



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

January-February 2018

Coyote Valley: With Progress, New Threats Are Looming

by Shani Kleinhaus and Mackenzie Mossing



Coyote Valley by Ralph Schardt

Nestled in the southern reaches of San Jose, Coyote Valley is a beautiful, unique and irreplaceable landscape of regional importance. Over 200 species of local and migratory birds can be found here as they seek sustenance and protection in agricultural fields, oak savannahs, creek corridors, and vernal pools. Bobcats, coyotes, deer, and other wildlife use the valley to migrate between the Diablo Mountain Range and Santa Cruz Mountains, while also relying on the valley floor for habitat and vital resources. During the wet season, Coyote Valley swells with water: heavy rains are absorbed by soils and dispersed into wetlands, contributing to San Jose's flood control capacity and recharging the aquifer. Unfortunately, all that Coyote Valley has to offer could be lost forever, as the threat of development continues to loom over this spectacular place.

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Monthly Speaker Series

Cubberley Community Center, Room H1, Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Roads

Doors open 7:30PM; Program begins 8:00PM



Wednesday, January 17

"Insights into Avian Lifestyles & Behaviors" with Barry Boulton

As birds navigate their lives, their behaviors are varied and fascinating, having evolved and adapted with many different patterns. Join videographer Barry Boulton, President of Central Sierra Audubon Society, to observe and discuss these behaviors and see how different species respond to specific challenges.

Wednesday, February 21

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

We will dive into the stories that explain a variety of bird names, which will reveal interesting and unique perspectives on bird nomenclature. 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.



January-February Field Trips

(Full details 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

****Please note: Online registration is now required for all field trips.****

This is a simple but necessary step to ensure our trips run as smoothly as possible. Please RSVP by going to scvas.org (look for Calendar, then Field Trips), then find your trip and follow the easy registration directions.

A confirmation email will follow. Thank you for your patience and understanding!

If you have any questions, please call Kelsey Frey at (408) 252-3740.

Wednesday, Jan. 3, 12:00PM City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer. Contact landfill coordinator, Silvana Ruiz, with questions at (408) 730-7545. **Directions:** Donald M. Somers Water Pollution Control Plant, turn into Borregas and then turn left at the T intersection. Meet under the pepper tree across from the Portapotty. **Difficulty:** Birding geared toward beginners. **Notes:** Bring binoculars; loaners available. **RC**

Saturday, Jan. 6, 8:00AM Ulistac Natural Area

Half day. **Leader:** Chris Johnson, (831) 601-8260. **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. **RC**

Saturday, Jan. 6, 8:00AM Panoche Valley

Full day. **Leader:** Clay Kempf, (831) 761-8260. **Directions:** Meet at Paicines Store on Hwy 25. **Highlights:** Explore oak woodland and open grassland via back roads. Targets: Phainopepla, Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle; other possibilities: Mountain Plover, Lark, Vesper and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Greater Roadrunner, Chukar. **Notes:** Bring lunch and a full tank of gas; carpooling recommended. We'll eat at Panoche Inn. To pre-order a sandwich (recommended), send choice of meat (turkey, ham, pastrami, chicken salad), cheese, and bread to ltjaeger@att.net. **Note:** Restrooms lim-

ited throughout trip. Heavy rain in San Benito County cancels. **RC**

Sunday, Jan. 7, 9:00AM Palo Alto Baylands

Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto turn right 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**

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 8:30AM Anderson Lake Park and Coyote Creek Trail

Half Day. **Leaders:** Bill Barnhart and Dennis Porter, (408) 569-9264. **Directions:** Take 101 south, exit East Cochrane Rd in Morgan Hill. Continue 1 mile and make a left on Malaguerra Ave. Continue to park ranger headquarters and parking lot. Depending on conditions we'll bird along Coyote Creek and Anderson Lake Park. **Difficulty:** Easy walking. **RC, LO**

Thursday, Jan. 11, 10:30AM Shoreline Riparian to Baylands

2 hours. **Leader:** Ralph Schardt, (408) 624-7845. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 take Shoreline exit and head for the bay. Turn right on Crittenden Ln and continue to the end. Parking is available on the right in the nursery - look for Audubon Trip Leader to know where to park. Carpool if possible. We will hike along a trail that is in the area next to Stevens Creek where it comes out to the

bay. **Highlights:** Riparian birds as well as raptors and shoreline birds.

