



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

May-June 2017

Bird-Friendly Building Design in Santa Clara Valley - We Are Making Progress!

by Sigal Wilnai and Shani Kleinhaus



Clara flying over the city by Nick Dunlop

In the past decade, glass has become popular as building material in both home and commercial office space. To birds, this fashion trend is deadly. It is estimated that between 300 million and one billion birds die as a result of glass collisions annually in North America. Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has been a leader in advocating for the birds, and partners with the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations in campaigning for bird-friendly policy in cities and with large companies.

Most bird deaths as a result of glass collisions go unreported due to the prevalence of scavengers such as crows, cats, raccoons or skunks that remove the casualties, but in 2013 a Peregrine Falcon carcass was found near San Jose City Hall. Orion, a Peregrine Falcon fledgling born on the roof of City Hall, had been carrying a pigeon to his nest when he collided with a window. Orion's parents, Clara and Fernando El Cohete, are famous in San Jose - the pair has a dedicated page on the city's website, a Facebook page, and a webcam that broadcasts a live video stream from the nest. Falcon fans around the world joined San Jose residents in following Clara and Fernando's story, and when Orion (who was named by local school children) died, many were distraught.

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Monthly Speaker Series

Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1 - Middlefield & Montrose Roads, Palo Alto
Doors open 7:30 PM; program 8:00 PM

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

"What's in a Bird Name?" with Bert Bruggeman

Where do the common names of birds come from? In this presentation, we will dive into the stories that explain a variety of bird names. These stories will reveal interesting and unique perspectives on bird nomenclature. At the end of the evening, you will be ready to go birding with a new appreciation of how intertwined our relationship with birds has become. Join us for this intriguing lecture by Bert Bruggeman, who has a background in microelectronics and is a world traveler with a passion for wildlife, especially birds.



What do a Stellar's Jay and Julius Caesar have in common? Come find out!

May-June Field Trips

(Full details are also available online at www.scvas.org)

Wednesday May 3, 12:00 PM City of Sunnyvale Landfill
One hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer. No RSVP needed. Contact landfill coordinator, Silviana Ruiz with questions at (408) 730-7545. **Directions:** Donald M. Somers Water Pollution Control Plant, junction of Borregas and Caribbean. Meet at trailhead at north end. **Difficulty:** Birding geared toward beginners. **Notes:** Bring binoculars; loaners available. **RC**

Saturday May 6, 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. Meet at 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.

Sunday May 7, 8:00 AM Picchetti Ranch
Half day. **Leader:** Dave Zittin, (408) 515-7104 **Directions:** From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Blvd south 3.3 miles (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd). Turn right on Monte Bello Rd. go about a mile, turn left past winery entrance into preserve parking lot. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous walk past an old orchard, seasonal pond, and oak woodlands.

Wednesday May 10, 8:30 AM Almaden Lake and Alamitos 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 0.8 miles then left onto Coleman Rd. Turn right onto Winfield Rd. and

park near end of street or pay \$6 fee in parking lot. Meet near blue bathrooms. **Highlights:** Migrants and breeding birds. **Difficulty:** Easy walking. **RC**

Saturday May 13, 8:00 AM Arastradero OSP
Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page, (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west; turn right on Arastradero Rd. and meet in the parking lot about a half-mile on the right. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous hiking. **RC**

Wednesday May 24, 8:00 AM Gilroy Water Treatment Facility
Half day. **Leader:** Rick Herder, (408) 779-3985. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 make a right on 10th St. Meet at the McDonald's parking lot at 10th St and Automall Pwky. We'll caravan/carpool to the field trip site together. **Notes:** We will check in at the plant office on Southside Ave before we start birding the site.

Saturday May 27, 8:30 AM Ed Levin County Park (North)
Half day. **Leader:** Dave Zittin, (408) 515-7104. **Directions:** Take Hwy 237 east, crossing I-880 and I-680 (237 becomes Calaveras Rd.), turn left on Downing Rd. to the park entrance. Meet in parking lot on the far, northeast side of Sandy Wool Lake (near the dog park). **Highlights:** Migrants and local breeding birds in Milpitas' prime birding hot spot. **Difficulty:** Trail is steep in places. Entrance fee required. **LO, RC**

Sunday May 28, 9:00 AM Palo Alto Baylands
Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto turn right

