



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

January-February 2019

Light Pollution: A Glowing Issue *by Dashiell Leeds*



San Jose Skyline *by Keith Wandry*

Artificial light is perhaps the most commonly recognized symbol of human progress. The glow of human civilization is even visible from space. Such brightness is often seen as a testament to human ingenuity and development. Our admiration for light permeates into our art, as futuristic cities in science fiction literature are vibrantly illuminated, and lasers (amplified light) are used as wartime instruments of death. Artificial light causes destruction not only in fiction, but also in the real world. Unlike the outlandish lasers in sci-fi stories, damage is inflicted throughout the world by normalized lighting systems in use today. Since its inception in the late nineteenth century, artificial light has been observed to be lethal to wildlife. Early evidence was found in 1886 when about 1,000 migratory birds died after colliding with an electrical light tower in Decatur, Illinois. Since then, the biological study of such incidents has remained underrepresented compared to other scientific issues. However, modern science is making great strides towards our understanding of artificial light. Current findings challenge our cultural worship of lighting technologies.

cont'd on page 4

Monthly Speaker Series

NEW Location: Redwood Hall at The Terraces in Los Altos; for directions go to scvas.org/SpeakerSeries

NEW Time: Doors open 7:00PM; Program begins 7:30PM

Wednesday, January 16 with Doug Cheeseman An Evening of African Predators, Including Raptors

In the past year, Doug and his wife, Gail, led three safaris to East Africa and marveled at all of the new behaviors they witnessed. Especially notable were the interactions among predators who have come up with new techniques of survival as they adapt to ever-changing conditions. Join Doug for a presentation to explore these new behaviors.



Wednesday, February 20 with Lee Pauser Seventeen Seasons of Nest Box Monitoring

Lee Pauser has been building, installing, and monitoring nest boxes for seventeen nesting seasons. His efforts have resulted in almost 12,000 birds fledging! In this presentation, Lee will share photos and videos of the eighteen species of cavity nesting birds that have graced his nest boxes.

January-February Field Trips

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

Carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing. LO = Lunch optional; RC = Heavy rain cancels; NF = No facilities available; KF-AA = Kid friendly, all ages; KF-10+ = 10 years and older; KF-14+ = 14 years and older

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

Please RSVP by going to scvas.org/FieldTrips, then find your trip and follow the easy registration directions.

A confirmation email will follow. If you have any questions, please call

Kelsey Frey at (408) 252-3740 or email at programs@scvas.org.

Wednesday, Jan. 2; 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, KF-10+**

Saturday, Jan. 5; 8:00AM

Arastradero OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Mary Wisnewski, (408) 887-0738. **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. 6; 10:00AM

Palo Alto Baylands

2 hours. **Leaders:** Robin Chen & Kelsey Frey, (408) 981-6965. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto turn right onto Embarcadero Rd. At the stop sign (not light), go left and follow the road to the paved parking lot across from the Lucy Evans Center. **Highlights:** Migrating waterfowl & shorebirds. **RC, KF-AA**

Wednesday, Jan. 9; 8:30AM

Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve

Half day. **Leaders:** Beth and Tom Hamel, (408) 750-6113. **Directions:** From 101 in San Jose take Bailey Ave west, turn left on Hale Ave (Santa Teresa) and right to the end of Palm Ave. **Highlights:** We'll bird the lower elevations of the preserve in search of raptors, Loggerhead Shrikes, Say's Phoebes, and Yellow-billed Magpies. **Difficulty:** Easy walking. **RC**

Saturday, Jan. 12; 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 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, tuna salad), cheese (swiss, cheddar, pepper jack, monterey jack), condiments, and bread (wheat, rye, sourdough) to ltjaeger@att.net. 12" pizzas and burritos also available; order upon arrival. Restrooms limited throughout trip. Heavy rain in San Benito County cancels. **RC**

Sunday, Jan. 13; 8:30AM

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve (NEW Birding with the Board!)