Difficulty: Easy walk with places to stop on bridges over the creek for better access to birds and scoping. **Notes:** Bring binoculars and/or cameras. **RC, LO**

Saturday, Jan. 13, 8:30AM 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. **RC**

Sunday Jan. 14, 8:00AM Uvas Creek Park, Gilroy

Half day. **Leader:** Rick Herder, (408) 930-1029. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go west on Tenth St for a mile where it turns right and becomes Uvas Pkwy. Go left at Miller Ave, across Uvas Creek, and left into Christmas Hill Park. Park right of the gate. **Difficulty:** Long but easy walk. **RC**

Saturday, Jan. 20, 8:00AM 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**

Sunday, Jan. 21, 8:00AM Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility

Half day. **Leader:** Dave Zittin, (408) 515-7104. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 take Hwy 237 East, exit north on Caribbean Dr, turn right on Borregas Ave, then left to the

Field Trips

cont'd

parking area. **Highlights:** Great place to study ducks. Scopes highly recommended. **Difficulty:** Fairly easy but long walk. **RC**

Saturday, Jan. 27, 8:00AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko, (408) 891-3187. **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 towards beginners. **RC**

Sunday, Jan. 28, 9:00AM

Ed Levin County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Ralph Schardt, (408) 624-7845. **Directions:** Take Hwy 880 to the Calaveras Rd exit in Milpitas. Head east (towards the hills) and turn left at the Ed Levin Park sign. Meet at the upper parking lot (overlooking the lake). **Highlights:** We'll look for migratory birds, shorebirds, raptors, flycatchers, corvids - you name it, we've seen it at Ed Levin! We saw Golden and Bald Eagles during the 2016 Christmas Bird Count! **Difficulty:** Easy walk around the lakes and trees. **Notes:** Bring water, binoculars and/or cameras. **RC, LO**

Saturday, Feb. 3, 8:30AM

Merced and San Luis Wildlife Refuges

Full day. **Leader:** Rich Page, (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** Meet at the parking area near the first Observation Platform in Merced National Wildlife Refuge. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy take Hwy 152 East thru Los Banos (no services past Los Banos, so check your gas gauge), approx. 20 miles, then north 7 miles on Rte 59 to Sandy Mush Rd, turn left approx. 8 miles to Merced Wildlife Refuge, on the left. Allow 2.5 hrs driving time from San Jose, more if it's foggy. **Highlights:** Raptors, ducks, geese, Great Horned Owls, Sandhill Cranes, and White-faced Ibis possible. **Notes:** This will primarily be a driving bird trip so FRS radios (Walkie-Talkies) set to channel 11 will prove to be of value. After

Merced Wildlife Refuge we will caravan to San Luis Wildlife Refuge for lunch and more birding. Dress in layers; bring lunch, liquids, and a full tank of gas. **RC**

Sunday, Feb. 4, 8:00AM

Ulistac Natural Area

Half day. **Leader:** Chris Johnson, (831) 601-8260. See write-up for Jan. 6. **RC**

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 10:30AM

Shoreline Riparian to Baylands

2 hours. **Leader:** Ralph Schardt, (408) 624-7845. See write-up for Jan. 11. **RC, LO**

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 12:00PM

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer. Contact landfill coordinator, Silvana Ruiz, with questions at (408) 730-7545. See write-up for Jan. 3. **RC**

Saturday, Feb. 10, 8:30AM

Mendoza Ranch and Coyote Lake County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson, (408) 996-3506. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Gilroy, take Leavesley Rd east for 1.5 miles, turn left on New Ave then right on Roop Rd. Go left at the T intersection and continue 0.9 miles to Mendoza Ranch parking lot on the left. We'll bird here briefly before continuing to Lakeview Picnic area in Coyote Lake County Park. **RC, LO**

Sunday, Feb. 11, 8:00AM

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, and turn left past winery entrance into preserve parking lot. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous walk past an old orchard, seasonal pond, and oak woodlands.

Wednesday, Feb. 14, 8:30AM

Graystone Park and Alamitos Creek Trail

Half day. **Leaders:** Hugh McDevitt and Janna Pauser, (408) 569-9264, jannapauser@gmail.com. **Directions:** From Hwy 85, exit Camden

South. Continue 4.8 miles. Turn right onto Mt. Carmel Dr (one half mile after Almaden Expwy) and park on street. We'll check the pines in Graystone Park, then bird north on the Alamitos Creek Trail. **Difficulty:** Easy walking. **RC, LO**

Saturday, Feb. 17, 8:00AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko, (408) 891-3187. See write-up for Jan. 27. **RC**

Sunday, Feb. 18, 8:00AM

Coyote Point and Foster City, San Mateo County Bayside

Half day (plus) **Leader:** Al Eisner (650) 926-2018, weekday daytime and voicemail. **Directions:** We will visit one or more locations in Foster City, and then caravan to Coyote Point County Park (\$6 fee per car or county parks permit). Meet at Sea Cloud Park in Foster City. Take Hillsdale Blvd toward the bay from Hwy 101. Turn right at Edgewater Dr and continue several stop signs past the shopping center to Pitcairn Dr (there is a sign for "Sea Cloud Park") and turn left. Continue on Pitcairn until you just reach the park, turn right on Sea Cloud Dr, and go to the end of the parking area. **Highlights:** A good variety of shorebirds (including "rockbirds"), waterfowl (possible Harlequin Duck), other water birds, and land birds. **Notes:** Spotting scopes recommended. **RC**