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

onto Embarcadero Rd. At the stop sign (not light), go left and follow the road past the duck pond to the parking lot across from the building under construction (Lucy Evans Center). Meet at the poles/gate to San Francisquito Creek Trail (towards Lucy Evans Center). **Difficulty:** For beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. **Notes:** Bring your spotting scope and a friend. **RC**

Saturday June 3, 9:00 AM McClellan Ranch
Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. **Directions:** From 280 N take Foothill Expy then go left onto McClellan Rd. Follow McClellan and turn left into McClellan Ranch. Meet in the parking lot. **Notes:** If parking lot is full, use overflow lot next door. From McClellan Ranch, make a right back on McClellan Rd. and an immediate right to the dirt lot.

Sunday June 4, 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 Waddell Creek Bridge (at MP 36.30; which is 2 miles south of Año Nuevo State Park and 7 miles north of Davenport). **Highlights:** Swainson's Thrush, Pacific Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and Woodpeckers. **Difficulty:** Moderately long but fairly level hike along Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail. **Notes:** Variable weather, dress in layers.

Wednesday June 7, 8:30 AM City of Sunnyvale Landfill
One hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer. See write-up from May 3rd.

Sunday June 11, 8:00 AM Ulistac Natural Area
Half day. **Leader:** Dave Zittin, (408) 515-7104. **Directions:** From Hwy 237 take Great America Pkwy south for about 0.8 miles, turn left on Tasman Dr. for about one mile, right on Lick Mill Blvd. and meet at the south park entrance on the left. **Highlights:** We'll look for migrants and local breeding birds in diverse habitats.

Wednesday June 14, 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 Exp. south for 4.3 miles. Turn right onto Almaden Rd. and drive 3 miles through New Almaden Township. Park in Almaden-Quicksilver Hacienda parking lot on right, which opens at 8AM. We'll bird nesting and breeding birds in New Almaden Township along Almaden and Bertram Rds. **Difficulty:** Easy walking. **LO**

Sunday June 18, 9:00AM Palo Alto Baylands
Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. See write-up for May 28th. **RC**

Sunday June 24, 8:00AM Sanborn County Park
Half day. **Leader:** Dave Zittin, (408) 515-7104. **Directions:** Either take Stevens Creek Canyon Rd, Hwy 85 S or Pierce Rd to get on Hwy 9. From Hwy 9 take Sanborn Rd, follow Sanborn Rd and meet in the large parking lot. On Google Maps, this lot is labeled Youth Science Institute. **Notes:** Entrance fee required. **LO**

SCVAS Events Calendar

Wed. 5/3; 7:30-9:00PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers

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

Topic 5/3: "Hummingbirds of Costa Rica and Ecuador" with Richard and Roberta Rhudy
See scvas.org/babp for more details.

Every Wed. May-June; 11:30AM-1:30PM
Egret Office Hours

Eastern end of Shorebird Way, Mountain View
Join us for our weekly exploration of the Egret Rookery! **Volunteers needed!**
Email Mackenzie at mackenzieSCVAS@gmail.com to volunteer.

Sat. 5/6; 10:00AM-3:00PM

Rummage Sale!

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino
See announcement below.

Tues. 5/9 & 6/13; 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 5/9: Goshawk

Topic 6/13: Annual Picnic (venue TBD)

Thurs. 5/11 & 6/15; 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 calendar at scvas.org for more details.*

Fri. 5/12 & 6/9; 12:00-1:00PM

Birding Google Campus

We have partnered with Google to offer guided bird walks on the Mountain View campus. Googlers, Audubon members, and the general public are invited. Park anywhere on campus. Please carpool if possible. Contact Mackenzie Mossing with questions at (408) 394-0330 or mackenzieSCVAS@gmail.com.

5/12: Meet at Permanente Creek Trail head on Charleston Road.

6/9: Meet at 1015 Joaquin Road on the north side.

See calendar at scvas.org for more details.

Tues. 6/6; 6:00PM

Birdathon Awards Dinner

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino
See page 9 for details.

Wed. 6/21; 5:30PM

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner & General Meeting/Board Elections

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino
Join your fellow SCVAS members for the annual potluck dinner and volunteer recognition awards. We'll also vote for board members. *See announcement below.*

Young Audubon Activities:

Sat. 5/6; 7:30-10:00AM

Conservation in Action: Bird Banding with SFBBO

Join us at the peak of the spring migration for a special opportunity to witness live bird banding demonstrations by experts from the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO).
Cost: \$25/family or \$8/child, \$10/adult
*Children must be accompanied by an adult

Sat. 5/20; 10:00AM-3:00PM

Wingding Family Fest!

