



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May-June 2016

SCVAS Endorses San Francisco Bay Ballot Measure AA: Restoring Vital Bird Habitat, Providing Clean Water And Ensuring Flood Protection *(article courtesy of Audubon California)*



*San Leandro Bay
Photo by Gareth Bogdanoff*

In a move that seeks to breathe new life into one of the Western Hemisphere's most important natural places, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority recently voted to place the San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention, and Habitat Restoration Program, known as the "Clean and Healthy Bay Ballot Measure," on the **June 7, 2016** ballot in all nine Bay Area counties.

Audubon California immediately threw its support behind the measure, which will raise approximately \$500 million for tidal marsh restoration throughout San Francisco Bay. The Clean and Healthy Bay ballot measure will create a \$12 per parcel tax for the next twenty years. It is expected that these monies will leverage additional state and federal funding for bay restoration. "In a state that offers so many natural treasures, San Francisco Bay stands apart for both its beauty and its importance to birds and wildlife,"

said Brigid McCormack, executive director of Audubon California. "This ballot measure offers residents the opportunity to not only restore what has been lost over time, but to also invest in the future."

cont'd on page 6



SCVAS also endorses "Yes" on Measure A - Santa Clara County Park Charter Fund. For more information on Measure A go to www.yesonparks.com

Monthly Speaker Series

Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1

Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Rds

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Wednesday, May 18th

"Cuba: Gorgeous Bird Life"

with Alvaro Jaramillo



Cuba is a fantastic birding destination with a lot still to learn. It is safe, birdy, and has a lot of protected habitat and forest cover. In fact it may be where the Ivory-billed Woodpecker still lives! Our speaker, Alvaro, has birded in Cuba several times over the years, and he is excited to be able to show you some of the gorgeous birds and other wildlife that exist there. During this presentation he will also give you a sense of the culture and people of Cuba, and discuss how it remains a charming, friendly and jovial place in the face of much hardship!

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

*Above Left: Cuban Tody; Above Right: Bare-legged Owl.
Photos courtesy of Alvaro Jaramillo*

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



**Wednesday June 22; 6:00 PM
McClellan Ranch Preserve**

See Page 5 for details

May-June '16 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 May 1, 7:50 AM

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Sonny Mencher, email soccerquizz@yahoo.com. **Notes:** Trip is limited to twelve people; E-mail Sonny to reserve a space (those without e-mail can call 650-814-8028). **Directions:** Sonny will send you directions to the meeting spot where people are expected to form their own carpool (*required*). Be ready to caravan with the leader at 7:50 AM. **Difficulty Level:** Trip involves 2-3 miles of moderately strenuous walking, and goes rain or shine.

Wednesday May 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, for directions or more details (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. **RC**

Sunday May 7, 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**

Sunday May 8, 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.

Wednesday May 11, 8:30 AM

New Almaden Township

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser, 408-569-9264 or jannapauser@gmail.com. **Directions:** From Hwy 85 in San Jose, take Almaden Expwy south for 4.3 miles. Keep right at Y and drive through New Almaden township. Park in Almaden-Quicksilver C.P. Hacienda parking lot on your right, which opens at 8am. We'll bird through New Almaden township on Almaden and Bertram Rds. **Difficulty Level:** Easy walking. **LO, RC**

Saturday May 14, 8:30 AM

Mt Madonna County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Stephen Berlyant, (415) 420-3680. **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. **Highlights:** 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. **Difficulty:** Trip involves about 3 miles of moderately strenuous walking. **Notes:** be sure to bring liquids. **LO**

Sunday May 15, 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**

Saturday May 21, 8:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier, (408) 623-4686. **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 22, 8:00 AM

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Frank Vanslager, (650) 961-1505. **Directions:** Meet at the Vista Point Pullout located on the Bay side of Skyline Blvd. (Hwy 35) a little over a mile northwest of Page Mill Rd. Bring extra layers of clothing in case it's foggy and cold. **Highlights:** Possible Grasshopper Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting. **NF**

Saturday May 28, 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). **Highlights:** Possible Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager. **Difficulty:** This is a moderately strenuous walk with some elevation change. **Note:** Do not park in the Russian Ridge Parking Lot! Bring extra layers of clothing as temperatures can vary wildly even at this time of year. **LO**

Wednesday June 1, 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, for directions or more details (408) 730-7545 with questions. See write-up for May 4th for details. **RC**

Sunday June 5, 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, 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). **Highlights:** Looking for Swainson's Thrush, Pacific Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and Woodpeckers. **Difficulty:** This is a moderately long but fairly level hike along the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail. **Notes:** Be prepared for variable weather, dress in layers

Wednesday June 8, 8:00 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 Rd. Turn right onto Winfield and park on street or \$6. fee for parking lot. Meet near blue bathrooms. **Difficulty:** Easy walking.

