by San José's residents.

We are also pleased with the City of San Jose's efforts to reduce pesticide use in City Parks, something SCVAS has long advocated. Now, as part of an Integrated Pest Management program, the City of San Jose has started using Barn Owl boxes in some parks to help control rodent populations, instead of toxic rodenticides.

In **Palo Alto**, SCVAS and the Sierra Club led a campaign to select an alternative pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Highway 101 that will have a subtle presence in the context of the Baylands and will not imperil birds in flight. The City Council voted unanimously to move forward with our recommendation - a low-profile and elegant design for a bridge that is safe for people and for birds and harmonizes with the Baylands landscape. See <http://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2015/03/17/palo-alto-opts-for-lighter-touch-in-new-baylands-bridge>.

In January, we asked our Palo Alto members to respond to an online survey for a Palo Alto Master Plan for Park, Trails, Open Space and Recreation. Now, the results are in!!! The city received 1164 responses, with overwhelming support for "integrating nature throughout the park and recreation system". This is important as the city proceeds to weigh alternatives for development of recreational and other facilities in parks throughout Palo Alto's urban and natural landscapes.

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## Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg, Programs Coordinator

Over the past several years, our volunteer needs have been focused on educational programs for schools, outreach events, and office support. And while we are always in need of assistance in these areas (especially weekday nature shop support!), we wanted to branch out a little this issue and highlight some of the volunteer opportunities available as part of our conservation programs:

**Egret Docents:** Docents are needed to provide information to Google employees at the egret rookery on Shorebird Way in Mountain View. This opportunity starts in May and will run through mid-July. During lunchtime on Thursdays (and on occasional weekends), volunteers will provide Googlers with information about the egrets and SCVAS, and with opportunities to see the egrets up close and personal as they raise their young. Please contact [advocate@scvas.org](mailto:advocate@scvas.org) if you are available for at least two Thursdays in the next 6 weeks.

**Facebook Bird Surveys:** Expert birders are needed to monitor birds the first Friday of each month on Facebook's 9-acre roof (that's right, the roof!). SCVAS and the Sequoia Audubon Society (SAS) will be working together to conduct a monthly bird survey of the newly constructed habitat roof on the Facebook West Campus. The roof has a half-mile walking (and birding) loop, native plants, over 400 trees and vistas out to the surrounding bay

Now, we are asking Palo Alto residents to help anchor nature in the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan. Please consider signing up for the "Our Palo Alto Summit" on May 30th (go to <http://www.paloaltocomplan.org/our-palo-alto-2030-the-summit/>) and tell the city that BIRDS MATTER!

**Regionally**, we continue to advocate for the protection of birds and habitat in Panoche Valley, Wind Turbines at Altamont pass, and Redwood City Salt Ponds. We have also submitted comments and expressed concern with the Shoreline Levee. As currently delineated, the levee would restrict opportunities for restoration of Coyote Creek delta and is likely to impact habitat near Artesian slough in Alviso.

**We still need YOUR help now:** Please contact [advocate@scvas.org](mailto:advocate@scvas.org) to add your name to our armchair advocate list for any of the following current efforts:

- Engagement with local companies to provide docent services and to monitor birds on their campuses (see "Volunteer Ventures," below).
- Advocacy against the proposed development of Parkside Trails in Cupertino. This 18-homes residential development requires a retaining wall that is likely to imperil the Stevens Creek ecosystem at one of the creek's most ecologically sensitive section.
- Supporting our efforts in Palo Alto to protect and integrate birds and nature into the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Supporting our efforts in Gilroy to limit sprawl and to protect and integrate birds and nature into the City's General Plan.

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and marshlands. SCVAS and SAS will lead the bird surveys and encourage engagement with Facebook employees. Please contact [advocate@scvas.org](mailto:advocate@scvas.org) if you can assist. NOTE: Space is limited for this opportunity; volunteers need to be strong birders and able to commit to several surveys.