Saturday, Feb. 24, 8:00AM

Oka Ponds

Half day. **Leader:** Kirsten Holmquist, (408) 747-0988. **Directions:** Take 17 South to Lark Ave exit, turn right onto Oka Rd, then turn left onto W. Mozart Ave and turn right onto Oka Ln. We'll meet at the park entrance at the end of this road. Please be respectful in parking in and around this neighborhood. **RC**

Sunday, Feb. 25, 9:00AM

Ed Levin County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Ralph Schardt, (408) 624-7845. See write-up for Jan. 28. **RC, LO**

A History of Repeated Development Attempts

Coyote Valley has been targeted for industrial development for decades. Land use designations currently allocate North Coyote Valley for 'Campus Industrial Area' (1,400 acres), Mid-Coyote Valley as 'Urban Reserve Area' for future urban growth (2,000 acres), and South Coyote Valley as 'Greenbelt Area' (3,600 acres) to separate San Jose from Morgan Hill. However, agricultural infrastructure (primarily greenhouses) and supporting development have mushroomed in South and Mid-Coyote Valley. North Coyote Valley remains open space, with orchards, vegetables, and hayfields, but we have fought to keep it that way.

When corporate and residential developers looked to continue San Jose's sprawl into the valley, they were met with relentless opposition. Again and again, development proposals for North Coyote Valley came knocking on the door and were met with fierce opposition from SCVAS and other environmental groups. North Coyote Valley only narrowly escaped being covered with asphalt and concrete thanks to unyielding advocacy efforts and economic downturns.

Hopeful Progress

SCVAS advocates spent the better part of 2016 and 2017 fighting a proposal to transform thirty acres of open space into a gargantuan distribution center along Fisher Creek in North Coyote Valley that would significantly impact wildlife movement. A harmonious voice of opposition from environmental organizations and the local community (including many Audubon members) participated in letter-writing efforts and in public meetings, making our opposition clear to City officials and project proponents. This activity may have influenced the developer, who eventually dropped the proposal. The land was sold to Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in June 2017, protecting the parcel from development in perpetuity.

Around the same time, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (OSA) released their Coyote Valley Landscape Linkages Report, which establishes a clear vision of functional land connection for wildlife and protected water resources in the valley. The report uses scientific evidence to validate what we have always known: that preserving Coyote Valley is critical to the welfare of both people and wildlife in our region. Indeed, last winter's flooding in San Jose would have been much worse had Coyote Valley been covered with asphalt and concrete.

The release of OSA's report coincided with an announcement by POST of plans to spend \$80 million dollars to link 1.1 million acres of open space between the Diablo Range and Santa Cruz Mountains. In October, POST purchased a 63-acre property in Mid-Coyote Valley within the Fisher Creek floodplain, an important component of the critical ecological connection.

Evergreen Senior Homes Initiative: An Attack on Coyote Valley

But while SCVAS and other environmental groups have been organizing to bring an ecologically-focused, resilient vision for North Coyote Valley to fruition, a new threat is starting to bare its teeth. Masquerading as a socially responsible solution to the Bay Area's housing crises, the Evergreen Senior Homes Initiative is actually a covert attack on Coyote Valley. Hiding behind a guise of affordable housing for seniors and veterans, the initiative secretly creates a new "senior housing" land use for San Jose that will be cast onto all "under-utilized employment lands" in the city for ten years. The authors of the initiative conveniently excluded a definition for this term, opening the door for senior housing subdivisions on any land that currently supports or is designated for employment.

Considering North Coyote Valley is predominantly undeveloped open space designated for industrial use, it did not take us long to connect the dots: Coyote Valley is the intended target. Should this ballot measure pass, developers who have been unsuccessful in developing Coyote Valley thus far could jump on the opportunity to cover the valley in gated communities, eradicating any possibility of preserving the area for wildlife and flood control. The initiative will be on the ballot during the June 2018 primary election – we urge you to participate and vote!

What Can You Do?

In the face of incessant development proposals to transform Coyote Valley into corporate campuses and distribution centers, SCVAS is collaborating within a regional campaign to protect the valley in perpetuity. Together with the Sierra Club - Loma Prieta Chapter, Committee for Green Foothills, Greenbelt Alliance, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, and Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), we are working to establish an ecologically resilient vision for Coyote Valley – one that serves people, birds, and wildlife. Join us in this last chance opportunity to protect the valley. Please email advocate@scvas.org, and pledge your support at protectcoyotevalley.org.

Cavity Nesters Recovery Program

Monitor Training Sessions (Pick one session)
Saturday, February 17 OR March 3
10:00AM-1:00PM
McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

We will start with general information for potential and/or new nest box monitors. You will learn what's going on with our local cavity nesters and how you can help stop their decline. After that we will grab a quick lunch (so bring food!) and then walk along the nest box trail at McClellan Ranch and learn how to open nest boxes, identify different species, and troubleshoot. We will also discuss the various ways to volunteer. This session is open to all new monitors or any existing monitors who would like a refresher.

Please RSVP online at scvas.org/cnrp.