Field Trips *continued*

Saturday June 11, 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:** Trip involves moderately strenuous hiking. **RC**

Saturday July 9, 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. **Notes:** All are encouraged to attend but birding will be geared toward the beginning birder.

Saturday Aug. 13, 8:00 AM

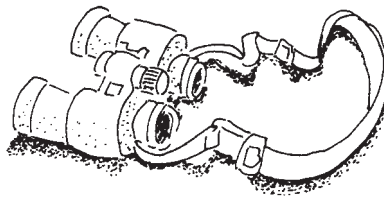
Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko, (408) 247-5499. For directions see the write-up for July 9th.

Sunday Aug. 14, 8:30 AM

Ano Nuevo State Reserve

Half day. **Leader:** Stephen Berlyant, (415) 420-3680. **Directions:** The entrance is along Hwy 1 about 30 miles south of Half Moon Bay or 20 miles north of Santa Cruz. **Highlights:** Possible birds include Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet, Black Swift and early returning shorebirds. There is a \$10 per car parking fee, meet at the far (south) end of the parking lot. **Difficulty:** 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 as the weather can be variable. **LO**



Special CNPS/SCVAS Program:

Sunday June 12, 9:00AM-12:00PM
Lake Cunningham Park
Beginner's Bird and Plant ID Walk Series Session #2

Leader: Vicki Silvas-Young (*space is limited*); **RSVP to arvind.kumar@cnps.org**. Have you wanted to learn the names of both the birds and plants around you? As summer approaches, please join us for a beginner's bird and plant identification walk through Lake Cunningham Park, a major destination for waterfowl and migratory birds. Learn how to identify the common birds of our area, as well as the native plants they depend on. **Difficulty Level:** 4 miles round trip on a level path. **Notes:** Bring a hat, water, your bird and plant list, and binoculars. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Parking fee is \$6.

SCVAS Events Calendar

Wed. 5/4; 7:30-9:00PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers

Lucy Evans Nature Center, Palo Alto

Topic: "Rediscovering" Peru with Vivek Tiwari

Go to www.scvas.org/babp for details

Thur. 5/5; 12-1:30PM

Egret Office Hours Begin (corrected date)

Shorebird Way, Mtn View

Join us for our weekly viewing and exploration of the Egret Rookery on the Google Campus. Volunteers especially wanted! See page 4 for details.

Tues. 5/10 & 6/7; 10:00AM**

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group

- meets at the home of Rosalind Roberts, 100 Kathy Ct., Los Gatos. (408) 395-6631.

Topic 5/10: Loons

Topic 6/7: Annual picnic. Everyone welcome - please bring something to share. Birds for 2016/2017 discussions will be decided. ****NOTE: The picnic will start at 11:00AM. Location TBD.**

Wed. 5/11 & 6/8; 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

(click on "Calendar")

for more details.



Bird Sketch
© John Muir Laws

Sat. 5/21; 10:00-3:00PM

Wingding Family Fest

Skyline Ridge open Space Preserve
Fun, family-friendly event to celebrate spring. Details on page 9 or online.

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

(see SCVAS website for directions)

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Thur. 5/12; 6:30PM (Dinner)

RSVP to 408-252-3740 or
programs@scvas.org

Birdathon Awards Dinner

Tues. 6/7; 6:00PM

RSVP to 408-252-3747.

www.scvas.org/birdathon for details

Annual Potluck Dinner

& Board Elections

Wed. 6/22; 6:00PM

No RSVP necessary.

See page 5 for details



The Avocet would like YOUR Feedback!

You've probably noticed that the SCVAS newsletter has been changing the last several issues. We'd love to know what you think about it - is something missing? Think we should add more? Anything we should eliminate? Stories you'd like to read about? Please let us know!