**Burrowing Owl Surveys:** Volunteers are needed to count the Burrowing Owls that reside in the buffer lands in San Jose on the 1st Saturday of every month, from 9am-1pm. We will be walking and surveying approximately 300 acres of Burrowing Owl habitat to count the number of owls and map their locations. All skill levels are welcome. This is a great opportunity to see this special species. If you are interested in participating, contact Joshua McCluskey at [owls@scvas.org](mailto:owls@scvas.org) at least 3 days prior to each survey date. See SCVAS website for more details.

### **Special Call Out to PALO ALTO RESIDENTS:**

Palo Alto is holding a "Palo Alto 2030" event to discuss the City's vision for growth. Please join the conversation at the Saturday, May 30th event at the Mitchell Park Community Center and speak for birds and nature! Sign up today at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/our-palo-alto-2030-the-summit-tickets-15744923490>. For more information see [www.paloaltocomplan.org](http://www.paloaltocomplan.org).

For more opportunities to help, check us out at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) - click on "Volunteer."

# Adult Education Classes - Spring 2015

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](http://www.scvas.org).



**Presented by Freddy Howell & Toby Goldberg (SCVAS Education Committee)**  
 The way a bird builds its nest can tell you where it lives, what it eats, and much more. This information can be a valuable tool in learning how to identify birds in the field. We'll discuss the different ways birds nest, examine many of their creations, and learn what we need to look for when birding. Our field trip will follow up with a visit to the nest boxes at McClellan Ranch to see nesting in action.  
**Dates:** Class: Tues. 5/26, 6:30-8:00PM; Field: Sat. 5/30, 8:30-11:00AM. **Location:** McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino. **Fee:** \$30 SCVAS members/\$45 non-members. Note: **ALL ages welcome** (with adult supervision)



## Annual Meeting and Potluck

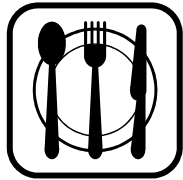
Wednesday June 17, 6:00PM

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.**



## Notes from the SCVAS Nature Shop:

We are all a-buzz in the Nature Shop with our new Native Bee Homes! Come learn about these amazing creatures and how they can improve your blooms!



The Bee Chalet is perfect for both Mason and Leafcutter Bees. It has room to place a cocoon release box in the attic. Add tubes and you are all ready for your Bees. \$38.95.



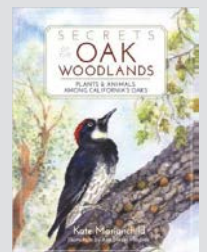
*Mason Bees for the Backyard Gardener* (Inkwater Press, \$19.25) has step-by-step instructions to get you started.

*Mason Meets a Mason Bee* (Good Green Life, \$9.95) is a delightful book for children of all ages.



Cindy's favorite book today is *The Secrets of the Oak Woodlands* by Kate Marianchild (Heyday, \$18.00).

Learn about Lace Lichen, Poison Oak, the Symbiosis of Ground Squirrels and Burrowing Owls... and much more.