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve
Join SCVAS and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District for a fun, family-friendly event to celebrate all things winged!
See banner on page 4 and details online.

Note: Information and links to RSVP are available on our website (click "Young Audubon" under the "Kids' Corner" tab).

A note to our members and patrons:

The Nature Shop and Office at McClellan Ranch are now open again after being closed for a week of maintenance. Thank you for your patience during this time.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Rummage Sale!!!

Stop by the SCVAS office on **Saturday, May 6** from **10:00AM - 3:00PM** to purchase some fun and affordable finds.

To donate gently used items, please stop by the office during our operating hours.

Listed below are some items we'll have for sale:

- Professional Photography Equipment
- Household Items & Appliances
- Journals & Notebooks
- Electronics Accessories
- Framed Photographs
- Body Care Products
- Children's Toys
- Home Decorations
- Bird Feeders
- Books
- Artwork
- Clothing
- Binoculars
- & more!!!!



The Nature Shop will also have select items on **SUPER SALE!!!**
Stop by to see what all the fun is about!

General Meeting @ McClellan Ranch

Wednesday, June 21 @ 5:30PM for birding, 6:30PM for potluck and Board Elections

****This year, we're combining our annual Volunteer Appreciation Potluck and Board Elections at the General Meeting!**

SCVAS Board Elections

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, 2017. SCVAS members in good standing may participate in the voice vote at the meeting. The majority of available votes will determine the winner.

Position & Term

President 2017 - 18
Vice President 2017 - 18
Treasurer 2017 - 18
Secretary 2017 - 18

Candidate

Diane Hart
Don McDougall
Pete LaTourrette
Joan Leighton

Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Join your fellow SCVAS members for the annual potluck and volunteer recognition awards. Bring a main dish, casserole, salad, or hors d'oeuvres to share - SCVAS will provide beverages and desserts.

NOTE: Bringing your own plates and cups to the dinner will help us reduce the use of wasteful plastic and paperware.

Bird-Friendly Building Design cont'd from page 1

Collisions like these are easily avoidable as solutions are numerous, aesthetic, flexible, and often inexpensive. Bird-friendly building design guidelines offer options such as reducing reflective glass areas, providing visual cues to alert birds to the risk, avoiding hazardous see-through flight paths, turning off non-emergency lighting at night, designing landscaping to avoid funneling open space toward buildings, and locating water features away from structures. Since solutions are simple with advanced planning, we have been advocating for the adoption of bird-friendly building design policy by cities. In addition, we created a new "Make Your Home Safe For Birds" brochure to provide homeowners with solutions to help them reduce the risk of window strikes (http://www.scvas.org/pdf/Conservation/Make_Your_Home_Safe_For_Birds.pdf). Protecting birds from window strikes can add value to homes by increasing energy savings, reducing disruptive glare, and decreasing light pollution.



San Jose falcon pair by Nick Dunlop

Policy that we successfully advocated for in previous years is now bearing fruit. In Mountain View, new North Bayshore campuses are incorporating visual cues to help birds see and avoid glass facades. The design of Intuit's new building has won accolades and drawn media attention with headlines such as "Intuit's Sleek New Building 20 Helps Save Area Birds' Lives" (Curbed Magazine). Google and Microsoft are also planning with birds in mind, and their new campus buildings will minimize light pollution and include visual cues on all glass surfaces. Buildings outside of North Bayshore are also starting to implement voluntary bird-safe measures with the hope of attracting world-class companies to their projects. In Palo Alto, new green-building requirements include some bird-friendly design measures near creeks and open space. Facebook's new building in Menlo Park features a 9-acre living-roof habitat and incorporates visual cues on the

building's glass facades, and a second building, currently under construction, provides similar measures. Santa Clara County supervisors recently directed their staff and architects to include bird-safety in the master plan for the new Civic Center in San Jose. We thank Supervisors Yeager, Simitian and Chavez for responding to our advocacy and highlighting the importance of the issue.