Half day. **Leaders:** Diane & Peter Hart, (650) 766-4252. **Directions:** From Hwy 280, take the Sand Hill West exit and travel 2 miles to the Jasper Ridge main gate (on the left), 100 yards before Portola Rd. Meet at the Sand Hill Rd preserve entrance at 8:30AM to enter as a group. **Highlights:** Our first stop will be the historic and now-controversial Searsville Dam. Along the lake, we'll look for wintering waterfowl, woodpeckers, raptors, and songbirds. **Notes:** Limited to 12 participants. **RC**

Thursday, Jan. 17; 12:00PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve

2 hours. **Leader:** Merav Vonshak, (408) 252-3740. **Directions:** From 280-N exit on Foothill Blvd, turn

left, then left again on McClellan Rd. Meet at the bird feeders in front of the SCVAS office. **Highlights:** Take a walk in different habitats along the preserve looking at bugs, snails, salamanders, and other small critters! **RC, KF-4+**

Saturday, Jan. 19; 8:00AM

Grant Ranch County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey, (408) 966-3860. **Directions:** Take Hwy 130 east for ~11 miles from I-680; or take Quimby Rd east ~7 miles from Capitol Expwy. Meet at Grant Lake parking area on Mt. Hamilton Rd (Hwy 130) on the left (coming from San Jose) 0.25 miles past the main park entrance (on the right). Parking here is free but limited, and we'll do some car shuffling in the main park if needed. **Highlights:** We'll check out Grant Lake and other park locations looking for migrants and resident birds. **Notes:** Entry fee required (\$6 or SC County Park pass) for main park area. **RC**

Sunday, Jan. 20; 8:00AM

Sunnyvale Water Treatment Plant

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

Friday, Jan. 25; 1:00PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve

(Drop In Birding)

Two hours. **Leader:** Eve Meier (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** From 280-N exit on Foothill Blvd, turn left, then left again on McClellan Rd. Meet at the bird feeders in front of the SCVAS office. **Highlights:** Learn your backyard birds with the help of Merlin Bird ID, a free smart phone app, while we sit and watch

Field Trips

cont'd

the bird feeders. **Notes:** Drop in anytime 1:00-3:00PM. Great for beginners! Binoculars available. No walking involved. **RC, KF-AA**

Saturday, Jan. 26; 9:00AM Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Mountain View take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Blvd parking area. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. **Notes:** For beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. **RC, KF-10+**

Sunday, Jan. 27; 1:00PM Charleston Slough (Drop In Birding)

Two hours. **Leaders:** Chuq Von Rospach & Eve Meier (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Mountain View take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Blvd parking area. Park and meet by the Observation Deck along the main paved pathway. **Highlights:** Learn to identify shorebirds foraging on mudflats, ducks dabbling in the slough, and raptors soaring overhead. **Notes:** Drop in anytime 1:00-3:00PM. Great for beginners and families! Binoculars available. No walking involved. **RC, KF-AA**

Saturday, Feb. 2; 3:00PM Charleston Slough & Adobe Creek Waterbird Photo Outing

2.5 hours. **Leaders:** Mary Ann Robertson & Julie Amato, (408) 252-3747. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Mountain View take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Blvd parking area. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. **Highlights:** Use your camera as a tool for observing birds! We'll photograph birds at two different spots near the water. You'll observe bird behavior and learn to identify some of the birds that winter on the bay. Have fun taking photos of birds with others who share your enthusiasm. **Difficulty:** Easy walk to two different sites close to the trailhead. **Notes:** Naturalists and photographers of all levels are wel-

come. Bring binoculars and a camera with a zoom lens. Contact the leaders with questions about camera equipment. Limited to 8 participants. **RC, KF-14+**

Wednesday, Feb. 6; 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. 2. **RC, KF-10+**

Saturday, Feb. 9; 5:00PM McClellan Ranch Preserve

Two hours. **Leader:** Keith Wandry, (408) 859-0974. **Directions:** From 280-N exit on Foothill Blvd, turn left, then left again on McClellan Rd. Meet at the bird feeders in front of the SCVAS office. **Highlights:** We'll look for owls and constellations in the sky. **Difficulty:** Easy 1-mile walk. **RC, KF-10+**

Sunday, Feb. 10; 8:00AM Alum Rock Park

Half day. **Leader:** Bill Pelletier, (408) 644-5583. **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 Rustic Lands parking lot (free). **Highlights:** Variety of habitats, including chaparral, riparian, mixed forests, grassland, and rocky terrain. We'll look for Great Horned Owl, Hermit Thrush, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, California Thrasher, Acorn Woodpecker, Raptors, and more. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous 3-mile walk. **RC, KF-14+**