**And don't forget - SCVAS Members receive 10% off new items!**

# Field Notes

*(February-March 2015)*

by Pete Dunten

## Geese through Rails

Uncommon geese in the county included 12 **Greater White-Fronted Geese** near the bay (m.ob.), with four remaining through Mar 30, two in the Diablo range at J Grant CP noted Feb 5 and Mar 14 (MBo, MDo et al.), and single birds at Oka ponds on Feb 18 (KO), Parkway Lakes on Feb 13 (MJM), and Vasona Lake throughout Feb (m.ob.). The high count of 12 **Cackling Geese** on Mar 5 were near the bay (m.ob.). Two were at J Grant CP on Mar 14 (MDo et al.), three favored Lake Cunningham (m.ob.), and single birds were in Morgan Hill on Feb 7 (SCR) and at Ogier Ponds on Feb 9 (RWR). A single **Ross's Goose** continued in Shoreline Park through Mar 19 (m.ob.). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** dabbled at the Palo Alto FCB Feb 27 and Mar 7 (CLa, JL), another male was present at the SCRWA ponds in Gilroy on Mar 10 (MJM), and six were noted on Salt Ponds A14 and A16 on Feb 21 (MJM, RJ, MMR). Four were found on Salt Ponds A9 and A14 on Mar 29 (MMR, RJ). The high count of **Blue-winged Teal** was eight at the SCRWA ponds in Gilroy on Mar 17 (MJM). Two were found on Mallard Slough at Don Edwards NWR through Mar 15 (m. ob.), and singles were noted on Salt Pond A5 on Feb 21 (MJM, RJ, MMR) and at the Palo Alto Baylands on Mar 1 (RPr). **Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)** occasionally winter in N. America; a male was at Shoreline Park on Mar 16 (HL). **Green-winged Teal (intergrade)** show features of both parents; a male was photographed on Mar 22 at Shoreline (JB, WB). An immature **Pacific Loon** was found on Calero Reservoir on Mar 9 (RPh, ABr). Two **Red-throated Loons** continued on Shoreline Lake until Feb 5 (GZ, JE), with one remaining through Mar 25 (m. ob.). **Wild Turkeys** with wanderlust turned up Feb 13 at the Moffett Blvd guard house (MMR) and in late January on Stanford campus at the business school (AM). **Red-necked Grebes** aren't found every year; one was on Calero Reservoir through Mar 9 (m. ob.) and another stayed at Coyote Lake through Mar 29 (m. ob.), long enough to display breeding plumage. **American**

**Bitterns** stayed through early March, with the Mountain View Forebay Bittern seen Mar 7 and another noted at Ogier Ponds on Feb 14 and Mar 6 (m. ob.). A single **Cattle Egret** was on Newby Island on Mar 26 (CJ, JStP). On Feb 1, a solo **White-faced Ibis** flew over the Charleston Rd marsh (KD). A pair of **Cooper's Hawks** was seen working on a nest in a yard in Saratoga as early as Feb 17 (PM). **Ferruginous Hawks** continued to be seen in February in and around Coyote Valley, with the last sighting on Mar 4 at Santa Teresa CP

## Late Winter Surprises Include a Black-throated Blue Warbler and a Townsend's Solitaire.

(KO). Vocal **Black Rails** delighted many at Alviso Marina beginning on Mar 13 (FV) and a lucky few caught glimpses of the elusive birds. They continued to be heard throughout the period, with a high count of four on Mar 22 (MDo).

## Shorebirds through Falcons

On Mar 10, a **Killdeer** nest scrape with two eggs was noted on the Stanford campus (ABe). On Mar 11, the nest held three eggs, and on Mar 14, four eggs. The water levels on the salt ponds at Alviso have been high this winter, eliminating suitable habitat for some shorebirds. A group of five **Sanderlings** was found on New Chicago marsh at Don Edwards NWR on Mar 13 (FV) and again Mar 14 (m. ob.). The **Slaty-backed Gull** at Vasona Lake CP was last seen on Feb 2 (m. ob.), drawing visitors from all over California. **Glaucous Gulls** were either late this winter, or evaded detection until a second-cycle bird was seen Feb 7 at Ogier Ponds (SCR). It was last noted on Feb 24. A first-cycle **Glaucous Gull** was at Ogier Ponds beginning Feb 28 (WGB) through Mar 2 (m. ob.). The first **Caspian Tern** to arrive was at Alviso Marina on Mar 21 (TF-H). **Black Skimmers** continued to be seen at bayside locations through the

period, with numbers increasing to 12 on Mar 18 (WGB). A **Greater Roadrunner** continued to be found at the Coyote Lake boat ramp through the period (m. ob.). A **Common Poorwill** was heard calling early in the evening of Mar 28 in Los Gatos near the Sierra Azul OSP (CLa). Hummingbirds returned in March, with a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** on Mar 31 (BM) and a **Rufous Hummingbird** on Mar 4 (JPa), both at feeders in San Jose. **Lewis's Woodpeckers** remained in the area through the end of the period, with 14 reported west of the Diablo Range crest. The three **Red-naped Sapsuckers** reported were all continuing birds, one at Ed Levin through Mar 16, one at Almaden Lake Park through Mar 8, and one along Casa Loma Rd near Rancho Canada del Oro OSP on Mar 14 (JPa). A **Prairie Falcon** was at the end of Marsh Rd on Feb 25 (CLa).