In 2015, the City of San Jose developed Bird-Safe Design Guidelines and Checklist, recommending measures for new commercial construction, and last year the city council adopted a Riparian Policy and Bird-Safe Design Ordinance. While the full set of measures is in effect only north of Highway 237, the ordinance recommends some protective measures (for example, avoiding highly reflective facades) along all creeks in the city. In March 2017, the council voted to prioritize a roadmap to a study for expanding the bird-friendly design requirement to riparian corri-

dors and open spaces citywide. Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society continues our campaign for bird-friendly buildings in our region. We hope San Jose will expand mandatory bird-safety measures, and that additional cities and companies will also embrace the birds that reside in or migrate through our landscape.

In this long-term campaign, hundreds of San Jose residents responded to our alerts, came to speak to the San Jose City Council, or sent emails and letters. Your elected officials listened, and we would like to recognize the council members who have been supportive of this effort: Mayor Liccardo and Council Members Peralez, Jimenez, Rocha, Khamis, and Nguyen as well as former Vice Mayor Herrera and former Assemblymember Kalra. We also thank our membership – you – for engaging in this effort and hope you continue to respond to our alerts.



SCVAS Adult Education

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's calendar at www.scvas.org.



Green-winged Teal by Ralph Schardt

Outdoor Photography Refresher with Ralph Schardt

Date: Thursday, May 11

Time: 8:30-10:00AM

Location: McClellan Ranch - Meet at SCVAS

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

Please join our Executive Director, Ralph Schardt, and explore outdoor photography opportunities at McClellan Ranch. Ralph will help you understand what photography equipment is needed for different outdoor conditions and how to take advantage of natural light. You'll learn to take better nature and landscape photos with a few easy examples. Rain cancels, with refund or credit for future classes. Wear layers and clothing appropriate for an easy hike on level, but unpaved trails. Charge your camera overnight before attending.



Red-tailed Hawk by Kym Sugano

Beginner's Bird and Plant Identification Walk Series

Session #2: First Day of Summer – Sunday, June 18, 9:00AM-12:00PM

This walk is organized jointly by California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and Open Space Authority, and is open to all.

Do you love being outdoors? Do you want to deepen your appreciation of nature by learning the names of birds and plants around you? At the onset of summer, join us for a beginner's 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 for food, shelter, and nesting places. Trip distance is four miles round-trip on a level path. Bring a hat, water, bird and plant list, binoculars, and walking shoes. Parking fee is \$6.

Space is limited. RSVP to Arvind Kumar arvind.kumar@cnps.org to reserve your spot and to receive directions and details.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS! WE NEED YOU!

Burrowing Owl Habitat Management – Help our local Burrowing Owl populations by removing invasive weeds on and around their burrows. This project takes place one day each month, from 9:00AM-1:00PM. Gloves and hand tools provided.

Wingding Family Fest – Volunteers are needed to help set-up, take-down, and run SCVAS tables during this fun family event. This is a great chance for us to recruit new members and promote our mission. 2-hour shifts available. See page 3 for event details.

Wetlands Discovery Program Docents (Volunteers can participate in one or both components. Training provided for both.)

- In-Class Programs: Assist elementary students in a series of stations focused on wetland habitat, birds, and changes in the bay. Docents are also encouraged to volunteer for other school activities as they are scheduled.
- Field Trips: Volunteers lead groups of students around Palo Alto Baylands or Alviso Marina County Park to bird and explore nature and discuss topics students learned in school.

Google Bird Walks - As part of a sponsorship with Google, SCVAS is hosting monthly birding walks of Google's campus in Mountain View - all are welcome to join, including Google employees and Audubon members. We are in need of decent birders to help guide the group, identify birds, and answer questions.

July 4th Burrowing Owl Guards - Volunteers are needed to assist the City of Mountain View with crowd management during the celebration and fireworks display at Shoreline Park, from around 6:00PM-10:30PM. Because of access and permitting requirements, **RSVPs are required**. Contact mackenziescvas@gmail.com to sign up!

Egret Docents - We need docents to help provide information to Google employees at the egret rookery on Shorebird Way in Mountain View. These events take place weekly and a short training will be provided.

For more information or to volunteer for any of these opportunities, contact Kelly at outreach@scvas.org.