Photos by Tom Grey



**Attention Current Monitors:
Don't forget to clean out your nest boxes by the end of February!**

Young Audubon

Community Service Day at McClellan Ranch Preserve

Date: Monday, Jan. 15; Time: 9:00AM-1:00PM

We are partnering with Grassroots Ecology for a day of restoration, exploration, and research as we work to bring back some of McClellan Ranch Preserve's natural beauty! We'll learn about local birds, remove invasive plants, and test the water quality of Stevens Creek.



Elephant Seal Walks at Año Nuevo State Park



Date: Saturday, April 7; Time: TBD

Join us for an unforgettable guided walk to see the majestic elephant seals of Año Nuevo. Families with children ages 7 and older are invited to attend. Space is limited, so sign up early!

For more information and to RSVP, visit scvas.org and click "Kids Corner," then "Young Audubon."

Field Notes

(October-November 2017)

by Pete Dunten

Geese through Hawks

On 1 Oct **Greater White-fronted Geese** were on the move down the bay, with 167 passing over Alviso in groups of up to 45 geese (MMR, MJM, RJ). Smaller numbers were found later in the period, with a single goose at Los Gatos Creek CP on 7 Oct (KB), two at Byxbee Park on 13 Oct (WGB), and ten at Don Edwards NWR on 16 Nov (AR). The first fall sighting of **Cackling Geese** was on 1 Oct, when two were seen over Alviso with a group of Greater White-fronted Geese (MJM, MMR, RJ). Groups of up to six were found at several locations later in the period (m. ob.). The high count was a flock of 36 over Shoreline Lake on 18 Nov (DSu). The first **Snow Goose** of winter was over Morgan Hill on 25 and 26 Nov (SCR), presumably on its way to and from Anderson Reservoir. A hybrid **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** was at Mallard Slough on 28 Nov (GL), and photos suggest it is the same individual that has been seen periodically since 2013 (MJM). Another hybrid, a **Northern Shoveler x Cinnamon Teal**, was found along the entrance to Don Edwards NWR beginning on 10 Nov (STu). A few **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** winter in the South Bay; the first to arrive this fall was one at Charleston Slough on 22 Nov (KaH). Numbers of wintering **Redhead** have been increasing since the late 1990's, and counts of 1500 on Alviso Salt Pond A14 on 31 Oct and 1448 on Pond A1 were encouraging (both AR). A male **Common x Barrow's Goldeneye** returned to Los Capitancillos Ponds for its eleventh winter on 15 Nov (AvE). A **Common Loon** frequented Los Capitancillos Ponds between 8 Nov (EvM) and 22 Nov (STu, m. ob.). Two loons, unidentified to species, were on Lexington Reservoir on 27 Nov (CF). The first **American Bittern** reported was one at Sunnyvale WPCP on 28 Oct (GL et al.). Another was at Mayfield Slough on 18 Nov (DSu). An evening roost of **White-tailed Kites** outside Gilroy hosted an impressive total of 37 kites on 28 Oct, and 35 on 2 Nov (SBr). A **Zone-tailed Hawk** over Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley on 12 Nov (STu) was the second record for the county. Both have been in the first half of November. A **Swainson's Hawk** was over Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS)

on 22 Nov (DWN). There are fewer than ten November records of Swainson's Hawk, and none in December. **Ferruginous Hawks** were not reported until 5 Nov this year, when one was found along Jamieson Rd in the south county (WP, KON). Two were seen in Coyote Valley, their favored wintering grounds, on 12 Nov (SCR).

Shorebirds through Woodpeckers

Seven **Red Knots** were at the mouth of Stevens Creek on 1 Oct (MMR, MJM, RJ), and one was at Palo Alto Baylands on 29 Oct (LSe). Though the high count of Red Knots in most years since the early 1980's has been in fall, this year and last their numbers peaked in early June. A **Stilt Sandpiper** was found in New Chicago Marsh on 1 Nov (WGB); the last migrants passed through the county in the first two weeks of November. A **Ruff** arrived at New Chicago Marsh on 4 Nov (DN) and remained through the end of the month (m. ob.). A single **Red Phalarope** stopped at Gilroy SCRWA from 12 – 13 Oct (MJM, DN). Red Phalaropes are found about one year in two in our inland county.

communications Hill in San Jose on 6 Nov (RSh). **Lewis's Woodpeckers** are resident in San Antonio Valley, and also occur in other parts of the county in some winters. Three to four have been seen at Chesbro Reservoir beginning on 21 Oct (JPa) and continuing through November (m. ob.). While the majority of our wintering sapsuckers are Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Red-naped, Yellow-bellied, and various hybrid sapsuckers do occur. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found in Santa Clara on 24 Nov (CVR), another was found in Morgan Hill on 26 Nov (SCR), and a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was noted in the Hunting Hollow portion of Henry Coe SP on 6 Nov (NS). **Yellow-shafted Flickers**, found here only in winter, were found at three locations. One was along Guadalupe River below Trimble on 21 Oct (SCR), one in Los Gatos beginning on 20 Oct (KB), and one at Ulistac NA beginning on 4 Nov (SJ, PB). A **Pileated Woodpecker** in Henry Coe SP in the Diablo Mountains on 3 Oct was outside the woodpecker's known breeding range, which maps further west in the Santa Cruz Mountains (JY, AL).