## Flycatchers through Phainopepla

One of the passerines to arrive in March was **Pacific-slope Flycatcher**; the first of the spring was heard on Mar 14 at J Grant CP (MDo et al.). A pair of **Cassin's Kingbirds** along San Felipe Rd near the San Benito county border may have overwintered in the area, given that one was found just over the county line in San Benito county on Feb 4 (DLS). The pair was in Santa Clara county Mar 5 (GHa), and on Mar 15 they were carrying nesting material to one of the towering eucalyptus trees (AH). **Western Kingbirds** arrived on Mar 14 at both the west side of Coyote Valley (JMa) and at J Grant CP (MDo et al.). The first **Warbling Vireo** of the spring was along Coyote Creek upstream of Hellyer CP on Mar 7 (JPa). Our cavity-nesting swallows noticed the arrival of spring and started



Townsend's Solitaire  
photo courtesy of Gail West



## Field Notes *cont'd*

investigating nest boxes. **Tree Swallows** were at nest boxes outside of Gilroy on Feb 1 (JMy) and at J Grant CP on Feb 14 (JH). **Violet-green Swallows** visited nest boxes in Lost Gatos on Mar 5 (LSu). **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** returned in Feb, with one at Coyote Lake on Feb 11 (WGB) and one at Oka ponds on Feb 12 (JL). A **Cliff Swallow** at Lake Cunningham on Feb 28 (MDo et al.) was well ahead of the traditional date (Mar 19) for the return of the swallows to Mission San Juan Capistrano. A **Barn Swallow** was over Shoreline Lake on the same date, Feb 28 (JL). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** have been scarce this winter. The only report during the period was of one visiting a feeder in San Jose on Mar 15 (BM). The pair of **Canyon Wrens** at the Coyote Lake dam were seen carrying nesting material on Mar 24 (DZ). The pair of **American Dippers** upstream of the Main St bridge along Los Gatos Creek were seen collecting nesting material in January and again on Feb 12 (GW). **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** arrived on Mar 8, with one at the Stanford Dish trail (JG) and a pair in the interior of Santa Teresa CP (DN). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was a nice surprise in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose, staying from Feb 10 to Feb 25 (BM, m. ob.). The **Phainopepla** near the Mendoza Ranch entrance to Coyote Lake CP continued to be seen through Mar 11 (JJ). Three Phainopeplas were along the Hotel Trail at J Grant CP on Feb 14 (JH).

### Warblers through Evening Grosbeak

The **Ovenbird** wintering at the tree line bordering the Charleston Rd marsh was last seen on Mar 1 (AVe), and the **Northern Waterthrush** wintering in the marsh was last noted on Feb 20 (CLa). The first **MacGillivray's Warbler** of the spring was at Star Creek Ranch in the Santa Cruz Mtns on Mar 28 (AR). A second-year male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was found Feb 9 upstream of the Main St bridge along Los Gatos Creek (MS), and enjoyed by many through Feb 20. This is only the fifth county record, with three overwintering birds and two noted during fall migration. The **Black-throated Gray Warbler** overwintering in the trees east of Charleston Rd marsh was last seen on Feb 7 (GZ, DN). The first of the arriving spring migrants was noted on

