



# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

November-December 2016

## SCVAS Will Continue The Fight For Burrowing Owls

*By Executive Director Ralph Schardt and Phil Higgins, Lead Biologist*

Burrowing owls are experiencing significant declines throughout their range and especially in California. This decline has been particularly severe in Santa Clara County. During the 1980's there were approximately 500 burrowing owls at 250 sites in the county. Unfortunately their populations have since plummeted, with only 53 adults at just four locations as of the 2016 breeding season. Habitat loss, fragmentation of the remaining habitat, disturbance and destruction of burrows, high mortality rates, inbreeding, and low reproductive rates are all factors contributing to the demise of burrowing owls in this area and elsewhere.



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The number one conservation project for SCVAS is the protection of burrowing owls and their habitat in Santa Clara Valley. We have several trained biologists who work with us to monitor and maintain various locations around the area for burrowing owl conservation. One site that has been our primary focus and responsibility is near Alviso at the Santa Clara City/San Jose Municipal Water Treatment Plant. SCVAS has managed this burrowing owl habitat for the City of San Jose for the last four years. We were recently awarded a new five-year contract with the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency to continue management of this site. This is one of only four breeding sites in Santa Clara County and it has continued to be successful in showing increases in breeding pairs and chicks while the other three sites are experiencing excessive declines. Nesting burrowing owl populations at this 180-acre site have increased for the fourth consecutive year. This year, our biologists counted twelve pairs of burrowing owls with a minimum of 58 young, up from ten pairs with 46 young last year, eight pairs with 17 young in 2014, and six pairs with twelve young in 2013. Working in

*cont'd on page 4*



**Monthly Speaker Series**  
**Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1**  
Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Rds  
**Wednesday, November 16, 2016**  
**Doors open 7:30 PM; program 8:00 PM**



### **A Naturalist's Guide to the Olympic Peninsula with Ken Campbell**

Take a photographic tour of Washington's Olympic Peninsula with Ken Campbell to see and learn about some of the best places to view the amazing diversity of habitats and wildlife. The Olympic Peninsula has two National Wildlife Refuges, a National Marine Sanctuary, a National Forest, and a National Park. With nearly 3,600 square miles to explore, the Peninsula is home to a variety of ecosystems and diverse climates which host a unique mix of flora and fauna.

Ken will share some of his beautiful photography focusing on capturing wildlife in action and reflecting the natural beauty of the world around them.

*Pictures by Ken Campbell. Additional information available at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) or by calling the SCVAS office.*

# November-December Field Trips Please carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing. LO = Lunch optional; RC = Heavy rain cancels; NF = No facilities available

(Full details are also available online at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org))

## Saturday Nov 5, 8:00 AM Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey (408) 966-3860. **Directions:** Located at intersection of Caribbean Dr and Borregas Ave. From Caribbean take Borregas toward the bay, turn left at the stop sign and continue to parking lot. We will meet at the north end of the parking lot.

## Sunday Nov 6, 8:00 AM Pearson-Arastradero Preserve in Palo Alto

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092 **Directions:** From I-280 take Page Mill Rd west (toward Santa Cruz mountains), right on Arastradero Rd, meet in parking lot about a half-mile on the right. **Difficulty:** Some moderately strenuous hiking. **Note:** Remember to set your clocks back!

## Saturday Nov 12, 8:00 AM Uvas Creek Park

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527 **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go west on Tenth Street for a mile where it turns right and becomes Uvas Pkwy. Go left at Miller Ave, over Uvas Creek and left into Christmas Hill Park. Park in first aisle to the right. **Difficulty:** Long, fairly easy walk. **Note:** Low water conditions may require an alternate birding destination in Gilroy.

## Sunday Nov 13, 8:00 AM Stevens Creek Park

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506 **Directions:** From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south 2.1 miles (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd). Turn left into first park entrance and meet in

Chestnut Picnic Area parking lot. **Highlights:** Top riparian birding spot for migrants and local breeding birds. **Note:** Entrance fee required.

## Tuesday Nov 15, Noon Ulistac Natural Area

Half day. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier (408) 644-5583 **Directions:** From Hwy 237 take Great America Pkwy south 0.8 miles, left on Tasman Dr. for one mile, right on Lick Mill Blvd. Meet at south park entrance on the left. **Highlights:** We will look for migrants and local breeding birds.

## Saturday Nov 19, 8:00 AM Coyote Valley OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Rick Herder (408) 779-3885. **Directions:** Take 101-S to Bailey Ave, turn right at end of ramp, left onto Santa Teresa Blvd and right onto Laguna Ave. (Meet here)

## Sunday Nov 20, 9:00 AM Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey (408) 966-3860 **Directions:** Take Hwy 101 to Palo Alto, exit Oregon Expy/Embarcadero Rd, stay right onto Embarcadero Rd and follow to the end.