Send your feedback to programs@scvas.org, or take our online survey - go to www.scvas.org (scroll down to "What's New").

Conservation Corner: Focus on South County

By Shani Kleinhaus, SCVAS Environmental Advocate

In 2000, SCVAS and the Sierra Club challenged the City of San Jose to oppose the proposed construction of a Cisco office research park amid the farmland and open space of the North Coyote Valley. We did not prevail, but a downturn in the economy delayed development. In its Envision 2040 General Plan (2010), San Jose allocated this area to industrial development, which focuses on distribution centers (consumer goods, logistics) and data centers. These types of development pave over land and produce relatively few jobs.

Now, after years of torpor, the economy is picking up and development plans for North Coyote Valley and the hills to the east are emerging. For example, Gavilan College is already building a new campus on Bailey Avenue. A cemetery was approved by the City of San Jose on the hills between the valley and Calero Reservoir (north of the Cinnabar golf Course). And plans for additional industrial development are emerging.

Our advocacy efforts (with numerous partners) resulted in a delay of the rezoning of a 30-acre parcel from agriculture to industrial uses for the construction of a distribution center. The City of San Jose will prepare an EIR for any development on the site, and will schedule the rezoning hearing at the time that the project itself is considered. We are also watching over the 570-acre Cisco site in Coyote Valley, recently sold to San Jose's Brandenburg family. We are working with partner organizations to highlight the value of Coyote Valley and to encourage the best outcome feasible.

Further south, both Morgan Hill and Gilroy have recently attempted to grow into agricultural lands outside of their current Urban Growth Boundaries, which SCVAS opposed. We are glad both these sprawl efforts failed to win necessary approval by the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).

Lastly, some good news. The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors recently approved spending \$25.1 million to buy two properties, comprising 2,748 acres, known as Coyote Highlands and Coyote Canyon. In 2012, we fought the Coyote Highland Fountain Oaks Ranch Cluster Subdivision. The project would have allowed the development of a private gated community of 25 homes and vineyards on the last undeveloped hillside looming over three creeks east of Morgan Hill, and would have built a road in the canyon of one of these creeks. At that time, we were able to convince the supervisors to require that the perimeter fence be a Wildlife-Friendly-Fence and that the Home Owner Manual include recommendations for Bird Safe Design. Although we could not stop the approval of the project in its entirety, we are pleased that our efforts resulted in some significant mitigation. It is gratifying to know that this land will forever be protected as park, and we'll all be able to enjoy it!

Volunteer Ventures:

Here are some ways YOU can get involved with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society:

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 christineslocomb@gmail.com if you are available for at least two Thursdays in the next 6 weeks.

Google Bird Walk Guides: Strong birders are needed to help lead monthly bird walks (May 10th, June 7th, and July 12th) along the Google Campus. The bird walks will be short - no more than an hour in the mornings - but will help to encourage Googlers to learn more about the birds in their own back yards. Please contact christineslocomb@gmail.com if you'd like to help out.

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 at least 3 days prior to each survey date. See SCVAS website for more details.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2016 VOLUNTEER AWARD HONOREES: Liz Salzer, Elaine Gould, Kate Gudmundson, Dick Blaine, Pooja Vedam, Kitty Trejo, Marti Wright, and Danielle Blakkan. Read more about these fantastic volunteers in the July/August newsletter.

For more opportunities to help, check us out at www.scvas.org - click on "Volunteer."

SCVAS Classes and Excursions: Summer 2016

We are pleased to offer the following classes and excursions to our members and friends. To register please call the main SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747. Cancellations require 72-hour prior notification for refunds. Information about our upcoming classes and field seminars is also available on our website at www.scvas.org.

Birds of the Farallones *with Alvaro's Adventures*

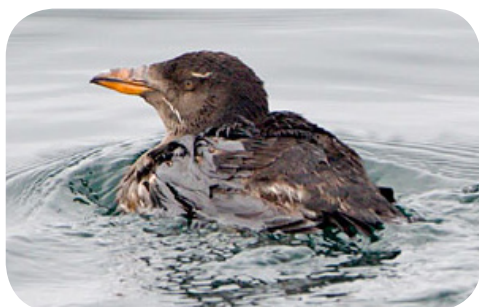
A summer trip to the Farallones conjures up images of Great White Sharks and Humpback whales. While we hope to encounter the entire breadth of ocean life the islands have to offer, we'll be going for nesting seabirds. The islands are teeming with nesting birds and our timing adds seabird migration to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

This is an approximately 10-hour trip, with a deep-water visit off the Continental Shelf on the return. For more details about this trip, see: <http://alvarosadventures.com/farallon-islands/>. But please note that registration for this particular trip is through SCVAS.