Mar 26 at Mount Umunhum (JPa). **Hermit Warblers** occasionally overwinter. None were detected this year before the beginning of spring migration on Mar 21, when one was found in the lowlands along Los Gatos Creek near Meridian (BM) and another was found on Loma Prieta in the Santa Cruz Mtns (CK). The earliest arriving **Wilson's Warbler** was at Stevens Creek CP on Mar 8 (BM). The high count of **Chipping Sparrows** at Jeffrey Fontana Park was five on Feb 25 (JPa). Three were last seen on Mar 5 (KO). Singles were at a feeder in Los Gatos on Feb 28 (LSu), at Rancho Canada del Oro on Mar 14 (JJ et al.), and at Vasona Lake CP on Mar 20 (BM). The **Grasshopper Sparrow** at Ed Levin CP on Mar 10 was the first found at the park this year (BM). In the urban areas of the county, the most frequently seen Fox Sparrows during the winter are in the "Sooty" group. Red Fox Sparrows and Slate-colored Fox Sparrows are reported less often. The **Red Fox Sparrow** along the tree line east of Charleston Rd marsh remained through Mar 1 (AVe). A **Slate-colored Fox Sparrow** was in the orchard between Calero Creek and Santa Teresa Creek in the Almaden Valley on Mar 19 (JPa). Winter also occasionally brings **Pacific Northwest Song Sparrow** to the area. One was at Stevens Creek CP on Mar 29 (BM). The **Swamp Sparrow** overwintering at the Palo Alto Baylands was last noted on Mar 29 (WGB). **Western Tanagers** overwintering were at Stanford on Feb 21 (WBr) and in Mountain View neighborhoods on Feb 24 and 30 (GZ) and Mar 22 and 29 (MDo). A Western Tanager along Los Gatos Creek near Meridian on Mar 21 was first noted on a date consistent with a migrant (BM). **Black-headed Grosbeaks** encountered in the late winter to early spring period included the second-year male overwintering in Los Altos through Feb 17 (JT), one at Vasona Lake CP on Feb 9 (KB), one along Penitencia Creek downstream of Alum Rock park on Mar 2 (AN), and a returning migrant in the Santa Cruz Mountains west of Gilroy on Mar 15 (JA, AA). The first **Hooded Orioles** of the year were singles at Hellyer Park on Feb 16 (AVi) and in Morgan Hill on Mar 12 (SCR). The first returning **Bullock's Oriole** was seen at Rancho Canada del Oro on Mar 14 (JPa). This has not been a banner year for **Lawrence's Goldfinches**. The high count during the period was six along San Felipe Rd in the southern part of the county, first



*Black-throated Blue Warbler  
photo courtesy of Gail West*

noted on Mar 6 (PDU). At least one was also seen along Canada Rd in the southern part of the county on Mar 29 (RWR). A group of seven **Evening Grosbeaks** was reported on Mar 11 in Sunnyvale on Danforth Dr east of their usual haunts, the first and only report since January (MS).

Observers: Julie Avnit (JA), Amir Avnit (AA), Avery Berkowitz (ABe), Andrew Bradshaw (ABr), Michael Bolte (MBo), Jim Brooks (JB), Will Brooks (WBr), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KB), Karen DeMello (KD), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), James Estes (JE), Thomas Ford-Hutchinson (TF-H), Joel Glassman (JG), Garth Harwood (GHa), Jan Hintermeister (JH), Alfred Hochstaedter (AH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Jim Johnson (JJ), Cole Jower (CJ), Clay Kempf (CK), Howard Laidlaw (HL), Caroline Lambert (CLa), Jason Liu (JL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Juliana Manoliu (JMa), Alice Miller (AM), Brooke Miller (BM), Paul Morris (PM), Jean Myers (JMy), Alex Navarro (AN), David Nickerson (DN), Kurt Ongman (KO), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Richard Price (RPr), Rob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Mike Sabin (MS), Debi Shearwater (DLS), Marty Sidor (MS), Jason St. Pierre (JStP), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Jack Tomlin (JT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AVe), Alie Victorine (AVi), Gail West (GW), David Zittin (DZ), Gina Zolotar (GZ)