## Sunday Nov 27, 8:00 AM Ulistac Natural Area

Half day. **Leader:** David Zittin (408) 515-7104 **Directions:** From Hwy 237 take Great America Pkwy south for 0.8 miles, left on Tasman Dr. for one mile, right on Lick Mill Blvd and meet at south park entrance on left. **Highlights:** Concentrated population of diverse birds, from woodpeckers to warblers.

## Tuesday Nov 29, Noon Pearson-Arastradero Preserve in Palo Alto

Raptor watch. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier (408) 644-5583 **Directions:** From I-280 take Page Mill Rd west (toward Santa Cruz mountains), right on Arastradero Rd and meet in parking lot 1/2 mile on right. **Difficulty:** Some moderately strenuous hiking.

## Saturday Dec 3, 8:00 AM Coyote Hills OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier (408) 644-5583 **Directions:** Take Hwy 84 (Dumbarton Bridge) east to Newark. Exit right at Thornton, left on overpass, as Thornton becomes Paseo Padre go left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd into park. Meet at far end of Quarry parking lot on left, 1/4 mile past entrance. **Note:** Entrance fee required.

## Sunday Dec 4, 8:00 AM Monte Bello OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier (408) 644-5583 **Directions:** From I-280 in Palo Alto take Page Mill Rd west, toward Skyline Blvd. (Hwy. 35) for approx. 7 miles. Meet at Monte Bello parking area on left. **Difficulty:** Moderate to strenuous.

## Saturday Dec 10, 8:00 AM Ed Levin County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier (408) 644-5583 **Directions:** Take Hwy 237 east, crossing I-880 and I-680 (237 becomes Calaveras), turn left on Downing Rd to park entrance. Meet in parking lot on far, northeast side of Sandy Wool Lake (near dog park). **Highlights:** We'll look for migrant birds in this birding hot spot. **Difficulty:** Trail is steep in places. **Note:** Entrance fee required.

## Sunday Dec 11, 8:00 AM Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

Half day. **Leader:** Dave Zittin (408) 515-7104 **Directions:** Located at intersection of Caribbean Dr and Borregas Ave. From Caribbean take Borregas toward the bay, turn left at the stop sign and continue to parking lot. We will meet at the north end of the parking lot.

## Tuesday Dec 13, Noon Santa Teresa County Park

Two hours. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier (408) 644-5583 **Directions:** Take Hwy 101 to Bernal Ave exit, follow Bernal Rd past the golf course and up the hill. Turn left into the park at the sign. We will meet at the last parking lot near the facilities. **Note:** Moderately strenuous in places.

## Saturday Dec 17, 8:00 AM Alum Rock Park

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd northeast toward hills then left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd and continue into park. Pass under bridge and meet at far end of upper parking lot. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk. **Note:** Vehicle entry fee required.

## Sunday Dec 18, 9:00 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier (408) 644-5583 **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Mt. View take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. **Difficulty:** Recommended for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. Bring a spotting scope and a friend.

# SCVAS Events Calendar

**Wed. 11/2 & 12/7; 7:30-9:00PM**

## **Bay Area Bird Photographers**

Embarcadero Room - Rinconada Library  
1213 Newell Rd, Palo Alto, CA

Topic 11/2: "Birding Inspirations Through My Lens" with Jeffrey Rich

Topic 12/7: "Birds and Wildlife of Ecuador and Peru" with Vivek Khanzode

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

**Tues. 11/08 & 12/13; 10:00AM**

## **Eve Case Bird Discussion Group**

Meets at the home of Rosalind Roberts, 100 Kathy Ct., Los Gatos. Call Rosalind with questions at (408) 395-6631.

Topic 11/08: Barn Owls

Topic 12/13: Peafowls

**Tues. 11/08**

## **ELECTION DAY!! Make your voice count!**

Make a difference in your community by supporting measures to preserve our local environment. See page 4 for details on where SCVAS stands on specific measures and propositions.

**Thurs. 11/10 and 12/08; 11:30AM-1:00PM**

## **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) (click on "Calendar") for more details.

**Sat. 11/19, 9:00AM-4:00PM**

## **Swap Meet!**

McClellan Ranch Preserve

We're holding a Swap Meet to benefit our conservation and education programs. There will be food, music, and lots of great items for sale. See page 10 for details.

**Wed. 12/07, 10:00AM-5:00PM, 5:00PM-8:00PM**

## **Holiday Extravaganza**

Stock up on last-minute holiday gifts during this great sale and join us afterwards for our annual Holiday Party.

See page 11 for details.

## **Christmas Bird Counts Need Your Help!!**

See page 9 for details or go to our website for more information.

**Sun. 12/18**

**San Jose CBC**

**Mon. 12/19**

**Palo Alto CBC**

**Tues. 12/27**

**Calero-Morgan Hill CBC**

**Mon. 01/02**

**Mt. Hamilton CBC**

PSST...

Want email reminders for upcoming events?