Guides: Al Jaramillo, Matthew Dodder, Bob Hirt, Bob Power.

Date: Sat. 8/13; 7:00AM to approx. 5:00PM. Location: Half Moon Bay (Princeton Harbor).

Fee: \$135 members; \$150 non-members.



Rhinoceros Auklets (left), Cassin's Auklets (center) and Tufted Puffins (right) are just some of the pelagic species sure to delight on this adventure to the Farallon Islands

Photos © Peter LaTourrette



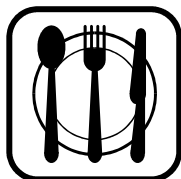
Annual Meeting and Potluck

Wednesday June 22, 6:00PM

(NOTE: This is the 4th Wednesday)

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.

Clean and Healthy Bay Ballot Measure

cont'd from page 1

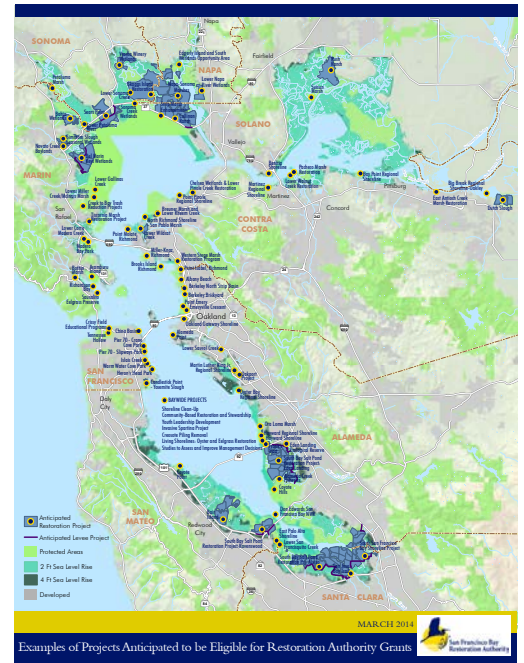
“Restored wetlands and cleaner water will support shorebirds and waterfowl that use the bay, which is one of the anchors of the Pacific Flyway,” said McCormack. “Increased public access to the bay shoreline will provide recreational and educational opportunities.” Save the Bay, the Bay Area Council and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group – along with Audubon California – are part of a broad coalition of environmental and business groups supporting the measure. A number of Bay Area Audubon chapters have also stated their support for the measure.

More than a million shorebirds and waterfowl use San Francisco Bay habitat at the height of migration, and the area includes twelve spots designated as Important Bird Areas due to the high number of rare and endangered bird species as well as the sheer number of birds supported by the bay and surrounding wetlands. Perhaps the most numerous of these birds are the Greater and Lesser Scaup, along with Bufflehead and Ruddy Ducks. Surf Scoters – with their white, red, yellow and black bills – were once plentiful in San Francisco Bay, but have declined considerably in recent years. Wetlands restoration will also greatly help the recovery of the federally-endangered Ridgway’s Rail. Other birds include Western and Clark’s Grebes, Wigeon, Pintails, Coots, Cormorants and Loons.

San Francisco Bay in 2013 was designated a “Wetland of International Importance” under the Convention on Wetlands, also known as the Ramsar Convention. It has also been recognized by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, which ranks it as being of “Hemispheric Importance” to shorebirds.

Tidal marsh restoration funded by the measure would improve water quality and control pollution by reducing the trash and other toxins that flow into the Bay and ocean. It would increase natural habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife beyond birds, including Pacific salmon and Dungeness crab, porpoises, sea lions, and shorebirds.

Restoring San Francisco Bay’s wetlands will protect shoreline communities from rising waters attributable to climate change. More than \$60 billion in homes, businesses, and crucial infrastructure is at risk, including ports, airports, roads, office buildings, and entire neighborhoods at or below sea level. A March 2015 report commissioned by the Bay Area Council found that an extreme storm event could cost our region \$10.4 billion, almost as much as the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.