Wednesday, Feb. 13; 8:30AM Almaden Lake (east side) and Los Alamitos Creek Trail

3 hours. **Leader:** Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** From Hwy 85 in San Jose take the Almaden Expwy exit south. In 0.8 miles, turn left onto Coleman Rd, then make the first right onto Winfield. Free street parking or \$6 parking lot. Meet near blue bathrooms. **Highlights:** We'll look for Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Hermit Thrushes, American Goldfinches, and more. **Difficulty:** Easy

2-3-mile walk on paved path. **RC**

Saturday, Feb. 16; 9:00AM Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. See write-up for Jan. 26. **RC, KF-10+**

Sunday, Feb. 17; 1:00PM Coyote Valley OSP (Drop In Birding)

Half day. **Leader:** Chuq Von Rospach, (408) 221-0797. **Directions:** Meet in visitor parking lot. Take Hwy 101 to Bailey Rd and take Bailey west (right turn off of freeway). Turn left on Santa Teresa Blvd, follow to Palm Ave and turn right. Road ends at the parking lot. **Highlights:** Golden Eagle, Bull-ock's Oriole, Rock Wren, Northern Flicker, Red-winged Blackbird. **Difficulty:** No walking involved. Open to all birding levels; great for families. **Notes:** Drop in anytime 1:00-5:00PM! Bring water; binoculars available; cameras welcome. No dogs. **LO, RC, KF-10+**

Saturday, Feb. 23; 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 1 mile, and turn left past winery into preserve parking lot. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous walk past an old orchard, seasonal pond, and oak woodlands. **RC**

Sunday, Feb. 24; 9:00AM Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) & Shoreline Lake (NEW Birding with the Board!)

Half day. **Leaders:** Joan Leighton & Bob Hirt, (408) 821-2732. **Directions:** *To WPCP:* From Hwy 101 take Hwy 237 east, exit north on Caribbean Dr, turn right on Borregas Ave, then left into parking area. *To Shoreline Lake:* From Hwy 101 take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Blvd parking. **Notes:** We'll bird the WPCP lot until 11AM, then head to Shoreline Lake. Limited to 12 participants. Please call Bob Hirt day before in case of changes. **RC**

Victims of Light: Migratory Birds, Nocturnal Wildlife, and People

Artificial light at night is highly disruptive and often deadly for migratory birds. Exposure to an artificial light field will alter the straight flight path of a bird and induce such deviations as hovering, slowing down, shifting direction, or circling. While lingering in the light, birds often increase their vocal activity, a sign of confusion. These behavioral anomalies keep the bird closer to the light source - scientists describe this phenomenon as "attraction" or "capture." This can produce serious consequences for birds, as they may die or be seriously injured from striking illuminated structures. They may also waste energy stores from circling and hovering in the light field until forced to rest and forage. This behavior can cause delayed arrival at breeding or wintering grounds, or even death from exhaustion. Horizon glow from cities has been observed to influence the orientation behavior of caged migratory birds, indicating that this is likely the case for wild migratory birds. Sky glow can therefore delay or alter migration routes.

Birds are increasingly attracted to light when visibility is poor, such as in low fog. They are also extremely susceptible to floodlit structures in such conditions. When illuminated with floodlights, monuments, skyscrapers, radio towers, and a variety of other structures can cause massive bird mortality from bird strikes even during clear weather. Birds have even been observed to fly into the gas flares of offshore oil rigs and become incinerated.

Many nocturnal species have extremely specific light preferences at very low levels of light. Bats have been observed to avoid crossing a brightly lit 60-ft gap between trees. Most nocturnal species avoid exposure to light brighter than that of the moon, and some even avoid exposure when the moon is full.

Artificial light also affects the well-being of humans, both directly and indirectly. Some of the direct health risks shared by both animals and humans include metabolic dysregulation, immunosuppression, and development of cancers. Artificial light also inhibits melatonin secretion in humans, which will disrupt natural sleep rhythms and cognitive abilities.