It's a feature on our **NEW WEBSITE!**

Go check it out!

## Young Audubon Events

### **Day of Service 2017 at McClellan Ranch**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Monday, January 16

Start out the new year by helping your local environment! We'll work with Grassroots Ecology to help plant native plants in the meadow at McClellan Ranch. Look out for more details on our website towards the end of December.

### **Elephant Seal Walks at Año Nuevo State Park**

President's Day Weekend: Monday, February 20

Join us for an annual tradition!! Come see the Elephant Seals! Space is limited, so be sure to sign up early! Check our website after December 20 for more details.

Ages: 7 years old and up, children under 18 should be accompanied by an adult

Cost: \$7/person (member); \$9/person (non-member)

partnership with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, we will be able to continue management of this site for the next five years and hopefully increase the owl population so this site can be a source population for future colonization of adjacent locations that once had historical populations of burrowing owls. Specific habitat management strategies on-site have included the installation of artificial burrows and expansion of the ground squirrel population (burrowing owls, despite their name, do not create their own burrows but are dependent on fossorial mammals such as ground squirrels for burrows and will even use artificial burrows), creation of prime habitat for burrowing owl prey with the installation of brush and rock piles, and monitoring of the owl population with monthly surveys to determine population dynamics such as reproductive success, owl movements, mate selection, and survival rates.

It is paramount that SCVAS continue conservation efforts throughout the Santa Clara Valley as development pressures and habitat loss continue to increase, and the burrowing owl population continues to decrease throughout its range.



## SCVAS Wants YOU To Vote!



The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society offers recommendations on several ballot measures and propositions that will be voted on this November. SCVAS endorses Measure A in Santa Clara County, Measure H in Gilroy, Measure R in the city of Santa Clara, and Measures I, J, and K in Milpitas. We also recommend a “yes” vote on state Proposition 67 and a “no” vote on Proposition 65.

**Measure A (Countywide)** is a 950-million dollar measure directed towards creating affordable housing for the most vulnerable among us: homeless people, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, low-income families, and working families. Passing this measure could help homeless people relocate from our creeks, helping to restore riparian and aquatic ecosystems.

**Measure H (Gilroy)** will add an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to the City of Gilroy’s general plan. Development would be restricted outside of the UGB until the year 2040 and would require voter approval for certain limited exceptions. This measure will help prevent urban sprawl by preserving open space and farmland.

**Measure R (City of Santa Clara)** would prevent the City of Santa Clara from selling public parkland or open space without a two-thirds voter approval. Passing this measure would protect parks including the Ulistac Natural Area, a unique valley floor habitat by the Guadalupe River. SCVAS helped establish Ulistac Natural Area and protected this area for many years.

**Measures I, J, and K (City of Milpitas)** aim to protect park, open space, and hillsides in Milpitas from urban sprawl. More specifically, Measures I and J would extend the life of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) into 2038, limiting growth to the valley floor and requiring a two-thirds voter approval to change hillside development rules outside of the UGB. Measure K would condition rezoning of parks, parklands, or open space to residential, commercial, or industrial uses in a two-thirds vote from the public. These measures will help protect Milpitas hillsides, parks and open space from future development.

**Proposition 67 (initiated by environmental organizations)** will ratify current legislation banning single-use plastic bags from grocery stores, pharmacies, liquor stores, and convenience stores and charging 10 cents for paper bags, with the revenues going toward covering the costs of non-plastic bags and educating customers. **Proposition 65 (initiated by plastic bag manufacturers)** will require that grocers deposit those fees into a state account for environmental improvement projects if voters decide to keep the ban. Vote yes on Prop 67 to protect our creeks, bay and ocean from plastic pollution that is harming birds and wildlife. Vote no on “poison pill” Prop 65 which aims to confuse voters and unnecessarily burden participating grocers.

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## Conservation Corner: What our Environmental Advocacy Team is working on...

by Shani Kleinhaus, SCVAS Environmental Advocate

We have previously reported on plans to pave **North Coyote Valley** with an industrial-sized warehouse and distribution center. The first proposal has now been submitted for a thirty-acre parcel on Blanchard Road, south of Tulare Hill.

**North of Highway 237/Alviso**, plans are also moving forward to build data centers and distribution centers on both sides of Coyote Creek (in Milpitas and in North San Jose). New hotels and buildings are also planned along the Guadalupe Creek in Alviso. Top Golf, an indoor/outdoor entertainment facility, proposals would offer food, drink, music and a three-story golf driving range open to the public until 2AM every day. The project includes 120-ft tall fences at the 100-ft setback from the river.

**San Jose is considering the deregulation of removal of trees** in the city. Currently, removal of a large tree requires a permit, providing the public with transparency and allowing us to express concern. We are concerned with this potential change, especially as it applies to native trees (such as oaks and sycamores), removal of more than three trees per site, or removal of trees from riparian and sensitive areas. We have asked that transparency be maintained in order to reduce the impact on visual and biological resources.