Saying Farewell With A Decade’s Worth of Gratitude

by Toby Goldberg

Education and Outreach Director

When I returned to the Bay Area at the beginning of 2006, I was thrilled to hear about an open staff position with the local Audubon Chapter. The timing couldn’t have been better, and it seemed like the perfect fit for my (somewhat odd) assortment of skills and interests. Now, as I prepare to depart almost a decade later, I gratefully acknowledge how important being a part of this organization has been to my development as a birder, an educator, a planner, and a team member. I have learned so much, and almost can’t imagine myself as anything *other* than an SCVAS staff member.

Skills, of course, are highly desirable, but I will also leave with a deep sense of connection and gratitude to the members, staff and volunteers that have given so much to this chapter. The people that I have been fortunate to get to know during my tenure with SCVAS have made an indelible impression. I have been so impressed with the commitment, energy, and support that’s been poured into this chapter by the volunteers, board, staff and chapter members. It’s hard to imagine anything that this chapter can’t accomplish with that much passion behind it, and I know that I will miss each and every one of you.

After so many years, the decision to leave was, of course, incredibly difficult. But I am looking forward to new challenges and new opportunities. Although I will no longer be directly involved in the future trajectory of SCVAS, I know that the Education Department and its programs, and the organization as a whole, will be in good hands. I look forward to hearing about all the good works that are accomplished. I do not say “Goodbye,” therefore. Instead, I say “Au Revoir, Hasta Luego, and Until We Meet Again” – hopefully on a birding trail sometime soon.

The Avocet 6



Left: Looking very young during my first couple of weeks as the Programs Coordinator with SCVAS.

Spring 2016 Birdathon Update

by Renee Polizotto, Birdathon Committee Chair

Our Spring Birdathon began March 26th and got off to a great start. As of the publication date for this issue, we have over 75 registered participants, 12 guided teams and several self-guided teams. In addition, we have raised over \$5000 so far!

Early Birdathon Highlights:

On Sunday, March 27, the **Fledglings** birded San Benito County back roads with guest leader Debi Shearwater for a total of 73 species. For the fourth year in a row, this team of intrepid youth birded 8 hours to raise money for SCVAS's Education Program. Debi took time away from her busy international schedule to showcase the beauty and bounty of her land-based 'backyard.' Highlights of the day included observing a breeding colony of Tricolored Blackbirds, a breeding site of Grasshopper Sparrow and a cavorting pair of Greater Roadrunner. Team members were

from 8 to 15 years old. Parents were allowed to help spot, drive and provide food & fluids. A special Thank You goes out to Debi for her generous gift of time and knowledge to the Team, and for her work protecting birds.

On Saturday, April 2nd, the **Mean Green Birding Machine** 4 hour biking team, led by Rob Furrow, stepped up their game from last year and tallied an impressive 105 species! The team biked 14 miles along the bayshore in Mountain View and Palo Alto. Highlights included Merlin, Hooded Oriole, Redhead and American Pipit. On April 3rd, the **Citizen Data Sets**, a 4-hour "Big Sit" team assisted by Mike Mammoser, observed 61 species from a 30 foot circle. Their vantage point was the intersection of Charleston Slough and Shoreline Lake. Favorite sightings included Peregrine Falcon, Western Kingbird and Eared Grebes in breeding plumage.

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

2016 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 15 prize sponsors for the Spring Birdathon (with more coming all the time)! Please visit 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)

Bob Hirt
David McIntyre
Los Gatos Birdwatcher



Great Egret Sponsors

(donated between \$250 and \$599 in prizes or support)

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris



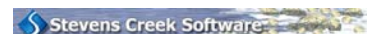
Western Bluebird Sponsors

(donated up to \$249 in prizes or support)

Alfaro Family Vineyards & Winery
Beauregard Vineyards
Bob Power



California Academy of Sciences
Children's Discovery Museum
David Wimpfheimer
Exploratorium
Mary Wisnewski
REI Outdoor School
Renee Polizotto
Stevens Creek Software



Join the SCVAS Board!