**Welcome Aboard to the new Field Notes Compiler, Peter Dunten!**

**RARITIES:** Please drop me a note: Pete Dunten, pdunten@gmail.com

# SCVAS' Environmental Action Committee (EAC) Says "Bon Voyage" to Chair, Lisa Karpinski

By Morteza Danesh, SCVAS Board Member

Lisa Karpinski, a dedicated and active leader with the SCVAS Environmental Action Committee (EAC) for more than 20 years, has stepped down from her position as EAC Chair to embark on a sojourn through Eastern Europe.

Lisa grew up in Sunnyvale at a time when children could still wade in creeks, catch tadpoles, and play in the apricot and cherry orchards. A nature lover and athlete, she excelled in her studies of biology and environmental science at UC Santa Cruz and her work at Apple and Intel. When illness cut her career short, Lisa refocused her energies on environmental activism.

Lisa joined the EAC in 1995 to fight development of the golf course at San Jose's Boulder Ridge, becoming its Chair in 2011. Over the past 20 years, Lisa has worked with SCVAS on dozens of environmental issues throughout Santa Clara County—preparing EAC agendas, organizing volunteers, researching and preparing documents, and speaking at city



Photo courtesy of Lisa Karpinski

council meetings. In her home town of Sunnyvale, she has worked with the City to protect burrowing owls, led volunteers in maintaining burrowing owl habitat, and helped motivate the adoption of bird-safe building design guidelines.

Lisa's current plan is to indulge her love of travel and passion for adventure as she journeys through Armenia, Turkey, Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries. We wish her all the best on her travels and eagerly await her return to the EAC as a highly valued member.

## Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers at our Annual Meeting on June 17, 2015

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, 2015. 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 2015-16	Bob Hirt
Vice President 2015-16	Diane Hart
Treasurer 2015-16	
Secretary 2015-16	Joan Leighton
Director 2015-18	Peter Hart
Director 2015-18	Tom Grey
Director 2015-18	Gabrielle Feldman

## Spring 2015 Birdathon Update

The SCVAS Birdathon Committee

Our Spring Birdathon began March 27th and got off to a great start. As of the publication date for this issue, we have over 100 registered participants, 15 guided teams and several self-guided teams. In addition, we have raised over \$7000 so far!

### Early Birdathon Highlights:

The *Oh My Godwits!*, led by Beth Hamel, completed their photo birdathon on Saturday April 11th ending up with an impressive total of 108 species photographed! The *Lens Loons* did a four hour photography birdathon on April 8th and photographed 78 species despite seeing and hearing 98, "but that's birding - so unpredictable and an adventure every time" said Caroline Lambert, team leader. The *Wrong Terns*, consisting of SCVAS Education Committee members, stepped

up their game from last year and tallied 93 species despite a long break for a much deserved and delicious lunch. Doing the birdathon in style, Stephanie Ellis led the *DataSets* in a "Big-Sit". The team observed 62 species in only 4-hours. Highlights were "Black Skimmers, mimosas, and crazy birders!" The *Cheeky Chickadees*, led by Debbie Thompson, also did a Big Sit. Their 30-foot circle was strategically located near the bird feeders at McClellan Ranch Preserve. They counted 40 species in four hours. A highlight was the Sharp-shinned Hawk that passed overhead several times, once while chasing a crow!

There is still time to sponsor individual team members, and raise money for our Conservation and Education programs. We thank all of the Birdathon participants for their tremendous efforts.



## Egret Rookery of Shorebird Way

(continued from page 1)

creating a buffer around the Egret rookery.