**Almaden Valley/Santa Teresa Hills:** Should open space near Almaden Lake be converted to housing? Recently, a debate surrounding a twenty-acre parcel of open space located near San Jose's Almaden Lake Park has caused us great concern. This area was designated private open space when housing development was clustered into an adjacent parcel. Now, housing is proposed for at least two acres, and the remaining acreage would be given to the public for open space and trail development. We are opposed to the change in General Plan designation: it would pollute the view of the hills from Almaden Lake Park, destroy habitat for birds and a wildlife corridor that connects Santa Teresa Park to Los Alamitos Creek and Almaden Valley, and continue sprawl into greenbelts and open space.

**Mountain View** is in the process of approving Moffett Gateway, a ten-acre project on Stevens Creek in a triangle formed by Highways 101 and 85 and Moffett Boulevard. The project includes a 255-room hotel, 200,000 square-foot office building, a six-level above-grade parking structure, and will include the removal of 187 heritage trees. We are concerned because of the close proximity of this project to riparian corridor (75 feet) and the risk

of bird collisions. We have highlighted the importance of bird-safe design and riparian setback. In discussions, developers have agreed to address our concerns.

We see renewed efforts to develop Young Ranch, a 79-home subdivision on the 2,150 acres of Young Ranch, located in the **southeast hillsides of San Jose**. The ranch's rolling hills and deep valleys are home to elk, deer, butterflies, birds, and wildflowers; these are beautiful landscapes that should be protected. The developers are offering to donate 58% of the parcel to the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan to help preserve the endangered species of the area, and to retain most of the developed part of the ranch as open space. We remain concerned with the effects of sprawl on the bird and wildlife species of our region, and the continued pressure on wildlife species as their habitats are reduced and fragmented while being invaded by humans, pets and automobiles.

### **Victory for Crystal Springs Watershed:**

Great news for wildlife and water quality! The San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted 10-1 to table (stop discussing) a proposal to open up the Peninsula Watershed Lands to unlimited public access, meaning that public access will continue to be restricted to docent-led tours. A community of Bay Area residents has been advocating for opening all of Crystal Springs Watershed to hikers, bikers and equestrians. Nestled within the pristine peninsula landscape of San Mateo County just off I-280, the watershed surrounds a reservoir providing the Bay Area with high-quality drinking water. The reservoir and watershed also serve as protected habitat for fish, wildlife, and endangered species. Opening this area for the public to roam freely could push wildlife out of their habitat, affect the quality of our water supply, and increase the possibility of wildfires. We are celebrating a victory this week as the tireless work of the Committee for Green Foothills, Sierra Club (Loma Prieta and San Francisco Bay Chapters), California Native Plant Society, Sequoia Audubon Society, Golden Gate Audubon Society and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has paid off. We are relieved that this beautiful place will continue to be protected from encroachment.

For more information or to get involved in conservation and advocacy work, contact Shani at [shani@scvas.org](mailto:shani@scvas.org).

# Field Notes

*(August-September 2016)*

by Pete Dunten

## Geese through Terns

A skein of 34 **Greater White-fronted Geese** was over Don Edwards NWR on 27 Sep (SJ) and a gaggle of 10 remained on 28 Sep (LL). A **Snow Goose** with Canada Geese at Coyote Lake on 18 and 19 Aug (BM, RSh) was unexpected; wild Snow Geese typically don't arrive until the end of Oct. An **American Bittern** in the marsh between Alviso salt ponds A16 and A17 on 22 Aug (PDU) was one of only a few Aug records. **White-faced Ibis** sightings began with two flying over the Santa Teresa Golf Club on 9 Aug (TB); subsequent sightings from 20 Aug through 27 Sep were all at the edge of San Francisco bay, with high counts of 14 on 6 Sep (BJ) and 9 on 7 Sep (WP) at Sunnyvale WPCP, and 11 on Alviso salt pond A16 on 6 Sep (DN). A **Sandhill Crane** announced its presence over the Gilroy SCRWA on 23 Sep (WGB) and was then seen over Llagos Creek heading southeast (MPx et al.). A single **Solitary Sandpiper** stopped at Coyote Lake from 15 to 21 Aug (MJM, m. ob.). A **Bar-tailed Godwit** alternated between Alviso salt ponds A16 and A17, depending on the tide, between 21 and 29 Aug (ChJ, m. ob.). Only the 4th record for the county, the Godwit was likely the same individual which spent 11 to 16 Aug in Marin county before reaching us, and then moved north to Alameda county where it was seen between 3 and 6 Sep. Two **Black Turnstones** were found in a closed part of Don Edwards NWR on 28 Aug (MMR, MJM, RJ). Single **Ruddy Turnstones** were at Alviso salt pond A16 on 11 Aug (AR) and the Stevens Creek delta on 25 Aug (BM). Two **Wandering Tattlers** on the Alviso salt pond A10/A11 levee were a nice find on 28 Aug (MMR, MJM, RJ); one was found along the

