



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

November-December 2015

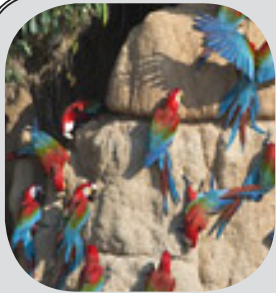
SCVAS Welcomes New Executive Director: Ralph Schardt

You may know Ralph from several of his SCVAS related activities. He has been an Audubon member for nearly 20 years. He led bird watching trips for a variety of local businesses and nonprofits. As the only photographer covering the relocation of the California condor at Pinnacles National Monument, Ralph's work was widely published. He brings over 15 years of leadership and development in nonprofit business to SCVAS, including running a small private nonprofit foundation supporting environmental education for youth over the last 9 years.

He is passionate about nature, birds, the outdoors and education. Ralph is excited about his new position with SCVAS as he brings a wealth of experience in nonprofit business management, fund development, and growth to SCVAS, combining all his skills for one cause. We are excited to have him join our team and are looking forward to working with him as we continue to grow.



Ralph Schardt, SCVAS' new Executive Director



General Membership Meeting
Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1
Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Rds
Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Wednesday, November 18th

**“Two Sides of the Andes: Peru’s Highlands and
Amazon Basin, and Brazil’s Pantanal”
with Doug Cheeseman and Steve Thompson**



A multi-faceted and exciting hour begins with amazing images of the Peruvian highlands from Cusco to Machu Picchu, including colorful tanagers and other highland birds that thrive in the surrounding “refugia” forests.

Then from the other side of the Andes in Brazil, we’ll be treated to the wildlife of the Pantanal, the largest wetland in the world. It’s a true conservation story of the recovery of wetland species and success of tourism to protect Hyacinth Macaws, White Caiman, Jaguar, Brazilian Tapir, Ocelot, Giant Anteater and even the very shy Maned Wolf.

*Left - Red and Green Macaws in Peru; Right - Jaguar in Brazil
Photos Courtesy of Doug Cheeseman*

(Additional information and directions available at www.scvas.org or by calling 408-252-3747)

Field Notes

(August-September 2015)

It’s been an amazing Autumn for photographers so far - with season highlights of a Semipalmated Sandpiper, Black Rail, Blackpoll Warbler, and so much more!

Full Field Notes lists are available online:
go to www.scvas.org/pdf/fieldnotes.

Please send notice of rarities to Pete Dunten via
email at pdunten@gmail.com



*Semipalmated Sandpiper
Photo courtesy Caroline Lambert*

Sept - Oct '15 Field Trips

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

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

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

Sunday Nov. 1, 8:00 AM

Grant Ranch County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on Hamilton Rd. and go approximately 9 miles to the park. Meet at Grant Lake (aka Hall's Valley Lake) parking lot, which is the first parking lot on the left side of the road (do not enter the Main Park Entrance on the right). **Highlights:** Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds and possible Golden Eagle. **Notes:** A park entrance fee will be required for the last half of the trip. This will be a moderate 2 mile walk. Renerver to "fall back" or be an hour early for this trip. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Nov. 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. **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 Nov. 7, 8:00 AM

Uvas Creek Park Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Direction:** From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go west on Tenth Street about a mile where it turns right and becomes Uvas Parkway. Turn left at Miller Ave, drive over Uvas Creek and turn left into Christmas Hill Park and park in the first isle to the right. Trip is a fairly easy but long walk. **Notes:** Low water conditions in the creek may require an alternate birding destination in the Gilroy area. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 8, 8:00 AM

Alviso Environmental Education Center

Half Day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey (408) 966-3860. **Directions:** From Hwy 237 turn left on North First St., right on

The Avocet 2

Nortech Pkwy, left on Disk Dr. and continue straight into the un-named entrance to the Environmental education Center along the southern edge of New Chicago Marsh and meet in the EEC parking lot. **Notes:** A chance to check out the impact of recent restoration work and take a nice long walk in an area that does not require an entrance fee. Light rain may require a change of venue.