As Google expanded its campus in North Bayshore to include Shorebird Way, the company has embraced the City's directives to protect the egret colony while planning for its future within a bustling, growing campus. For example, in its new campus plans, Google chose not to increase the height of buildings adjacent to the egret colony, and proposes to remove four buildings that separate the rookery from Charleston Slough. The company will also implement extensive wetland and riparian habitat restoration along the Slough and Permanente Creek. Google is partnering with SCVAS to sponsor stewardship, care and monitoring of the egrets. The company granted SCVAS funds to care for and monitor the egrets. As a result, in April, the City of Mountain View and Google closed the relevant section of Shorebird Way to vehicle traffic and Google placed signs on its property to inform its employees and other visitors, and to help them identify the egrets.

Things are looking pretty good for the egrets under Google's care. The Great Egrets returned to Shorebird Way almost a month early this year. By the first week of March, the regal Great Egrets were busy with white feathery displays, their bright neon green eye streaks easily visible through branches that were yet to sprout leaves. Three weeks later, as the trees filled in with leaves, the feisty Snowy Egrets started coming in as well, their yellow feet showing through the foliage.

On Easter Sunday, the first blue eggshell was found under a tree on Shorebird Way. The size of a chicken-egg, this blue shell indicated that the first Great Egret chick of the season had hatched.

It takes a village to care for the egrets. If you or anyone you know is interested in volunteering with us to help the egrets and educate Google employees and other visitors about them (see "Volunteer Ventures" on page 4), we'd love to have you join us. We hope that all of our readers and friends will find an occasion to visit Shorebird Way this nesting season and celebrate the egrets' success, and this partnership that works!



## 2015 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 25 prize sponsors for the Spring Birdathon! Please visit [www.scvas.org/birdathon](http://www.scvas.org/birdathon) for complete Birdathon information. Those participants that raise the most money win the best prizes!

### Golden Eagle Sponsors (donated more than \$600 in prizes or support)



Los Gatos Birdwatcher  
Patagonia  
Nancy Teater

### Great Egret Sponsors (donated between \$250 and \$599 in prizes or support)



Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris  
David Presotto  
Hawaii Forest and Trail

### Western Bluebird Sponsors (donated up to \$249 in prizes or support)



Alfaro Family Vineyards & Winery  
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Cinnabar Hills Golf Club  
City Lights Theatre Company  
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Los Altos History Museum  
Paicines Ranch  
Palo Alto Junior Museum

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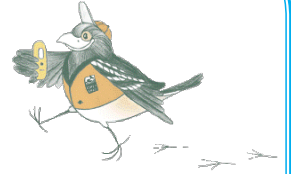
Renee Polizotto  
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San Jose Stage  
San Jose Textile & Quilting Museum  
Spirit of Health Massage  
Steve Abbors  
Steve Patt  
Stevens Creek Software  
Spirit of Health Massage  
TheatreWorks Silicon Valley  
Vivek Khanzode  
Mary Wisnewski



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



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



**Saturday, May 9th; 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; some activities do have limited space.

Highlights include nature walks, bird house building, geocache walks, arts-and-crafts, and live bird guests!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Calling All Kids:**

**It's Not Too Late to Register for A Week of Outdoor Fun!**



**2015 Summer Nature Adventures  
Outdoor Day Camps for Children in Grades 2-6  
July 20th-24th, 2015**



(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! Registration Deadline is June 15th.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**In case you missed it in April:**

**Summer Conservation in Action:**

**Bird Banding with SFBBO**

**Saturday, August 15th  
8:00am-10:00am**



Another chance for this special opportunity to witness live bird banding demonstrations by experts from the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO).

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

Cost: \$25/family (or \$8/child and \$10/adult)

**\*\* Children MUST be accompanied by a parent or guardian**

\* \* \* \* \*

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

# 2015 Friends of SCVAS

*Gifts received between February 1st, 2015 and March 31st, 2015*

## **\$500-\$999**

Dorsey and Katherine Bass  
Thomas Grey  
Bud and Joanna Koch  
Stephen Rosenthal

## **\$250-\$499**

Gordon and Carolyn Davidson  
Robert Girard  
Waldo Griffin  
Robert Hirt  
Kristine Karnos  
Mark and Petra Kinsman  
Karen Marnach  
Daniel McCranie  
William McHenry