edge of salt pond A11 on 29 Aug (CWf). Ten **Sanderlings** at Alviso salt pond A16 on 11 Sep (MJM, JHa) was the high count during the peak of their fall migration. A single **Pectoral Sandpiper** was noted at Alviso salt pond A15 on 28 Aug (MMR, RJ, MJM). Single **Baird's Sandpipers** on their way south stopped at Alviso salt pond A13 on 11 Aug (AR), at Coyote Lake from 14 to 19 Aug (PDU, m. ob.), and at New Chicago Marsh on 29 Aug (BM, RWR). **Red Knots** were seen on five dates between 23 and 31 Aug, with a high count of nine on closed refuge ponds on 28 Aug (MMR, MJM, RJ). New Chicago Marsh can be crowded with shorebirds in the fall, and a careful study is sometimes rewarded with a rarity. A **Stilt Sandpiper** was there between 2 Sep (JJo, SMa) and 9 Sep (m. ob.). A **Ruff** in New Chicago Marsh was first noted on 9 Aug (WBr), then not again until 28 Aug. It was often not far from a boardwalk over the marsh, and delighted observers through 26 Sep (m. ob.). Immature **Sabine's Gulls** stopped at the south end of the bay this year, the first arriving on 15 Sep at Sunnyvale WPCP (LB). Two were there on 17 Sep (PDU) until late in the day, when one was taken by a Peregrine Falcon (SPz, AIH). The remaining gull was seen daily through 20 Sep and again on 27 Sep (m. ob.). Additional sightings were made on 24 Sep on Adobe Creek (LG) and on 25 Sep on closed refuge ponds (MMR, MJM, RJ). Sabine's Gulls have been found in the fall about one year in every two on average over the past 30 years. After arriving in late July, **Elegant Tern** numbers increased through Aug and Sept and peaked on 25 Sep with 66 tallied on a survey of closed refuge ponds (MMR, MJM, RJ). Two **Common Terns** were noted on the same survey. **Least Tern** numbers peaked on 1 Sep when 32 rested on the Alviso salt pond A10/A11 levee (WGB), and none were reported after 3 Sep (SMa, TB).



*Ruff by Louise Liou*

## Swifts through Phainopepla

Persistent sleuthing in tracking **Vaux's Swift** movements late in the day was rewarded with the spectacle of 200 swifts spiraling over potential roosts in chimneys in a neighborhood adjacent to Almaden Quicksilver CP on 4 Sep (JPa). The spectacle was repeated with 300 swifts participating on 23 Sep over another nearby neighborhood (JPa). **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** regularly visited feeders in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose through 13 Sep, with a high count of 8 on 5 Aug (BM). **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were found in their traditional stronghold in the county, San Antonio Valley, with three on 10 Sep (CB, HP) and one on 16 Sep (WGB). The first **Prairie Falcons** noted at low elevation were solo falcons hunting along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley on 22 Aug (RSh) and over the landfill south of the Don Edwards EEC on 4 Sep (MK). The fall passage of **Willow Flycatchers** began on 18 Aug with one at J Grant CP (MBo) and continued through the period with sightings of one or two on many dates (m. ob.). There were an unusual number of **Purple Martin** sightings this fall, of birds not at the known breeding locales. These could be local dispersants, or passage migrants. On the one hand, historical data show the frequency of Purple Martin sightings in the county tails off from a peak in the spring, with no noticeable increase due to fall migrants passing through. On the other hand, we can uncover the

## Field Notes *cont'd*

timing of fall migration by looking at the frequency of sightings in San Francisco, where Martins don't breed and observations peak during spring and fall migration. Based on observations in San Francisco, migrants are expected to pass through Santa Clara county starting the second week of Aug, peak in the second week of Sept, and tail off in the first week of Oct. This year's pattern is consistent with migrants, with Martins over Los Capitancillos Ponds (JPa, AVe), the Guadalupe River (AVe), and bayside locations in Sunnyvale (MDo, JL, BM, SMa, WP, RSh) between 18 Aug and 11 Sep. The mixed group of swallows over the reed bed at Sunnyvale WPCP included a **Bank Swallow** on 17 Sep (MDo et al.). The only reports of **Phainopepla** were from San Antonio Valley, where singles were observed on 18 Aug and 16 Sep (both WGB).