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is seeking new Board members and welcomes expressions of interest from anyone who supports our mission. While your enthusiastic contribution of time and energy is the major qualification, the Board particularly needs expertise and experience in fundraising, environmental education, and social media.

Ours is a collegial, working Board whose members are rewarded by growing the effectiveness and achievements of a vibrant SCVAS. If you would like to explore the possibility of joining the Board, kindly contact Peter E. Hart, Nominating Committee Chair, at peterehart@gmail.com.

Elections for SCVAS Board of Directors and Officers at our Annual Meeting on June 22, 2016

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, 2016. 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 2016-17	Bob Hirt
Vice President 2016-17	Diane Hart
Treasurer 2016-17	Marlene Macek
Secretary 2016-17	Joan Leighton

Field Notes

(February-March 2016)

by Pete Dunten

Geese through Hawks

Greater White-fronted Geese remained in the area through 30 Mar, the last date four were reported from locations around the Palo Alto Golf Course (JL). One was at the Coyote Creek Golf Course on the same date (MJM). Congregations of **Cackling Geese** were not as large as in Dec – Jan, and most were found at inland locations. The high counts were five at Vasona Lake CP on 14 Feb (JV), six at Los Capitancillos Ponds and the nearby Deanza Park on many dates through 19 Mar (m. ob.), and nine at Lake Cunningham on 16 Mar (EGi, RGr). The two **Snow Geese** overwintering in the area were seen at several inland locations, though never together, with one lingering until 19 Mar at Los Capitancillos Ponds (MDo). The **Ross's Goose** at Los Gatos Creek CP stayed through 18 Feb (JPa). The high count of **Eurasian Wigeons** dropped compared to the Dec – Jan period, with four noted on 11 Feb at Alviso salt pond A16 (WGB) and four on 22 Feb on a circuit of the Alviso Salt ponds (MHo). One was present in the southern part of the county 28 Mar at the Gilroy SCRWA (MJM). Two rare ducks present this winter continued their stays, a **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** at Charleston Slough through 22 Mar (m. ob.), and a hybrid **Common x Barrow's Goldeneye** at Los Capitancillos Ponds through 15 Feb (m. ob.). The only loon in the county was a new find, a **Red-throated Loon** on Chesbro Reservoir from 9 Feb – 15 Feb (DN, m. ob.). Two **Red-necked Grebes** stayed at Calero Reservoir through 4 Feb (GZ) and another was at Don Edwards NWR on 5 Mar (MSm). Three **American Bitterns** were spotted; one flew into Alviso Slough adjacent to Salt pond A8 on 4 Feb (RWR), one at the end of Terminal Blvd offered views through Mar 15 (m. ob.), and one entertained a SCVAS field trip at Ogier Ponds on 20 Mar (SBe et al.). The first **Swainson's Hawks** of the year on migration were two over Ed Levin CP on 27 Feb (MDo et al.). The pair that has nested in Coyote Valley returned on 29 Mar (RPh) and were seen courting along Bailey Ave. A **Ferruginous Hawk** remained in Coyote Valley through 28 Feb (fide eBird).

Shorebirds through Phainopepla

Snowy Plovers began nesting on Alviso salt ponds A12 (RJ, MJM, MMR) and A13 (WGB) at the end of March. The first date a plover was spotted on a nest was 27 Mar, and the high count on the two ponds was 58 birds on the same date (MMR, RJ, MJM). The **Black Oystercatcher** present in Jan was seen once again on 1 Feb (BM) from the trail around Salt

pond A4. The first **Red-necked Phalaropes** stopping on their way north were three on Alviso salt pond A12 on 27 Mar (MMR, MJM, RJ). Single **Glaucous Gulls** were at Alviso salt pond A16 on 20 Feb (WBr) and 22 Feb (MHo) and at Sobrato HS in Morgan Hill on 5 Mar (SCR). **Caspian Terns** returned in late March, with six at the nesting islands on Alviso salt pond A16 on 27 Mar (MMR) and one at Calero Reservoir on 29 Mar (RPh). In the Charleston Slough/Shoreline Lake area, **Black Skimmer** numbers increased slightly, from one in Jan (WGB, MMR) to two on 23 Feb (MSh) and three on 18 Mar (BSw). Two **Common Poorwills** were heard and then seen at the Santa Teresa Golf Club on 9 Mar (KO). The first male **Rufous Hummingbirds** to arrive on their journey north were singles reported from the Sierra Road summit on 28 Feb (ChJ, LiJ), and from feeders in Los Gatos