Wednesday Nov. 11, 8:30 AM

Almaden Lake (East side) 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 Road. Turn right onto Winfield and park on street or \$6. fee in parking lot. Meet near blue bathrooms. **Difficulty Level:** Three hours maximum, easy walking. **RC**



Saturday Nov. 14, 9:00 AM

Western San Francisco

Half day. **Leader:** Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. **Directions:** From I-280 take 19th Ave. to Golden Gate Park. When you enter the park on 19th Ave. be in the left lane and take Crossover Dr. to 25th Ave. to Geary Blvd. then left on Geary. At 39th Ave., Geary becomes Point Lobos Ave., continue west on Point Lobos past the light at 48th Ave. and turn right into the Marrie Way parking lot. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 15, 7:30 AM

Ulistac Natural Area

Half day. **Leader:** William Pelletier (408) 623-4686. **Directions:** From Hwy 237 take Great America Pkwy South for

about 0.8 miles, turn left on Tasman Dr. for about one mile, turn right on Lick Mill Blvd and meet at the South entrance to the park on the left. **Highlights:** We will look for migrants and local breeding birds in diverse habitat that does not require an entrance fee. **RC**

Saturday Nov. 21, 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., then right on Penitencia Creek Rd. and continue on into the park. Drive under the bridge and meet at the far end of the parking lot. **Note:** Possible entrance fee. **Difficulty Level:** Trip is a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 22, 8:00 AM

Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility

Half day. **Leader:** Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. **Direction:** From Hwy 101 take Hwy 237 east, exit North on Caribbean Dr., turn right on Borregas Ave. then left to the parking area. **Highlights:** A great place to study ducks and scopes are highly recommended. **Difficulty Level:** Trip is a fairly easy but can be a long walk, **RC**

Saturday Nov. 28, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey (408) 966-3860. **Directions:** Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. **Difficulty Level:** This is a trip that is geared toward the beginning birder but all are encouraged to attend. **Notes:** Bring a scope if you have one, friends and non-members are always welcome.

Wednesday Dec. 2, 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.

Field Trips *continued*

Saturday Dec. 5, 8:00 AM

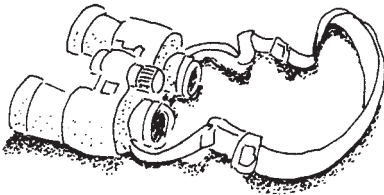
Ogier Ponds

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. **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**

Wednesday Dec. 9, 8:30 AM

Coyote Creek Trail; Silver Creek Rd

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser 408-569-9264 or jannapauser@gmail.com for specific directions. **Directions:** From CA 85 south, take Blossom Hill Rd., and exit east (left). Continue 2.4 miles onto Silver Creek Valley Rd. Make a U-turn at Piercy Rd. In .5 mile, Silver Creek parking lot is immediately on your right. Easy walking. **RC**



Looking Ahead:

Saturday Jan. 2, 7:30 AM

County Chase

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Highlights:** Get a head start on your 2016 County Year List with some vagrant chasing. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch, and field guides as we attempt to track down some of the unusual birds seen on the Christmas Bird Counts in Santa Clara County. **Directions:** Meet near the entrance to the Alviso Marina parking lot. From Hwy 237 in San Jose take Gold St. north to the end, bear left on Elizabeth St. and then right on Hope St. to the Marina parking lot. **Notes:** Be prepared to carpool as parking may be limited at some sites. **RC**

Sunday Jan. 3, 8:00 AM

Los Capitancillos Ponds

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** If coming from Hwy 85, go south on Camden Ave just past Blossom Hill Road. Singletree Way is the next left turn-off near Beacon School. Park on the street, we will meet at the trail entrance located on the right just beyond the power plant. **Highlights:** We will bird ponds that are often filled with a wide variety of waterfowl and Gulls, a nearby creek for riparian birds as well as other areas closely associated with the ponds that attract birds. **RC**

Saturday Jan. 9, 8:00 AM

Panoche Valley

Full day. **Leader:** Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260. **Directions:** Meet at Paicines Store on Hwy 25 approx. 11 miles south of Hollister. **Highlights:** This is one of our better "out of the county" field trips traversing oak woodland and open grassland via back roads into a unique habitat. Targeted species include Phainopepla, Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle; other possibilities include Mountain Plover, Lark, Vesper & Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Greater Roadrunner and Chukar. **Notes:** Bring lunch and a full tank of gas, carpooling is strongly recommended due to limited parking on the narrow roads. **Lunch:** We'll have lunch at the Panoche Inn. Birders who would like to pre-order (recommended) a sandwich should e-mail their choice of meat (turkey, ham, pastrami, chicken salad), cheese, and bread to the leader at ltjaeger@att.net. **IMPORTANT:** Do not expect to use the restrooms at the Paicines Store, as their use is limited to paying customers (we encourage patronage of local businesses).