### Warblers through Goldfinches

September brings the excitement of visits from eastern warblers, heralded this year by the arrival of a **Northern Waterthrush** at Stevens Creek near La Avenida on 5 Sep (MMR). A Northern Waterthrush was seen at this location several times through 21 Sep (m. ob.). Another Northern Waterthrush was at Ogier Ponds on 18 Sep (SCR). A **Canada Warbler**, only our 4th, spent 17 to 26 Sep near the SCVWD headquarters in Almaden Valley, though it was not found every day (AVe, m. ob.). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** stopped at Sunnyvale Baylands on 18 Sep (PKe et al.). A **Blackpoll** was near the Shoreline Golf Course on 13 Sep (DWn). Two **Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Vasona CP on 6 Aug (JPa) were likely dispersants from the local breeding population in the Santa Cruz range. Continuing with our western warblers, single migrant **MacGillivray's Warblers** were skulking in Monte Bello OSP at

the pond near gate 5 on 19 Aug (GHa) and at Ogier Ponds on 18 Sep (SCR). Two were at Ogier Ponds on 19 Sep (RSh). Single **Hermit Warblers** passing through on their way south were at the Don Edwards NWR EEC on 10 Sep (ChW, TW) and at Sunnyvale Baylands on 13 Sep (PKe). The earliest **Townsend's Warblers** to arrive were at Loma Prieta on 9 Aug (AR) and at a residence in the Santa Cruz Mountains outside of Gilroy on 11 Aug (AA, JA). Transient sparrows passing through the county included a **Clay-colored Sparrow** along Matadero Creek near the bay on 13 Sep (DWn). Another member of the Spizella genus, the **Chipping Sparrow**, is an uncommon resident of the Santa Cruz Range. One was near the Stevens Creek Reservoir dam on 2 Aug (WGB), and one returned to TJ Martin Park in San Jose on 29 Sep (JPa). This is the beginning of the tenth consecutive winter the sparrows have been found at TJ Martin Park. An unidentified Spizella visited the garden at Sunnyvale Baylands on 25 Sep (PKe). The same date a **Vesper Sparrow** was seen in a closed area of the Don Edwards NWR (MMR, MJM, RJ). Another Vesper Sparrow was at Ed Levin CP on 30 Sep (WGB). A first-year male Rose-breasted Grosbeak graced Lake Cunningham on 1 Sep (PDU). At this time of year, based on historical eBird data, the frequency of occurrence of **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** is ~1/20th that of Black-headed Grosbeak. September also brought **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** on passage, with singles at soccer fields in Morgan Hill on 10 Sep (SCR), the Sunnyvale WPCP on 11 Sep (MMR), along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley on 13 Sep (WP), and at Ulistac NA on 26 Sep (SJ). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were found in their stronghold, the San Antonio Valley, in respectable numbers. Counts on 18 Aug and 16 Sep were of 18 and 42 finches, respectively (both WGB), with 2 along Mines Rd on 17

Sep (TJ, MT). Smaller numbers were encountered at Loma Prieta on 5 Aug and 21 Sep, when counts of one and four were tallied (both AR).



*Canada Warbler by Richard Jeffers*

Observers: Amir Avnit (AA), Julie Avnit (JA), Laurie Bechtler (LB), Chris Benesh (CB), Terry Blows (TB), Michael Bolte (MBo), Will Brooks (WBr), Bill Bousman (WGB), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), Luca Gugelmann (LG), Janet Hanson (JHa), Garth Harwood (GHa), Alfred Hochstaedter (AIH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Steve Johnson (SJ), Tom Johnson (TJ), J Joseph (JJo), Bob Juhl (BJ), Michael Karpinko (MK), Pat Kenny (PKe), Louise Liou (LL), Jasen Liu (JL), Sean MacLiam (SMa), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Brooke Miller (BM), David Nickerson (DN), Howard Patterson (HP), Janna Pauser (JPa), Mark Paxton (MPx), William Pelletier (WP), Sergio Perez (SPz), Rob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Robert Shields (RSh), Linda Terrill (LTe), Scott Terrill (STe), Mary Tombley (MT), Ann Verdi (AVe), Dan Wenny (DWn), Chris Wills (ChW), Teri Wills (TW), Christine Wolfe (CWf)

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

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# SCVAS Classes and Excursions: Winter 2016

We are pleased to offer the following classes to our members and community. Information about our upcoming classes and field seminars is also available on our website at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org).

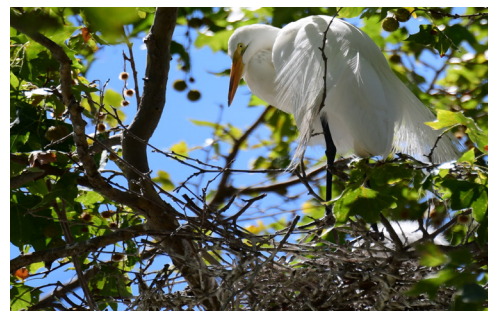
## Outdoor Photography for Beginners Series with Ralph Schardt

### *Outdoor Photography for Beginners Photo Class #1*

Cost: \$25 Non-members, \$15 Members, per class

Location: McClellan Ranch – Meet at SCVAS

Thursday, November 17th 8:30am-10:00am



Join Ralph, our Executive Director and published photographer, to learn more about how to use your camera for outdoor photography. This class will be focused on beginners and people who want to learn more about setting up for various types of outdoor photography – concentration on basic camera settings and preparing for outdoor photography projects. Charge your batteries, bring your camera, a hat, and a good pair of hiking shoes. Any outdoor activity in conjunction with this class will be easy to moderate. Photo Class #1 required to sign-up for Photo Class #2.