Winter Brings a Summer Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak Before Giving Way to Spring

on 1 Mar (KB). A good movement of **Rufous Hummingbirds** occurred on 26 Mar over the Loma Prieta saddle, when 22 (and 36 Rufous/Allen's) were tallied (AR). The lone sighting of a **Lewis's Woodpecker** was along Roop Rd near the entrance to Coyote Lake CP on 26 Mar (RWR et al.). **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were found at two locations, a continuing bird at Lake Cunningham on 7 Feb (JRy) and one at Almaden Lake between 11 Feb and 14 Mar (JPa, m. ob.). The **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Ed Levin CP, not always easy to find, was present through 24 Mar (RWR). The first of the flycatchers to return was a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at J Grant CP on 8 Mar (BM). J Grant CP was the site of the first arrival last year as well. **Cassin's Kingbirds** returned to their favored eucalyptus trees along San Felipe Rd in the southern part of the county, with one noted on 24 Feb (WGB) and two on 27 Feb (BB). They were about a month earlier than the first returning **Western Kingbird** seen 20 Mar at Ogier Ponds (SBe et al.). Single **Cassin's Vireos**, due back in late March, were found at Hidden Villa on 21 Mar (GHa), Chesbro Reservoir on 27 Mar (DN) and in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose the same day (BM). Heard-only reports of early-arriving Cassin's Vireo are hard to evaluate, given the similarity of some vocalizations of Purple Finches. The first **Warbling Vireos** of the spring were along the Guadalupe Creek Trail on 10 Mar (JPa).

Purple Martins returned to Loma Prieta in late March, with six noted on the 26th (WBr, JL, AR) and seven on the 27th (KO). **Northern Rough-Winged Swallows** were first detected on 7 Feb over Lake Cunningham (EGo), and **Cliff Swallows** on 25 Feb over the recharge pond at the end of Chynoweth Ave at the north end of Almaden Valley (JPa). A **House Wren** along Coyote Creek in a rarely visited area of Henry Coe SP on 6 Feb was likely overwintering (JY, AL). Another was along Stevens Creek near Crittenden Lane on 12 Feb (WGB). One of the three overwintering **Phainopeplas** remained at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park through 8 Feb (JPa). Singles were also found at the Stanford Dish on 14 Feb (OA) and in J Grant CP on 20 Mar (ChJ). The Stanford Dish is close to Jasper Ridge, the northernmost location on the peninsula where **Phainopeplas** have occasionally overwintered.

Warblers through Lawrence's Goldfinch

The secretive **Northern Waterthrush** overwintering at the Charleston Rd marsh was spotted again on 27 Feb (ChJ). In previous years a Waterthrush has stayed at that location into early April. **Black-throated Gray Warblers** have returned; one was singing at Monte Bello OSP on 27 Mar (GHa) and a migrant was at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 30 Mar (JoB). The **Hermit Warbler** present through the winter in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose was last seen on 23 Feb (BM) and heard on 27 Feb (MDo). Its regular visits to a feeder through the winter offered a rare opportunity to observe the start of the molt of an immature male into breeding plumage. **Wilson's Warblers** returned on the first day of spring, 19 Mar, when singles were noted at Stevens Creek CP (GZ) and at Los Capitancillos Ponds (MDo et al.). One of the **Swamp Sparrows** overwintering at Palo Alto Baylands showed itself on 5 Feb (MHa) and 19 Feb (WGB). And while many species are still on winter grounds or migrating, a pair of resident **Dark-eyed Juncos** was already incubating three eggs on 13 Feb in the South Park neighborhood of Santa Clara (KW). The same location hosted a striking immature male **Summer Tanager**, found on 10 Feb and still present on 9 Mar