Ruff by Louise Liou

A **Sabine's Gull** was a nice find on 30 Oct over a closed refuge pond (MXT, ES). The latest reports of **Elegant Terns** were from the end of October. On 29 Oct, 26 Elegant Terns were tallied at Ponds A3W, A2E, and a nearby closed refuge levee (MJM, MMR). On 31 Oct, ten Elegant Terns were over Alviso Salt Pond A14 (AR). Last year, double-digit numbers were found at the end of November, and a single Elegant Tern remained into the first week of December. The first **Short-eared Owl** of winter, and the only to date, was one on Com-

Flycatchers through Wood-Warblers

At the tail-end of fall migration in October, a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was found in Belgatos Park on 15 Oct (EvM), and a **Willow Flycatcher** was at Ulistac NA on 7 Oct (MSm). A **Tropical Kingbird** stopped at the riparian section of Adobe Creek near Charleston Slough between 24 and 25 Oct (WP, EvM). They are found one in every three years, on average. **House Wrens** that might stay for winter were at CCFS as late as 15 Nov (AR), Stevens Creek below Crittenden as late as 27 Nov (WGB), and Ulistac

Field Notes *cont'd*

NA as late as 30 Nov (ChJ). **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** that might stay over winter included one at Chesbro Reservoir on 14 Nov (JPa), two below Anderson Dam on 17 Nov (TE, HE), and two at Santa Teresa CP through the end of November (JRy). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** have been found in October each of the last five years at Sunnyvale Baylands; this fall three were present on 21 Oct (PKe) and two on 2 Nov (CWf). **Phainopeplas** were widespread west of the Diablo Range, with reports from six locations in October and November. The earliest report was of one at Oka Ponds on 8 Oct (KH). One returned to Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 2 Nov (JPa). This is the third winter in a row Phainopeplas have been in the park, and 2 Nov is the earliest arrival date. A **Lapland Longspur** at Moffett Field was a nice find on 29 Nov (SP, BrS). A **MacGillivray's Warbler** was found along Stevens Creek between Crittenden and La Avenida on 14 Oct (SCR); this is the latest date on record for a migrant. A **Yellow Warbler** at Don Edwards EEC on 5 Nov may be staying for winter (LL). A **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at SCVWD was the sixth county record, and was found on 14 Oct (EvM) and stayed through 17 Oct (m. ob.). A **Blackpoll** stopped at Ulistac NA between 6 Oct (RWR) and 9 Oct (m. ob.). One **Palm Warbler** was at Sunnyvale WPCP on 22 Oct (MJM, PKe) and two were found in New Chicago Marsh beginning on 28 Oct (RJ, MJM). At least one of the latter stayed through 6 Nov (WGB, BB). Two **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were reported in November, one on Graystone Lane along Alamos Creek in Almaden Valley on 10 Nov (JPa) and one at Sunnyvale WPCP on 15 Nov (fide eBird). The only **Hermit Warbler** found during the period was one at Sunnyvale Baylands on 1 Oct (PKe). A **Wilson's Warbler** along Guadalupe River below Blossom Hill Rd on 4 Nov was staying rather late in the year (JPa).

Sparrows through Evening Grosbeak

A migrant **Clay-colored Sparrow** stopped at Ulistac NA on 7 Oct (MSm). **Chipping Sparrows** were found at four locations in the valley, with a high count of three at TJ Martin Park in San Jose on 30 Nov (JPa). Two were along Guadalupe River below Trimble on 21 Oct (SCR), one was at Cuesta Park in Mountain View on 29 and 30 Oct (GL,

GZ), and two were at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park beginning on 2 Nov (JPa). A **Slate-colored Fox Sparrow** was at Stile Ranch trailhead in Santa Teresa CP on 20 Oct (JPa). A few **Song Spar-**

rows each winter are obviously different in appearance when compared to local populations. A Morphna type from the Pacific Northwest was found on 21 Oct along Guadalupe River below Trimble (SCR). The first **Swamp Sparrow** to arrive for winter was found along Adobe Creek on 14 Oct (TM) and seen again on 25 Nov (WBr). Another was found along Guadalupe River below Trimble on 21 Oct (SCR). The first **White-throated Sparrow** of fall arrived at Ulistac NA on 1 Oct (PDU). As many as three have been reported by several observers at that location, beginning on 4 Nov. Single **Western Tanagers** that might stay over winter were noted in the Willow Glen neighborhood on 22 Nov (BM) and along Guadalupe River in downtown San Jose on 30 Nov (KG). A dapper **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was attracted to a yard in San Jose with feeders and a bird bath on 5 Oct (JMo). They are found in the county about three years in every five. A **Bobolink** was an excellent find in the dry lakebed of Lake Lagunita on 2 Oct (RFu). It was the first in the county since fall of 2011. All save one of the previous fifteen recorded have been seen for only one day. A **Bullock's Oriole** was found along the bay-side riparian section of Adobe Creek on 25 Oct (WGB). While most Bullock's Orioles head south for winter, a few do overwinter. A single **Evening Grosbeak** visited Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton on 27 Oct (EGa). The irrup-