### *Outdoor Photography for Beginners Photo Class #2*

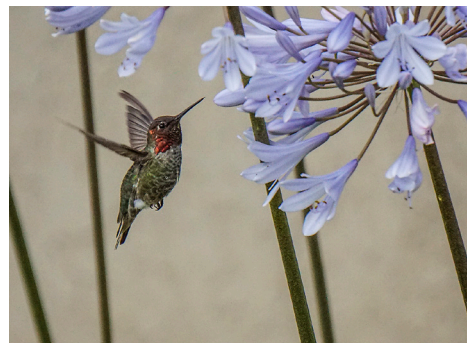
Cost: \$25 Non-members, \$15 Members, per class

Location: McClellan Ranch – Meet at SCVAS

Tuesday, December 6th 8:30am-10:00am

*This is the second class in a series of two.*

*\*Photo Class #1 is a pre-requisite.*



This class with Ralph will concentrate more on field work – both preparing for outdoor shooting, along with finding an interesting topic/subject to photograph. The focus for this class will be to practice checking your camera settings for a particular type of project, things to take with you on an extensive outdoor photography project, and practice in the field to find projects and setup to shoot them. Bring your camera with charged batteries, hiking shoes and hat, tripod or monopod if you have one. Also bring a wide-angle lens and a telephoto lens if you have them. If you are bringing a fixed-lens camera, you will receive instruction on how to use your camera in both wide-angle, telephoto and close-up settings.

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## Beginner's Bird and Plant Identification

Cost: Free class, parking fee is \$6

Location: Lake Cunningham

Sunday, December 18th 9:00am-12:00pm

*Co-sponsored by SCVAS, California Native Plant Society, and Open Space Authority*

Join us for a beginner bird and plant identification walk through Lake Cunningham Park - a major destination for waterfowl and migratory birds, and home to many resident birds. Vicki Silvas-Young will show you how to identify common local birds and the native plants they depend on. Trip distance is four miles round-trip on a level path. Bring a hat, water, bird and plant list, binoculars, and good walking shoes. Space is limited. Contact Arvind Kumar ([arvind.kumar@cnps.org](mailto:arvind.kumar@cnps.org)) to reserve your spot and receive details.



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# It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... Bird Counts!

*Join us for another year of adventure and excitement in this citizen science effort to study the birds of our county. Contact the compiler of the region you are interested in (see below). Participation is free and highly encouraged!*

## **SAN JOSE**

The San Jose Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Sunday, December 18th. 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!"
- 2) tally-man, able to make small marks on increasingly grubby bits of paper.

**ATTENTION:** This year we are still in need of a compiler for the San Jose Count. This is an incredible opportunity and one that is pivotal for the success of this event. If you are interested in this position, please contact Ralph Schardt at [rschardt@scvas.org](mailto:rschardt@scvas.org) or (408) 252-3748.

## **PALO ALTO**

This year the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count will be held on Monday, December 19th. This annual census covers a circle from the Bay to the Santa Cruz mountains, 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 7, in San Mateo County from Portola Valley up to beyond Skyline Blvd., is Malia DeFelice ([maliadances@yahoo.com](mailto:maliadances@yahoo.com)). We welcome 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](mailto: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 Tuesday, December 27th. This count covers city parks, county parks, creeks and reservoirs in mid-south Santa Clara County and the Almaden area. If you are interested in participating, please contact Beth Hamel by email at [Beth.Hamel@gmail.com](mailto:Beth.Hamel@gmail.com).

## **MOUNT HAMILTON**

Mark your calendars for Monday, January 2nd. 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 at (408) 821-2732 (cell) – as soon as possible to participate.

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## **A Year in Reflection**

*by Ralph Schardt, Executive Director*

I was sitting in my office the other day when I realized it was my one year anniversary with SCVAS and was immediately transported back to my first days starting as Executive Director. I first joined this great little chapter as a member 25 years ago and shortly thereafter proceeded to lead bird watching trips for another small non-profit. Around 1999, the SCVAS board recruited me to become a board member where I stayed for a little over two years and then had to step down. But I always stayed connected even after I ran a small private foundation, which gave significantly and continuously to SCVAS programs. Through coincidental timing, I had the opportunity to apply for the Executive Director position last August and was hired in October. There are so many stories I could share but, due to lack of space, you will have to come by in person and ask me to share highlights. One of the biggest lessons I have learned over this past year is certainly that there is strength in numbers. I find this both in our efforts to increase our membership, and in collaboration with other similar organizations. I have also realized that, without good open communication, it is difficult to get staff and volunteers engaged. And last, but certainly not least, I have learned that our members, donors, and volunteers are the lifeblood. Without all of your support, we would not exist. Thank you for such an amazing year and I look forward to many more as we celebrate our passion of watching and caring for our amazing avian species.