## **\$100-\$249**

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Laura Bold  
Judith Borlase  
Laura Brown  
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Pamela Lavin  
Carlos Marquez Garcia  
Lisa Myers  
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Sharon Pasquinelli  
Jere Wilson  
Virginia Wright

## **Up to \$59**

Stephen Barlow  
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Christine Bennett  
John Bennett  
Robyn Boothby  
Liang-Fang Chao  
Allison Connor  
Katie Crum  
Colleen and Gary Cunningham  
Meera Desikamani

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Janet Yelland  
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We are also grateful for the support of the Los Gatos Birdwatcher, and the members who participated in the JustGive. Org matching donation program.

These donors were inadvertently omitted from the last issue:

## **\$100-\$249**

Lindy Fung  
Peter Hart

## **\$60-\$99**

Louis Caputo  
Ann Hepenstal

## **Up to \$59**

Priya Balasubramaniam  
Mark Boyce  
Nancy Hay  
Donald Lorenzen  
Barbara Marcum

If we have omitted any names, we apologize. Please let us know and we will correct this in the future.

## What's New at McClellan Ranch:

Spring is definitely in full swing here at the Preserve, and we are enjoying all the new life that is emerging. Come for a visit and you might just see:

- The Nancy Hertert Memorial Native Plant Garden is in full bloom! Sage, Gillia, Penstemons, Poppies, and Monkey Flower have produced a riotous rainbow of glorious color.
- Monarch Butterflies have discovered the Milkweed, and left us with some beautiful caterpillars to admire. We're looking forward to their hatching!
- The nest boxes on the Preserve are simply chock full of baby songbirds - Chestnut-backed Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, House Wrens, Bewick's Wren, Oak Titmice, and Western Bluebirds! Walk quietly along the trail and you might just hear their persistent "cheeps" begging for more insects.
- Cooper's Hawks and Black Phoebes, among many others, are busy building nests and feeding their young. Looks like a productive season for all of our avian friends!



Monarch caterpillar on milkweed  
Photo courtesy of Keith Wandry

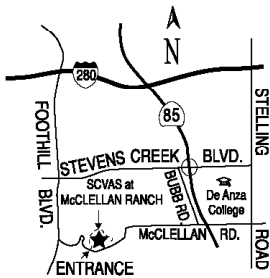
We'll look forward to seeing you soon!



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

Phone: 408-252-3747  
 Fax: 408-252-2850  
 E-mail: [scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org)  
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### STAFF

**Interim Executive Director** 408/252-3748

Jeanne Labozetta [executivedirector@scvas.org](mailto:executivedirector@scvas.org)

**Office Manager** 408/252-3747

Cindy von Ofenheim [scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org)

**Programs Coordinator** 408/252-3740

Toby Goldberg [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org)

**Environmental Advocate** 650/868-2114

Shani Kleinhaus [shani@scvas.org](mailto:shani@scvas.org)

**Programs Assistant** 408/252-3740

Andrew Bradshaw [outreach@scvas.org](mailto:outreach@scvas.org)

**Burrowing Owl Projects** 408/252/3747

Joshua McCluskey [owls@scvas.org](mailto:owls@scvas.org)

### OFFICE HOURS

**Monday - Friday**

**10 AM - 5 PM**

**Saturday**

**10 AM - 2 PM**

**Office Fax**

408/252-2850

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[scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org)

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

**GENERAL MEETINGS** are held on the third Wednesday of each month except July, August and December and are open to the public.

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

**Avocet Editors:** Toby Goldberg, Cara Kuhn

## 2015 Volume 62, Number 3

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

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

\$25 Song Sparrow (Student)     \$35 American Avocet (Individual)     \$60 California Quail (Family)     \$100 Burrowing Owl

\$250 White-tailed Kite     \$500 Peregrine Falcon     \$1000 Golden Eagle     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**C1ZC140Z**

*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.*