Black-throated Blue Warbler by Gail West

rows each winter are obviously different in appearance when compared to local populations. A Morphna type from the Pacific Northwest was found on 21 Oct along Guadalupe River below Trimble (SCR). The first **Swamp Sparrow** to arrive for winter was found along Adobe Creek on 14 Oct (TM) and seen again on 25 Nov (WBr). Another was found along Guadalupe River below Trimble on 21 Oct (SCR). The first **White-throated Sparrow** of fall arrived at Ulistac NA on 1 Oct (PDU). As many as three have been reported by several observers at that location, beginning on 4 Nov. Single **Western Tanagers** that might stay over winter were noted in the Willow Glen neighborhood on 22 Nov (BM) and along Guadalupe River in downtown San Jose on 30 Nov (KG). A dapper **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was attracted to a yard in San Jose with feeders and a bird bath on 5 Oct (JMo). They are found in the county about three years in every five. A **Bobolink** was an excellent find in the dry lakebed of Lake Lagunita on 2 Oct (RFu). It was the first in the county since fall of 2011. All save one of the previous fifteen recorded have been seen for only one day. A **Bullock's Oriole** was found along the bay-side riparian section of Adobe Creek on 25 Oct (WGB). While most Bullock's Orioles head south for winter, a few do overwinter. A single **Evening Grosbeak** visited Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton on 27 Oct (EGa). The irrup-

Observers: Patrick Baglee (PB), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Sam Britton (SBr), Will Brooks (WBr), Karen Burnson (KB), Pete Dunten (PDU), Tom Edell (TE), Herb Elliot (HE), Craig Fosdick (CF), Rob Furrow (RFu), Elinor Gates (EGa), Kevin Gin (KG), Karen Hogan (KaH), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Steve Johnson (SJ), Pat Kenny (PKe), Garrett Lau (GL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Louise Liou (LL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Tobin Master (TM), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), John Moore (JMo), David Nickerson (DN), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Janna Pauser (JPa), William Pelletier (WP), Stephen Peterson (SP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Nelson Samuels (NS), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jennifer Rycenga (JRy), Logan Searl (LSe), Robert Shields (RSh), Marc Simmel (MSm), Bridget Sousa (BrS), Emma Stevens (ES), David Suddjian (DSu), Max Tarjan (MXT), Steve Tucker (STu), Ann Verdi (AVe), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), Dan Wenny (DWn), Christine Wolfe (CWf), James Yurchenco (JY), Gina Zolotar (GZ)

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

Conservation Corner: What Our Environmental Advocacy Team is Working On...

by Shani Kleinhaus and Mackenzie Mossing

Nurturing Nature in San Jose Parks

In our ever-expanding cities, nature often gets tossed to the wayside and considered only as an after thought. However, parks can play a vital role by providing critical wildlife habitat in urban landscapes, and so we continue to advocate for a focus on nature in various cities' parks plans. For the past year, we have been engaged in the steering committee for San Jose's update to its Greenprint - a long-term strategic plan that guides the future expansion of San Jose's parks. In November, when the City Council was presented with an update on the Greenprint process, we encouraged them to include nature and habitat quality when assessing existing parks and identifying future park sites.

Thanks to support from Councilmember Don Rocha, our recommendations were added to the motion and approved unanimously by City Council.

Santa Clara County Sanborn Park Threatened

High above Saratoga, Sanborn County Park comprises a dense wilderness of madrones, oaks, and conifers that provide habitat and connectivity for wildlife in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Here, quail and turkeys, Peregrine Falcons, woodpeckers, and songbirds can be seen and heard throughout the forest. But a heated debate over a nearby abandoned Christmas tree farm has caused us consternation. The farm (about twenty acres) is part of 140 acres that are designated for development of "active recreation" in a newly initiated update to the Sanborn Park Master Plan. The only idea for such "active recreation" has come from a group of mountain bike enthusiasts who are pushing for the parcel to be transformed into a high-impact bike park with jumps, ramps, and trails that could attract 1,000+ visitors per day. However, community members and environmental groups want to see the park left alone or restored to serve as habitat for wildlife, where only quiet, passive recreation is allowed. In November we attended a public meeting regarding the Plan, and joined the vast majority of the crowd calling for a focus on nature. We will continue to advocate for the wildlife that rely on this landscape.

Santa Clara Valley Water District Looking to Expand Pacheco Dam

Santa Clara Valley Water District recently applied for California Water Bond funding to expand the Pacheco Res-

ervoir east of Gilroy. The expanded dam would be filled mostly with water from San Luis Reservoir and some storm runoff from the surrounding watershed. It would also be used to store water imported through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. While the project aims to provide much needed water to wildlife refuges in the Central Valley and to Pacheco Creek for the threatened Central Coast Steel-

head, we are wary of new dams, the potential for contamination of Pacheco Creek and the Pajaro watershed with invasive species, and whether environmental benefits will be guaranteed. We outlined our concerns in comments on the Initial Study and Notice of Preparation, and also attended a working group meeting for the project. We will continue to be involved.