SCVAS Events Calendar:

Wed. 11/4 & 12/2, 7:30-9PM

The Bay Area Bird Photographers Meeting

Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center - East Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto

11/4 - "Birds from Costa Rica and Ecuador" with Yamil Saenz
12/2 - "Photographing hummingbirds using multi-flash setups" with Vivek Khanzode and Luis Villablanca
Details available online; go to www.scvas.org/babp

Tues. 11/10 & 12/8, 10:00AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group - meets at the home of Rosalind Roberts, 100 Kathy Ct., Los Gatos, CA 95032, tel. 408 395-6631,

Topic 11/10: Pelicans

Topic 12/8: "Your Own Choice" of bird-related topic

Wed. 11/11 & 12/9; 3-4:30PM

Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws

McClellan Ranch Preserve

Free workshops for all ages! No RSVP required, but please be on time.



Bird Sketch

© John Muir Laws

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's) Need your Help!!

See page 7 or go to our website (www.scvas.org - under the Citizen Science section of our Birding pages) for more detail

Sun. 12/20

San Jose CBC

Mon. 12/21

Palo Alto CBC

Sun. 12/27

Calero-Morgan Hill CBC

Mon. 12/28

Mt. Hamilton CBC



2015 New Members of SCVAS

Those who joined August 1st -September 30th, 2015.
We look forward to a great year with your support!

Deborah Hall
Edward Perry
Ellen Ratner
Catherine Stewart
Sharon Thorp
Keith Wandry
Carolyn Wilbur



It's a great time of year to think about the perfect gift for the birder or nature lover in your life!

The SCVAS Nature Shop has unique items that are sure to make anyone smile!

MANY THANKS to the 2015 Wildlife Education Day Sponsors & Supporters:

2015 Event Sponsor:



Michael Lee
Environmental Foundation

2015 Event Supporters:



Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg

SCVAS Education and Outreach Director

Volunteering with a non-profit organization isn't always easy. It seems like there are more regulations, training and policy requirements that volunteers have to deal with than ever before. The projects and programs don't always have positive outcomes (for example, the fight to keep large solar farms out of the Panoche Valley litigation, or the smaller frustrations of failed nest boxes). And sometimes, what a volunteer does never comes to light for most of the organization (this is especially true for many of our hard-working committee members).

Why, then, would anyone choose to volunteer? The emphatic answers to that are love and passion. Our volunteers love what they do, even when frus-

trations hit. They love what the organization stands for and are passionate about our mission. They are passionate about birds and the environment. And they love working with all of the other amazing people that are equally dedicated. At this time of year in particular, the SCVAS would like to acknowledge how grateful we are for this passion, and for the many years of service our volunteers have dedicated to our mission. Thank you, one and all!

Considering adding your passion to our volunteer team? We definitely have a place for you! From once-a-year to once-a-week opportunities, we have activities and positions that will fit any level of experience, availability, interest and energy. All you need is an interest in supporting our mission and a willing attitude - we'll take care of the rest! Check out our opportunities at www.scvas.org - click on "Volunteer" - or contact the office at 408-252-3747.

Thoughts and Musings from the New SCVAS Director

Ralph W. Schardt, Executive Director

Wow! After 20 years of being a member of Audubon I am now part of the staff at Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. I feel very privileged and fortunate to be serving as the organization's Executive Director. For this to happen in autumn is also great timing as it is my favorite season of the year. I can now say that I'm actually part of the fall migration!