Local Issues with Artificial Light

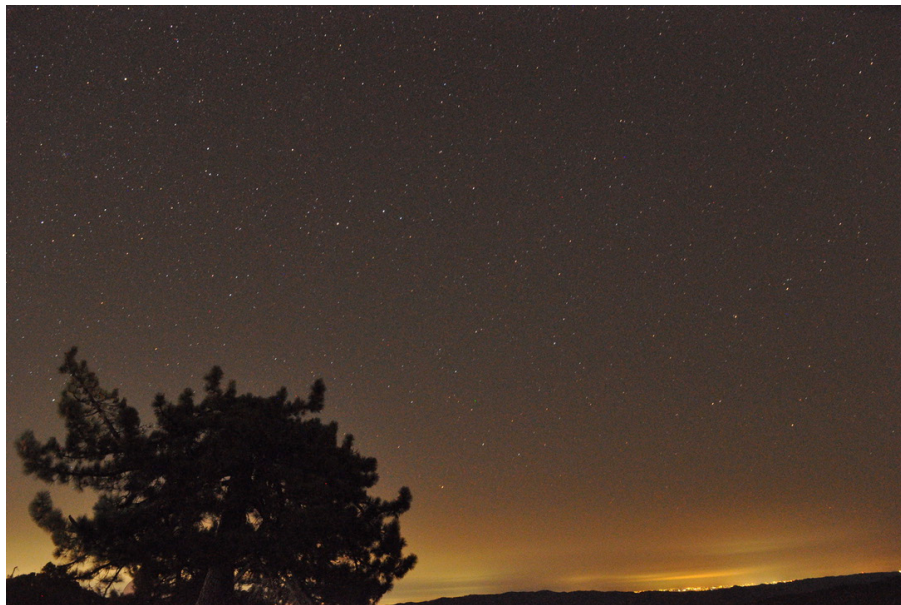
The City of San Jose is currently facing two major projects that have the potential to cause light pollution. The first project is a city-wide transition from yellow sodium va-

por lights to white LED lights. While LED lights are more energy-efficient, they are also much brighter and people tend to use more, rather than fewer of them. Furthermore, the wavelengths of white light produced by LED lights are often more harmful to wildlife than other color temperatures. SCVAS is currently engaging with San Jose (and other cities) to help them minimize the potential large scale impacts of this transition.

Also in San Jose, an iconic landmark is proposed by the Light Tower Corporation for Arena Green Park, at the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek. An international competition is expected to produce innovative designs for this project. SCVAS is following closely as this project moves forward, advocating for design criteria that would avoid harmful impacts on wildlife.

In Palo Alto, a new ordinance allows the use of rooftop gardens to satisfy open space and park requirements. We were greatly concerned, but glad that at least the roof-top lighting will be turned off at 10PM, and no uplighting will be permitted.

A Starry Sky from Mt. Hamilton by Keith Wandry



A New Symbol of Progress

If humanity intends to survive the effects of our own technology, we must first strive to understand the effects that our development has on the biosphere. This knowledge is critical in the case of climate change, and remains true in the case of artificial light. The harmful effects of artificial light on our ecosystem should give us cause to reevaluate how we have perceived artificial light as a symbol of human progress in the past. Perhaps when we think of a futuristic skyline, we should not think of a brightly glowing city. Instead we could imagine a darker city under the beautiful backdrop of a clear, starry sky.

Migration Happens - Farewell to Executive Director, Ralph Schardt

Dear Friends,

After 35 years in the Bay Area, my wife Julie and I have decided that we are going to migrate away from the West Coast, and have set plans for nesting in the Southwest. We both enjoyed working in the high-tech area when it was in its heyday and now find our final chapter with the work we have done in the nonprofit sector. Having a rewarding experience and now wanting something a little less fast-paced and busy, we decided to take flight to New Mexico. Our plans involve moving out of, and selling a home we've lived in for more than 35 years. There's a lot involved in such an endeavor. The choice I recently made is to step down as Executive Director for SCVAS and over the next few months, work part-time with the Board and our Transitional E.D., Kelly Alfrey, to provide a smooth and effortless transition, while I work on the start of the eastward migration to New Mexico.