Field Notes

(February-March 2017)

by Pete Dunten

Geese through Sapsuckers

Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** continued to be seen at Byxbee Park and Palo Alto Golf Course through the end of March (m. ob.). The largest gaggle of **Cackling Geese** was a group of 22 at the Los Capitancillos and nearby ponds on 3 Feb (DG) and 11 Feb (DPv). A single **Snow Goose** frequented bayside locations in Palo Alto and Mountain View through the end of March (m. ob.). No **Ross's Geese** were found. One to two **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** were reported from Charleston Slough through 26 Mar (m. ob.), and another was at Lake Lagunitas on 22 Feb (RFu), a first for that location. A **Pelagic Cormorant** conveniently flew by an observer with a camera at Alviso Salt Pond A16 on 19 Feb (GL). This is within a few days of the latest winter date a Pelagic Cormorant has



Red-necked Phalarope by Tom Grey

stayed in the South Bay. An **American Bittern** finally appeared in the channel at the end of Terminal Way on 25 Feb (GL). A solo **Cattle Egret** was seen briefly alongside Mallard Slough on 12 Mar (DN). The latest dates **Ferruginous Hawks** were found in the county were 8 Mar when one was at Sierra Road Summit (BP, PL) and 11 Mar when one was at Coyote Ridge OSP (RH). The leucistic **Bald Eagle** present in the area since the first week of Jan was spotted again on 27 Feb at Lake Vasona CP (KB). A **Ruddy Turnstone** flirted with the county line at San Francisquito Creek Delta on 28 Mar (JL) and again on 29 Mar (DN). The first **Red-necked Phalarope** on

passage, and one of the first in the state (based on eBird submissions), was on Lake Lagunitas on 23 Mar (BN). This is a first record for Lake Lagunitas; Red-necked Phalaropes have turned up on many bodies of water, including small ponds, away from San Francisco Bay. Though it was an extraordinary winter for rare gulls on the coast, no particularly rare gulls were noted in the South Bay. **Glaucous Gulls** put in a good showing in March, with one to four found on Alviso Salt Ponds A12 and A16 between 7 and 23 Mar (WP, WBr, WGB, NoA, GL, AR, JCh). Twelve **Caspian Terns** returned to nesting islets at Alviso Salt Pond A16 on 29 Mar (WGB), and three were noted at Palo Alto Baylands on the same date (DN). Those inclined to count terns at A16 need to be careful not to count decoys placed on the islets. After being absent all winter, the first **Black Skimmer** to return was at Charleston Slough on 4 Mar (RSh). Only one bird has been noted at Charleston Slough and Shoreline Lake on dates in March this year (m. ob.). The **Long-eared Owl** first heard during the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC was heard again on 13 Feb (WGB). Two **Short-eared Owls** were active midday at Palo Alto Baylands on 10 Feb (GC). The earliest **Rufous Hummingbirds** were singles visiting feeders outside of Gilroy on 10 Feb (JA, AA) and on Stanford campus on 14 Feb (RFu). The high count during spring migration has been recorded at the Loma Prieta Saddle in past years, in late March and early April. This year, 23 were tallied a bit earlier on 9 Mar, along with 17 Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds (AR). The **Red-naped Sapsucker** wintering at Almaden Lake Park was last seen on 14 Mar (MRe). The wintering **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Ed Levin CP stayed through at least 23 Mar (BSw). A hybrid **Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsucker** returned for its third winter to a Mountain View neighborhood and was present through 9 Mar (PDU). An interesting aspect of the biology of this hybrid combination is that hybrids are thought to have lower fitness (i.e., reduced survival) away from the breeding grounds, which limits the hybrid population size. Some hybrids make it through winter and breed, leading to backcrosses, which can more closely resemble the pure parental species.

Flycatchers through Orioles

An early or wintering **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was at Stanford on 28 Feb (TGr), and the second report during the period was of one found on 13 Mar at McClellan Ranch (BLL, VLL). The first **Western Kingbird** of the spring was at Santa Teresa CP on 17 Mar (SPv). **Warbling Vireos** arrived on 11 Mar, with two on territories along the Guadalupe Creek Trail in Almaden Valley (JPa), one at Rancho Canada del Oro OSP (AMc), and one on passage near the Don Edwards EEC (BSt). An early **Purple Martin** was with swallows near the western end of



Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsucker
by Pete Dunten

Almaden Reservoir on 19 Mar (Ave). **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** returned on 3 Feb, when one was along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 (WGB) and two were at Ed Levin CP (RJ). A group of **Pygmy Nuthatches** first recorded in a Los Altos neighborhood last July remained there into late March, with one noted on the 24th (JT). They haven't been documented as nesting in that lowland part of the county, so it will be interesting to see if the nuthatches stay and raise young. The **House Wren** that spent the winter at Ulistac NA was singing on 21 Feb (ChJ), one of the unmistakable sounds of spring. Two returned to their territories at a residence in the Santa Cruz Mountains outside of Gilroy on 24 Feb (AA, JA). One of the two **Palm Warblers** that has wintered at the Don Edwards EEC was last seen on 5 Feb (DW) and 11 Feb (JVs). A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** on the Stanford campus on 21 Mar was the

Field Notes *cont'd*

first migrant spotted (WL). **Wilson's Warblers** found in late winter included two at Santa Clara University on 14 Feb (JFw et al.) and one on Stanford Campus on 24 Feb (SCR). The first migrant was at Sunnyvale Baylands on 14 Mar (BLL, VLL). As many as four **Chipping Sparrows** remained at TJ Martin Park in San Jose through 16 Mar (m. ob.). Single birds turned up at three other locations in March, one at Santa Teresa CP on 17 Mar (SPv), one at the junction of San Antonio Valley and Del Puerto Canyon Roads on 18 – 29 Mar (WBr, JVs, BSw, BD), and one at Foothill College on 25 Mar (PDu). **Grasshopper Sparrows**, whose song may be a less familiar sign of spring than that of the House Wren, were back on their territories at Ed Levin CP on 12 Mar (BSt). The **Summer Tanager** discovered on the Stanford

Campus during an Audubon CBC was still present on 14 Feb and 21 Feb (both RFu). Single **Western Tanagers** were reported from six locations (m. ob.), with no noticeable uptick in numbers as of the end of March. **Black-headed Grosbeaks** added to the spring chorus, returning on 10 Mar to Uvas Creek near Watsonville Road (JMy) and on 19 Mar to Santa Teresa CP (BM). Our colorful orioles also returned in March, with the first **Hooded Oriole** in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose on 10 Mar (BM) and the first **Bullock's Oriole** outside of Gilroy on 3 Mar (AA, JA).

Observers: Noah Arthur (NoA), Amir Avnit (AA), Julie Avnit (JA), Will Brooks (WBr), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KB), Jim Chiropolos (JCh), George Chrisman (GC), Bob Dunn (BD), Pete Dunten (PDu), John Farnsworth (JFw), Rob Furrow (RFu), Daniel George (DG), Tom Grey

(TGr), Rick Herder (RH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Virginia Langdon-Lassagne (VLL), Garrett Lau (GL), William Lawton (WL), Jasen Liu (JL), Patricia Lynch (PL), Amy McDonald (AMc), Brooke Miller (BM), Jean Myers (JMy), Becca Nelson (BN), David Nickerson (DN), Janna Pauser (JPa), Dimitry Pavlov (DPv), Sergey Pavlov (SPv), William Pelletier (WP), Mike Resch (MRE), Alex Rinkert (AR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Robert Shields (RSh), Brian Steger (BSt), Byron Swift (BSw), Jack Tomlin (JT), Ann Verdi (AVe), Jason Vassallo (JVs), Dave Weber (DW)

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

SCVAS Excursions: Summer 2017

We are pleased to offer the following excursions to our members and friends. For more information, please call the SCVAS main office at (408) 252-3747. Additional details can also be found on our website at www.scvas.org.

Monterey Bay Whale and Bird Watching with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

Join us for an incredible day of whale watching and birding aboard the *Star of Monterey*. We'll be looking for Blue Whales, Humpback Whales, Sea Otters, and dolphins, along with some amazing seabirds - shearwaters, jaegers, skuas, albatross, and alcids. Grab your binoculars and get ready for an adventure!

To register, contact Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris at (408) 741-5330 or info@cheesemans.com.