Palo Alto Baylands by Kelsey Frey

Palo Alto Baylands: Ongoing Planning and Engagement

In the past few years, SCVAS advocates and volunteers contributed to a large number of projects in the Palo Alto Baylands and areas east of Hwy 101. With the goals of minimizing harm to birds and their ecosystems, and of preserving and enhancing nature and bird habitat, we actively engaged in planning processes for the new golf course, Byxbee Park Master Plan, San Francisquito Creek flood control plans, Palo Alto Airport's Wildlife Hazard Management Plan, Adobe Creek bridge, the Parks Master Plan, and even the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan update. Most of these plans are now complete and in the process of being implemented. Recently, the City has embarked on a new Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan, which aims to consider opportunities for protection, enhancement and recreation at the Emily Renzel Wetlands, Byxbee Park, and the newly acquired ITT Antenna Field, while also considering the needs of the Water Quality Control Plant, airport, and the impacts of sea level rise. Palo Alto residents are welcome to volunteer and join us for the public outreach process - please email advocate@scvas.org if you are interested in participating.

Lastly,

We need volunteers to help us fight the deceptive and dangerous "Evergreen Senior Homes Initiative" (see main article). Please let us know if you can help spread the word - email advocate@scvas.org.

SCVAS Winter Excursions

We are pleased to offer the following excursions to our members and community. For more information, please call the SCVAS main office at (408) 252-3747 or visit our website at www.scvas.org and click on the class in our calendar.

Outdoor Photography with an Introduction to Digiscoping

Western Bluebird by Ralph Schardt



Dates: Tuesday, January 16 and February 20

Time: 9:00-11:00AM

Location: McClellan Ranch, Cupertino - Meet at SCVAS

Cost: Free! for members, \$15 non-members

Register: To register, please visit scvas.org and click on the event in our calendar.

Note: Rain cancels, with refund or credit for future classes.

Description: Explore outdoor photography opportunities at McClellan Ranch with our Executive Director, Ralph Schardt. We will review photography equipment needed for 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. A brief introduction to digiscoping will follow. Wear layers and clothing appropriate for an easy hike on level, but unpaved trails.

Merced National Wildlife Refuge

Merced NWR by Chuq Von Rospach



Date: Saturday, February 17

Time: 9:00AM - around 1:00PM

Location: Merced National Wildlife Refuge

Cost: Free! for members, \$15 non-members

Register: To register, please visit scvas.org and click on the event in our calendar.

Note: Rain cancels, with refund.

Description: Come explore one of the Central Valley's winter birding jewels. Sandhill Crane, Snow, Ross's, and Greater White-fronted Geese all commonly stay here for winter, along with many varieties of ducks, shorebirds, and raptors. This is an auto tour around the perimeter of the refuge so it is accessible to all. Bring a lunch and we will discuss how the refuges are helping birds survive against the ongoing loss of habitat due to human expansion and climate change.

GET
READY
FOR:

BIRDATHON

THE FUN BEGINS
MARCH 2018
STAY TUNED!

SCVAS Events Calendar

Wed. 1/3 & 2/7; 7:30-9:00PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers

Embarcadero Room, Rinconada Library

1213 Newell Rd, Palo Alto, CA

Topic 1/3: "Bird Photos from My India Journeys" with Harjeet Singh

Topic 2/7: "A Birdwatcher's Take on Bird Photography" with Dorian Anderson

See scvas.org/babp for more details.

Tues. 1/9 & 2/13; 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 1/9: American Robin

Topic 2/13: Penguins

Fri. 1/12 & 2/16; 12:30-2:00PM

Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

Free workshops for all ages! No RSVP required; please be on time. ***Please note change in time and day*** See calendar at scvas.org for more details.

Sat. 2/17 & 3/3; 10:00AM-1:00PM

Cavity Nesters Recovery Program

Orientation and Training

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

See details on page 5.

Sat. 4/21; 10:00AM-3:00PM

Rummage Sale!

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

See details on page 10.