I have been the E.D. for over 3 years and the challenges and rewarding experiences have been the best of my professional life. It was my honor to come on board and give some stability to the organization. It was good to work with longtime members while establishing an efficient database for recording, reactivating, and adding members – something vital to a successful chapter such as ours. I was also energized by working with new talent positioned in effective roles to strengthen our education and outreach activities. We have a solid, hard working staff and the chapter is gaining more members and creating more benefits than ever before. I will always remain an active member of SCVAS, and of course, stay in touch with the many friends and acquaintances I've met over the years. Our nest in New Mexico will be open to any of my SCVAS friends to visit, stay over and bird with us in one of the best birding areas in North America. No goodbyes, just “see you later.”

All My Very Best,

Ralph Schardt

Happy Birding, Everyone!

Events Calendar

Wed. 1/2 & 2/6; 7:30-9:00PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers
Embarcadero Room, Rinconada Library

1213 Newell Rd, Palo Alto

Topic 1/2: “Birding San Francisco Hotspots” with Bob Gunderson

Topic 2/6: “Video for Bird Photographers” with Bill Walker

See scvas.org/babp for details.

Tues. 1/8 & 2/12; 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 1/8: Killdeer

Topic 2/12: Avocet

Fri. 1/11 & 2/15; 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. *See calendar at scvas.org for details.*

Wed. 1/16 & 2/13; 12:00-1:00PM
Birding Google Campus

Meets at the intersection of Charleston Rd and Shorebird Way - park on campus. Googlers, Audubon members, and the general public are welcome. Contact Carolyn Knight with questions at carolynSCVAS@gmail.com.

Tues. 1/22; 12:00-1:30PM

Rally for Coyote Valley

Outside of San Jose City Hall. Please help us demonstrate public support for the protection of Coyote Valley. Contact Shani Kleinhaus to sign up at advocate@scvas.org.

Sat. 2/23 & 3/9; 10:00AM-1:00PM
Cavity Nesters Recovery Program

Orientation and Training

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino
See details on page 8.

Young Audubon Activities

Wed. 1/23 & 2/27; 10:00-11:15AM
Toddler Explorers

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino. Join SCVAS and Sierra Club - Loma Prieta Chapter for a free toddler discovery program including filling the bird feeders, creek exploration, and story time. *Toddlers must be accompanied by an adult.*
Space is limited, RSVP required - details and registration at scvas.org/YoungAudubon.

Mon. 1/21; 9:00AM-12:00PM

Community Service Day

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino
Details on page 10.

Field Notes

(October-November 2018)

by Pete Dunten

Greater White-fronted Goose through Red-necked Phalarope

October brought wintering geese back to our area. First to arrive was a **Greater White-fronted Goose**, seen flying over Ulistac NA on 5 Oct (OA). A gaggle of twelve was on the Coyote Creek Golf Course on 14 Oct (SCR). On 13 Oct a **Cackling Goose** flew over Morgan Hill (SCR). A wedge of seventy Cackling Geese followed by an additional twelve flew over Ed Levin CP on 5 Nov (BM). Smaller groups have been found in November at several locations between the bay and Coyote Valley (m. ob.). The

ter was on Alviso Salt Pond A16 on 7 Oct (DWn). The only report away from the bay was of one at the SCRWA Ponds outside Gilroy on 11 – 12 Oct (MJM, DZ, RWR). The hybrid **Cinnamon Teal x Northern Shoveler** was found again on 5 Nov along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road (GL). **Redhead** appear to be having another good year, after the phenomenal winter of 2017-2018, with 2,960 tallied on Pond A3W on 4 Nov (MJM, MMR, RJ). By mid-November, Shoreline Lake hosted both goldeneyes as well as a hybrid between the two. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found on 18 Nov (FV), one day after a hybrid **Barrow's x Common Goldeneye** was noted (STu). Both have stayed through the end of November. A **Common Loon** was on one of the deeper salt ponds in Alviso,

remained robust into November, with 135 censused on Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 4 Nov, together with nineteen additional plovers at other bayside locations on the same date (MJM, MMR, RJ). Single **Ruddy Turnstones** were noted on Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 6 Oct (STu) and in New Chicago Marsh adjacent to State St and Spreckles Ave between 6 Oct and 11 Nov (MJM, MMR, RJ, m. ob.). One to two **Pectoral Sandpipers** frequented the marsh along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road between 15 Oct and 22 Oct (BM, m. ob.). Another stopped at Coast Casey Forebay between 8 – 9 Nov (WGB, m. ob.). A **Baird's Sandpiper** slow to head south stopped at Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 2 Oct (GL). This bird was “late” in the sense that about one in one hundred Baird's Sandpipers in the county have been found after October 1st. A **Ruff** added to the great variety of shorebirds visiting the marsh along the entrance road to Don Edwards NWR on 14 Oct (FV). It was enjoyed by many through 20 Nov. A **Red-necked Phalarope** on 22 Oct in the marsh along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road was also late to head south (BrJ).