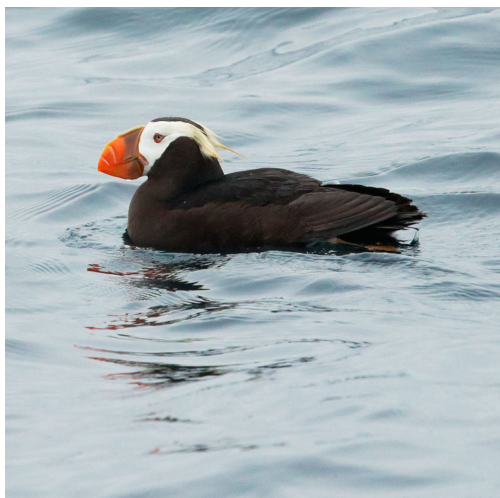
Date: Sunday, 7/16; 7:30AM-4:00PM.

Location: Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey

Fee: \$150/person



Humpback Whale by Ralph Schardt



Tufted Puffin by Tom Grey

Birds of the Farallon Islands with Alvaro's Adventures

A summer trip to the Farallon Islands 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. We're hoping to see Tufted Puffins, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemot, Cassin's Auklet, Black-footed Albatross, and more! 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.

To register, see <http://alvaroadventures.com/boat-trips/pelagics/> and find the SCVAS trip.

Date: Saturday, 8/12; 7:00AM to approx. 5:00PM.

Location: Half Moon Bay (Princeton Harbor)

Fee: \$135/person

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

by Mackenzie Mossing, Environmental Advocacy Associate

Young Ranch proposed development puts open space, wildlife, and birds at risk. After a 2014 defeat, YCS Investments is at it again with yet another proposal to develop Young Ranch – a 79-lot subdivision on the southeast hillsides just outside San Jose’s Greenline. A natural extension of Coyote Ridge, Young Ranch contains ecologically sensitive habitat where Tule Elk roam, Golden Eagles fly over the grasslands, and wildlife use natural springs to quench their thirst. In spring, wildflowers create spectacular displays, and the endangered Bay Checkerspot Butterfly hovers among the flowers. We are concerned with the loss of this open space and habitat, and fear the proposed residential development will introduce cats and rodenticides onto the property, consequently impacting birds and other wildlife. SCVAS has joined other environmental organizations in submitting comments to the County highlighting our concerns and the inadequacy of the environmental impact report produced for the project.



Young Ranch by Shani Kleinhaus

Another proposed development in the County, **Cordoba Center**, abuts Llagas Creek in San Martin and also has the potential to impact birds and wildlife. We have submitted comment letters to the County addressing our concerns with this project as well.

Museum Place project threatens the birds of Plaza de Cesar Chavez. A proposal to add a 24-story mixed-use high rise to the Tech Museum in San Jose will cast a shadow on Plaza de Cesar Chavez, dramatically changing the environment of the park. Several palm trees in the park serve as nesting sites for Acorn Woodpeckers, and are slated for removal should they be affected by the shade. In a letter to the City of San Jose, we outlined our concern that the shading of the park and removal of these palm trees may cause the eviction of the Acorn Woodpecker colony. The development’s giant cliff of glass may also pose a hazard to birds that are susceptible to colliding with glass, including Cooper’s Hawks and Cedar Waxwings. We will continue to advocate and offer suggestions to protect birds in the park.

Google moves forward with a new campus development (Charleston East). In March, Mountain View City Council voted to approve Google’s new campus on Charleston Road. We were supportive of the proposal to replace some of the non-native trees, including redwoods, with tree spe-

cies that regenerate our valley’s historical landscape. We hope that in just a few years, willows, cottonwood, sycamore, oaks and other native trees will provide an enriched habitat for birds and for people in North Bayshore. The Charleston East project embraces a complex set of ecological planning and sustainability concepts. From a bird’s point of view, the project proposes bird-friendly glass, minimized light pollution, and the replacement of linear street tree model with a complex palette of native plants and trees. Through our partnership with Google, we are able to offer guided birding tours of the various native habitats that have been integrated into the fabric of their current campus. We envision the Charleston East project will prove to be as successful as the current campus in providing sustenance for local and migrating birds.

A sand and gravel quarry and an endangered species mitigation bank are proposed for sections of the 6200-acre Sargent Ranch at the southwestern border of Santa Clara County. This is the latest in decades of efforts to use this land. Over time, dozens of oil wells have been constructed here, but efforts to develop golf courses, a casino, luxury homes and residential communities have all ended up in litigation and bankruptcy. SCVAS and other environmental organizations opposed the development of Sargent Ranch in the early 2000s, and we remain concerned today.