Summer Tanager
Photo courtesy Karen Werner

Field Notes *cont'd*

(KW). Single **Western Tanagers**, another of the many species due back at the end of March, were found at Edenvale Park in San Jose on 14 Mar (JPa) and along the Los Gatos Creek Trail north of Los Gatos Creek CP on 20 Mar (BM). The first **Black-headed Grosbeak** to return was at Stevens Creek CP on 19 Mar (GZ). A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was seen on one day only, 5 Feb, at Los Capitancillos Ponds (GR). They occur in winter about one year in six. Orioles, brightly colored signs of the turn of the seasons, have returned. The first **Hooded Oriole** appeared on 29 Feb in the Almaden Valley (JPa), and the first two **Bullock's Orioles** were at Ed Levin CP on 14 Mar (BM). The overwintering **Evening Grosbeaks** in Sunnyvale were last found on 2 Feb, with the high count of the winter, 21 birds, recorded (BM). One was at a new location, a feeder in Almaden Valley, on 3 Feb (JPa). The latest date in downtown Los Altos was 12 Feb, when one Evening Grosbeak was still present (GHa). The first report of **Red Crossbills** from Henry Coe SP since the winter of 2012-2013 was of a flock of 27 on 30 Mar (RPh). Crossbills could be nesting now – reports



Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Photo courtesy Geary Ridings

of breeding are welcome. A flock of 200 **Pine Siskins** at J Grant CP on 12 Mar was a nice count (MDo et al.). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** occurred in small numbers at several locations, two at Henry Coe SP on 6 Feb (JY, AL), one to two at Ed Levin CP on 19 Feb (CD) and 30 Mar (RWR), as many as four along San Felipe Rd between 24 Feb and the end of the period (WGB, m. ob.), two at Coyote Valley OSP on 8 Mar (KO), and four at the Santa Teresa Golf Club on 9 Mar (KO).

Observers: Ozzie Altus (OA), Stephen Berlyant (SBe), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Joan Brauch (JoB), Will Brooks (WBr), Karen Burnson (KB), Chris Daniels (CD), Elizabeth Gibbons (EGi), Eric Goodill (EGo), Rebecca Grieser (RGr), Garth Harwood (GHa), Michael Hawk (MHa), Marcel Holyoak (MHo), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Lisa Johnson (LiJ), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Jasen Liu (JL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Brooke Miller (BM), David Nickerson (DN), Kurt Ongman (KO), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Rob Reiling (RWR), Geary Ridings (GR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jennifer Rycenga (JRy), Mike Shafto (MSh), Marc Simmel (MSm), Byron Swift (BSw), John Villa (JV), Karen Werner (KW), James Yurchenco (JY), Gina Zolotar (GZ)

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

AVOCET CORRECTION:
The delightful picture of the Orchard Oriole from our March/April 2016 newsletter issue was unfortunately mis-credited. That picture came from Will Brooks. We appreciate his allowing us to use that picture, and we apologize for the error.



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

Saturday, May 21st; 10:00am-3:00pm

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

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

July 2016: RAILS Program for Teens

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's RAILS Program for Teens provides free education and training for young adults to help them develop skills in environmental "Research, Advocacy, Identification, Leadership and Stewardship" – skills that will help them excel in higher education and careers in wildlife biology, field ecology and environmental education.

The program is for young adults ages 14-18 who have completed at least one year of High School, and who show an interest in the natural sciences and want to expand those interests into potential career tracks.

Full program details and dates available online at www.scvas.org/RAILS. Orientation and Information meeting on Tuesday, May 3rd at 7:00PM. Please RSVP (see online).



Ridgeway's Rail
courtesy of Tom Grey

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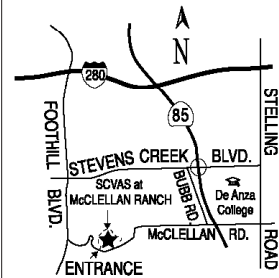
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Office Manager scvas@scvas.org , 408/252-3747	Environmental Advocate Shani Kleinhaus, shani@scvas.org , 650/868-2114	Burrowing Owl Projects Joshua McCluskey, owls@scvas.org , 408/252-3747

Office Fax 408/252-2850
 Office E-mail scvas@scvas.org
 Website www.scvas.org

MONTHLY SPEAKER SERIES are held on the third Wednesday of each month except July, August and December and are open to the public.

NATURE SHOP HOURS
Effective May 1st through May 31st (only):
Monday - Friday 11 AM - 4 PM
Saturday 10 AM - 2 PM

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

Details available on the SCVAS website.

Please call 408-252-3747 for June hours and/or special requests.

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

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Vice President
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Treasurer
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