This is the period when all of us who enjoy birding gear up for the largest migration of bird species on the western hemisphere. My mind goes to Marin Headlands and Hawk Hill, Grey Eagle and Sutter Buttes, Merced wetlands, and Grizzly Island – all great places to see so many different kinds of birds travelling through our diverse area. However, this year it seems that migration comes in a variety of different forms.

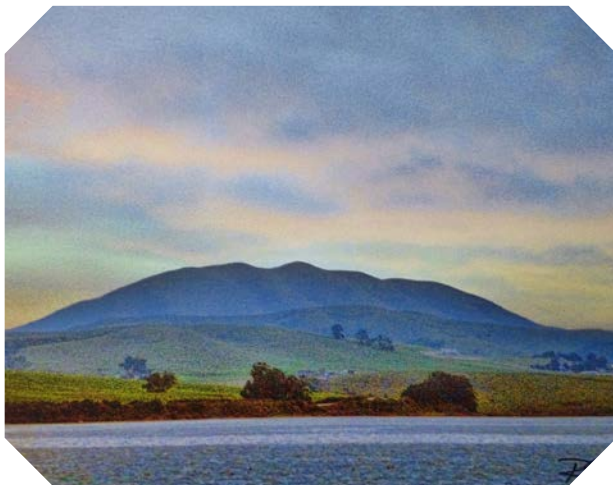
One example is the massive human migration that is happening in Europe and the Middle East due to war and lack of sustainable resources; including safe housing, power infrastructure and food. A few weeks ago California's Governor Brown gave a presentation on climate change in Los Angeles and spoke about human migration due to floods on the east coast and wild fires in the west. I never thought about the fact that someone who survives drought and severe weather might be uprooted or not want to return to their homes (for example, think about the folks in Lake County, California, that might have to rebuild in an area that has been described as a burnt, barren wasteland).

Bird migration is of course another area where great changes are taking place. Recent scientific research is showing that climate change alone will be a major factor in where we grow our food, what types of diseases will be prevalent, and how it will impact our natural resources, including bird populations. Evidence shows there will be major impacts on all migration paths of waterfowl throughout North America. In the west, sea level rising, precipitation changes, and less snow pack may severely impact avian migration with predictions of 6 – 9% loss in breeding numbers due to migratory reroutes by 2030. These are conservative numbers.

As I write this, I am preparing to introduce one of our speakers at the member's meeting in Palo Alto this evening. Dan Line-man has written over a hundred publications on environmental issues including his recent studies on climate change. He is an active member of the Climate Reality Project and a longtime volunteer for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. I hope many of you were able to catch his presentation.



*A view of the Lower Sacramento River - a place of special concern for birders and environmentalists
Photo © Ralph W. Schardt*

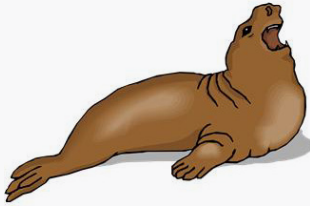


*A favorite wetlands scene, and a reminder of what's at stake as our climate continues to change
Photo © Ralph W. Schardt*

Although this may sound like gloom-and-doom, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is dedicated to the conservation of important bird habitat and to education about our local bird species. We feel that our efforts can make a big difference - in how people think about their local environment, when they're willing to use their voices to speak up about important issues, and in making changes to every day behaviors that can improve the chances of survival for our birds. We will continue to help keep our membership and local Bay Area neighbors informed on the effects of climate change and how important it is to stay both hopeful and proactive. There's a lot we can do to lessen the impact on all species of animals throughout the world.

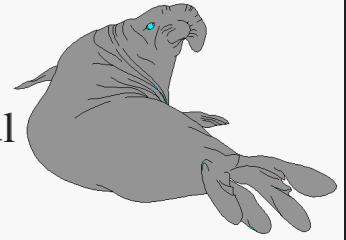
Whether we're tackling issues large or small, local or global, I look forward to standing at the helm of this remarkable organization and working with all the many people - members, volunteers, staff, partners and more - that help create a positive change in our community.

Young Audubon Winter Adventures for 2016



Join Us for an Annual Tradition:

A chance to view the weird and wonderful
Elephant Seals at Año Nuevo State Park!



Space is limited, so be sure to sign-up early!