# Friends of SCVAS

*Gifts received June 2nd, 2016 through September 30th, 2016*

**Gift**

**(Up to \$99)**

Loren Mendel  
 John Wu  
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 Geary and Joan Ridings  
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 Drew and Suzanne Ehresman  
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**Avocet Sponsor  
 (\$100 - \$249)**

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 Stephanie Karp  
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**Burrowing Owl  
 (\$250 - \$499)**

Risa Anav  
 Shirley Wodtke

Pamela Price  
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**Peregrine Falcon  
 (\$500 - \$999)**

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 Benevity Community Impact  
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 Ruth Troetschler  
 Peter and Diane Hart  
 Laurie Bechtler  
 David Simon

**WE'RE HAVING A SWAP MEET**

**NOVEMBER 19 2016** | **STARTS 9AM TO 4PM**  
**MCCLELLAN RANCH**

**"AN OLDIE BUT STILL A GOODIE..."**

**FOOD + MUSIC**      **GREAT DEALS GOOD COMPANY**

PROFITS WILL HELP FUND OUR EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS. DONATIONS OF NEW AND USED SELLABLE ITEMS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED. PLEASE DROP OFF BY NOV. 18.

WEDNESDAY • 7 DECEMBER 2016 • SALE 10AM-5PM • PARTY 5-8PM

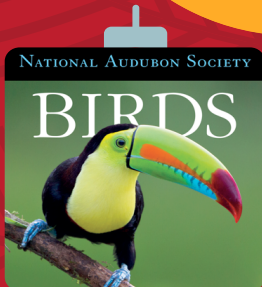
*Oh! What Fun!*

• **HOLIDAY** •

# *Extravaganza*

You are cordially invited to join us for our annual holiday party at McClellan Ranch, from 5 to 8 pm. The Nature Shop will be open and we will serve light refreshments. Let's party!

**SALE! 10AM-5PM**  
**ALL ITEMS 25% OFF!**  
**FREE GIFT WITH EVERY**  
**PURCHASE! BRING IN SCVAS**  
**MEMBERSHIP CARD TO**  
**RECEIVE AN EXTRA 10%**  
**OFF!**



Desk Calendar  
\$16.99



Caspari Gift Bag, \$5.50

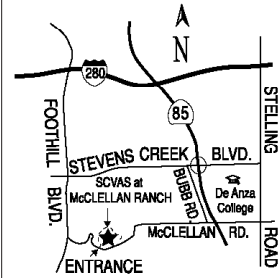
Audubon Bird Call, \$8.00



Jewelry Holder  
\$10.00

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



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## 2016 New Members of SCVAS

*Those who joined August 2nd - September 30th.  
 We look forward to a great year with your support!*

Barbara Adey	John Hodge
Xiaoqin Ma	Jeanine Lee & Family
Mary Pfister	Ryan Funk
Stephanie Karp	Richard Seely
Pyarelal	Nalayini Gunanayagam
Mary Lu	Drew and Suzanne Ehresman
Maria Robles Gonzalez	Patrick Wong
John and Lee Bonds	Marley Amin
Margaret Bingham	Elizabeth Malmborg
Megumi Balun	Kitty O'Neil
Marita O'Reilly	Aditya Chaoji

And thank you to those who renewed their membership!

## Go Paperless!



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](mailto:scvas@scvas.org) to start your paper-free membership today!



### STAFF

#### Executive Director

Ralph Schardt, [rschardt@scvas.org](mailto:rschardt@scvas.org),  
 (408) 252-3748

#### Education Specialist

Kymberly Sugano, [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org),  
 (408) 252-3740

#### Environmental Advocate

Shani Kleinhaus, [shani@scvas.org](mailto:shani@scvas.org),  
 (650) 868-2114

#### Office Manager

Tracy Neher, [scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org),  
 (408) 252-3747

#### Outreach Coordinator

Kelly Alfrey, [outreach@scvas.org](mailto:outreach@scvas.org),  
 (775) 335-7801

#### Burrowing Owl Conservation

Sandra Menzel, [sandmenzel@gmail.com](mailto:sandmenzel@gmail.com),  
 (831) 431-3301

#### Office Fax

(408) 252-2850

#### Office E-mail

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

#### Website

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

Details available on the SCVAS website.

#### NATURE SHOP HOURS

**Monday - Friday**

**10 AM - 5 PM**

**Saturday**

**10 AM - 2 PM**

Please call (408) 252-3747 for special requests.

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

#### OFFICERS

##### President

Bob Hirt

##### Treasurer

Peter LaTourrette

##### Vice President

Diane Hart

##### Secretary

Joan Leighton

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'14-'17

Don McDougall

'16-'18

Gabrielle Feldmen

'15-'17