Friends of SCVAS

Gifts received October 1st, 2017 through November 30th, 2017

Gift (Up to \$99)

Jeff Adams
Gerardine Albers
Patricia Anderson
Gary Bailey
Roberta Baker
Glen & Melanie Barnett
William Barnhart
Diane Bates
Walter Beck
Roy & Josephine Beck
Peter Bischoff
Martha Bond
Judith Borlase
Frank & Joan Brauch
Winslow Briggs
Richard & Marjorie Brody
Cathy Brown
Richard & Elizabeth Brownell
David & Meredith Burnham
Bernice Camuso
Chris Carneghi
Fanghong Chen
Sanjay Chikarmane
William Collins
John Colwell
Marianne Damon
Ann Davidson
Gerald Degirolamo
David Depew
Sylvie Deschenes
George & Debra Doeltz
Hazel Donaldson
Lisa Egert-Smith
Curtis Engelhard
Sharon Erickson
Victoria Farrell
Thomas Ferrito
Gale Galloway
Paul & Carole Goldstein
James Goodkind
Stacy Goss
Arushi Goyal
Ardeh Greenquist
Herb Grench
Herbert Gross

Aaron Grossman
Laura Haberlin
Nancy Hall
Carl & Roberta Handen
Konrad Herman
Howard Higley
Judy Hoff
Mason Holmes
Winnifred Homer-Smith
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Debra Symons

Ted Tawshunsky
Laura Thompson
David Topley
Mike & Ellen Turbow
Barbara Tyler
Francis Vanslager
Sharon Vorse-Yu
Linda Votteri
Bill Walker
Thomas & Irene Wallters
Keith Wandry
Margaret Watson
Christine Weaver
Marcia White
Betty Wyatt
Steven Zamek
Douglas Zody

Avocet Sponsor (\$100-\$249)

Sylvia Alderman
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James & Carolyn Bliss
Phyllis Browning
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Charlotte Epstein
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Julio Mulero
Edward Perry
David Poeschel
Don & Cathy Priest
April Pufahl
Michael Pyle

Richard Rairden
Annemarie Rosengreen
Indranil Sircar
Catherine Trejo

Burrowing Owl (\$250-\$499)

Mathew & Kate Bartlett
Peter & Patricia Biocini
George Clifford
Kathryn (Kit) Gordon
Larry & Marcia Hulberg
Jim & Kathy Johnson
Jerry & Mary Kamprath
Elizabeth Malmborg
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Eve Meier
Illona Polizotto
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Michael & Leslie Schroeder
Barbara Shufro
Steve & Debbie Thompson
Vrshali Wagle
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Ofer Zajicek

Peregrine Falcon (\$500-\$999)

Linda Brownrigg
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Lavonne Hardy
Jeffrey & Marcia Keimer
Marlene Macek
Jean & Gregory Myers
Ernest & Jean Renzel III

Golden Eagle (\$1000+)

Alan & Irene Adler
Doug & Gail Cheeseman
Fenton Family Foundation
Thomas Grey
Robert Hirt
Leighton Nakata
Elizabeth Rizzi

RUMMAGE SALE!

Saturday, April 21 10:00AM-3:00PM

We are now accepting donations of the following items.
To donate gently used goods, please stop by the McClellan Ranch
office during operating hours.

- Photography equipment
- Bird feeders
- Home decor
- Household goods/appliances
- Binoculars
- Children's toys
- Outdoor equipment
- Artwork
- Clothing

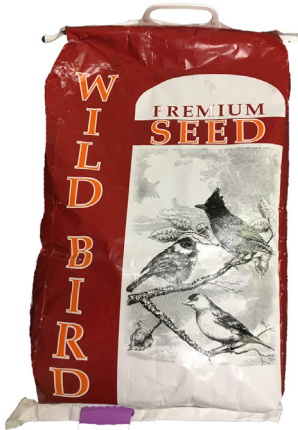
Nature Shop

New Hours:

M 10:00AM-4:00PM

T-F 9:00AM-4:30PM

Sat 10:00AM-2:00PM



Patio Mix, \$32

- Millet, sunflower, & peanuts (no shells)
- Attracts: House Finches, ducks, geese, turkeys, flickers, titmice

Backyard Basic, \$19

- Millet & sunflower (more millet)
- Attracts: House Finches, ducks, geese, turkeys, goldfinches, jays, Pine Siskins, California Quail, native sparrows



Birder's Choice, \$22

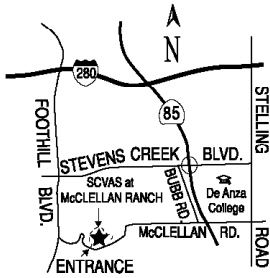
- Millet & sunflower (more sunflower)
- Attracts: House Finches, ducks, geese, turkeys, goldfinches, jays, Pine Siskins, California Quail, native sparrows



Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
22221 McClellan Road
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Fax: 408-252-2850
E-mail: scvas@scvas.org
www.scvas.org

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New Members of SCVAS

*Those who joined October 1st - November 30th, 2017.
We look forward to a great year with your support!*

Gerardine Albers
Monica Cavllaro
Helen Chapman
Sanjay Chikarmane
William Collins
May Davenport
Geral Degirolamo
Laura Haberlin
Lavonne Hardy

Mason Holmes
June Hsueh
Maile Ibanez-Favela
Gary Kremen
Kent Mak
Jawahar Malcotra
Andrea Reid
Agustin Vazquez
Michael Wyman

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!
- Get a FREE SCVAS pin!

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

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(408) 252-3740

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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

Monday 10:00AM - 4:00PM
Tuesday - Friday 10:00AM - 4:30PM
Saturday 10:00AM - 2:00PM

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 special requests.

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

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