The Gilroy Dispatch describes Sargent Ranch as “a magnet for real estate developers, a Holy Grail to nature conservationists, and ‘most sacred grounds’ to a local Native American tribe.” Indeed, every inch of this land is holy to the Amah Matsun Tribal Band. Wildlife are free to roam and raptors to soar. The rolling hills of Sargent Ranch hide natural seeps of oil that creep down the slopes into the sycamore-shaded (aptly named) Tar Creek.



Tar Creek at Sargent Ranch by Shani Kleinhaus

Though this area is a unique natural resource for residents and wildlife, sand is an important commodity and we expect to see support for local mining of sand and gravel. We will be watching as this plan moves forward and will consider the impacts of this project on birds and nature.

Spring Birdathon Updates

by Kelsey Frey, Birdathon Coordinator

Birdathon began on March 25 and has already seen great success! As of the publication date for this issue, we have 8 Guided Public Teams, 11 Private Teams, and a total of 79 participants. **We have raised over \$10,000 so far!**

Birdathon Highlights:

The **Mean Green Birding Machines**, led by Rob Furrow, kicked off the first day of Birdathon on Saturday, March 25 for a whirlwind day of biking and birding! They saw a total of 99 species during their 4-hour Birdathon along the Mountain View and Palo Alto Bayshore. The biggest highlight was a Prairie Merlin, typically seen in the Great Plains, spotted on a tower by the Stevens Creek Trail. Other exciting sightings included a Eurasian Green-winged Teal, a Mew Gull, Redheads, and a Eurasian Wigeon.

The **Peninsula Plovers**, also led by Rob Furrow, went out on Saturday, April 1 for a whole day of birding fun in various mountain and bayside habitats in San Mateo County. In 13 hours they saw 162 species (and heard 4 others, such as the Great Horned Owl)! They began before dawn for some owling, and ended the day just before dark. Highlights included Black Scoters, a variety of shorebirds



The Peninsula Plovers scouting for birds (and just look at all that gear!).

(including 1 Ruddy Turnstone, 2 Red Knots, and 3 Red-necked Phalaropes!), and a singing Swamp Sparrow.

The **Cupertino Creek Cruisers**, led by Deborah Jamison, embarked on their birding adventure on Sunday, April 2 and saw a total of 43 species along the Stevens Creek Trail in Cupertino. Highlights included 2 pairs of Hooded Orioles, a Golden Eagle, and an amazing display by 2 female (Red-shafted) Northern Flickers! The birds were facing off in a mock “fencing duel” – behavior that is usually prevalent during early phases of the breeding cycle.



The Cupertino Creek Cruisers are aflutter over their flicker sighting.

Thank you to all who have participated! Although the Birdathon birding window has now closed, we will be collecting donations from sponsors until May 15 at 5:00PM.

Don't forget! The **Birdathon Awards Dinner will be held at McClellan Ranch on June 6 at 6:00PM. Food and refreshments will be provided. Dinner will include prize announcements along with games, surprises, and fun for all!

Questions? Email Birdathon Coordinator, Kelsey Frey, at scvasbirdathon@gmail.com.

Spring Birdathon Prize Sponsors

SCVAS is pleased to promote our generous prize sponsors who helped make our Spring Birdathon so successful in raising money for our conservation and youth environmental education programs. Please visit www.scvas.org/birdathon if you would like to learn more about Birdathon.

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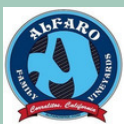
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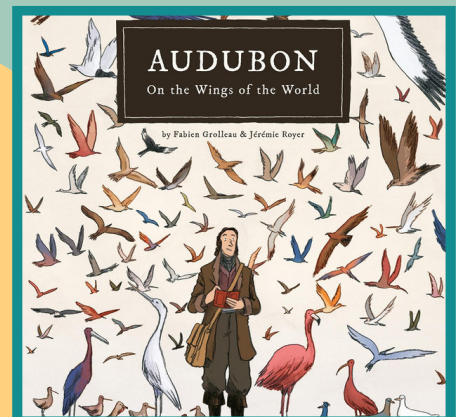
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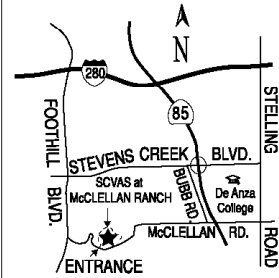
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