**Elephant Seal Walks at Año Nuevo State Park
President's Day Weekend: Mon, February 15th**

Times still TBD (check back after Dec 21st)

Ages: 7-years-old and up

Cost: \$7/person for members; \$9/person for non-members

More details will be available online after Dec 21st (www.scvas.org) and in the Jan/Feb newsletter.

And stay tuned for our annual Day-of-Service event on January 18th, 2016!

Details coming soon!



HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA at the SCVAS Nature Shop

Wednesday, December 2, 5:00-8:00pm



Come shop for the holidays this evening!

(see coupon below)

There will be a storytime by the fireside from 6-7pm for the children.

Cookies and Hot Chocolate; Free Gift-Wrapping



*This coupon good for 25% off any regular
priced item through Dec. 31, 2015*



The Christmas Bird Counts are Almost Here!

Join us for another year of fun, adventure, and excitement as we help add to the body of bird research and knowledge throughout the country! Contact the compiler of the region you are interested in (see below). Free to participate.

SAN JOSE:

Yes, it is almost that time of year again ... time to celebrate the feathered folk. The San Jose Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Sunday, December 20th. Birders of all experience levels are welcome and needed. Bird identification skills are great but other skills are important too, such as:

- 1) spotter, able to point and say "Bird!", and
- 2) tally-man, able to make small marks on increasingly grubby bits of paper.

We are blessed with habitats to suit anyone's preference: shoreline, oak woodlands, lake-side, or riparian, we can accommodate you. So, come have fun and contribute to an important, on-going biological survey.

The countdown dinner will review all birds seen for the day. The Leininger Center in Kelley Park is the host location. A donation will be welcome to help cover the cost of dinner. If you are interested in participating in the count, please contact Kirsten Holmquist before December 14 at 408.747.0988 or via email at kirsten.holmquist@comcast.net.

PALO ALTO:

The Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count will be held on Monday, December 21 this year. This annual census covers a circle from Bay to Skyline, with four regions in each of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. If you want to participate in the same region where you have counted previously, please contact your region coordinator soon (one change: the new coordinator for Region 4, in Santa Clara County between Hwy 101 and Foothill Expy/Junipero Serra, is Rob Furrow, robertfurrow@gmail.com). But we welcome any eager birders at any level of experience to participate in this fun event. If you are new to the Count, or would like to explore a different region than before, please drop a line to Al Eisner, eisner@slac.stanford.edu. In order to find you a good spot, we need to hear from you at least two weeks before the count (the sooner the better).

CALERO-MORGAN HILL:

The Calero-Morgan Hill CBC will be held on Sunday, Dec 27, 2015. This count covers city parks, county parks, creeks and reservoirs in mid-south Santa Clara County and the Almaden area. If interested in participating, please contact Ann Verdi by email at aeverdi235@gmail.com or by phone 408-266-5108.

MT. HAMILTON:

Mark your calendars for December 28th. We hope to have a great count again through the Mt. Hamilton and San Antonio Valley area. Count leaders are especially needed. Contact Bob Hirt – 408-821-2732 (cell) – as soon as possible to participate.



Christmas Bird Counts are a fabulous opportunity for some great winter birding. Likely species to be seen are Horned and Eared Grebes (above) and White-crowned Sparrows (below).

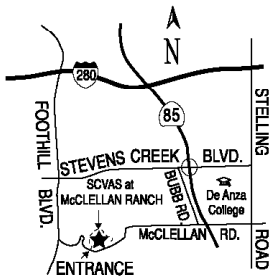
Photos courtesy of Tom Grey



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Sign up to receive your newsletter via email and enjoy these benefits:

- Save resources - eNewsletters save trees, postage, fuel (and more)!
- No waiting for the mail - get your newsletter up to 2 weeks sooner!

Contact the SCVAS office at scvas@scvas.org to start your paper-free membership today!

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Peter Hart '15-'18

Tom Grey '15-'18

Vivek Khazode '14-'17

Gabrielle Feldmen '15-'17

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

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

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday

10 AM - 5 PM

Saturday

10 AM - 2 PM

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Avocet line-drawings: Bonnie Bedford-White

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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 \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City State & Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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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).

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