Lesser Black-backed Gull through Chestnut-collared Longspur

A second-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was in the gathering of gulls on Alviso Salt Pond A12 on 10 Nov (NoA). **Caspian Terns** took their leave early this year, with the latest report from Don Edwards NWR of a single tern on 21 Oct (BM). **Elegant Tern** numbers tapered from forty on 2 Oct at the Alviso A10/A11 levee (JVs) to twelve at Pond A4 on 5 Nov, the last date they were detected (MDo). At least one **Common Tern** remained with the large group of Forster's Terns near the Alviso A10/A11 levee through 6 Oct (RWR, JVs, ChJ, STu). Two were found there on the last day of September. All the tern activity attracted a **Parasitic Jaeger** to A11 on 3 Oct (RPh). It was seen harassing Forster's Terns, taking advantage of its superiority in the air to relieve the terns of the small fish they labor to catch. A **Common Poorwill** calling on 3 Nov at Santa Teresa CP was unseasonal (JRY). Immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** turned up at two locations in October. First was one at the Santa Clara Valley Water District headquarters on 23 Oct (AVe, JPa, KB). The sapsucker was seen through November and into December (m. ob.). Another immature Sapsucker was discovered at Ulistac NA on 26 Oct



Ruddy Turnstone by Garrett Lau

first **Snow Geese** of the winter were a group of five along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road on 31 Oct (MKi). Further south, one was on Coyote Lake on 3 Nov (ACo) and two were on a field on the outskirts of Morgan Hill on 10 Nov (SCR). Single Snow Geese visited the wetland adjacent to State St and Spreckles Ave in Alviso on 10 Nov (ChJ, BM), the Sunnyvale Community Center lawn on 23 Nov (MMR), the Shoreline Park kite-flying area on 26 Nov (JHu) and the Bay Trail south of Pond A1 on 29 Nov (WGB). Three calling **Tundra Swans** flew over Ogier Ponds on 13 Nov (RH). Forty-five in a V formation flew over the Don Edwards NWR EEC on 26 Nov (BB). Most winters, Tundra Swans aren't found in the county. They last visited in the winter of 2016-2017. The first **Eurasian Wigeon** of the win-

A11, on 6 Oct (STu). Sixty-eight **Brown Pelicans** at Shoreline Lake on 12 Nov (GL) was a good count for a date in November. Two **White-faced Ibises** briefly visited Charleston Slough on 7 Oct (CQ, MTd, BF), and a single ibis was found at the SCRWA outside Gilroy on 11 – 12 Oct (MJM, DZ, RWR). The first **Ferruginous Hawks** to arrive for the winter were single birds at the SJ/SC WTP on 6 Oct (DWn) and along Palm Ave in Coyote Valley on 8 Oct (JPa). A **Pacific Golden-Plover** stayed with Killdeer in the marsh along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road from 16 Oct (JVs) to 30 Oct (m. ob.). A week later the same location hosted an **American Golden-Plover**, the first in the county since 2006. The American Golden-Plover visited from 7 Nov (MDo) through 10 Nov (m. ob.). **Snowy Plover** numbers

Field Notes *cont'd*

(PLa) and seen through 24 Nov (m. ob.). **Hammond's Flycatchers** are rare in the fall. In addition to the Hammond's found in September, two occurred in October. One was at Ulistac NA on 5 Oct (OA) and another was at Sunnyvale Baylands on 23 Oct (PKe). A **Tropical Kingbird** along the Bay Trail adjacent to Moffett Field on 3 Nov was a nice find (DA). The **Townsend's Solitaire** present at West Valley College since the second week of September stayed until 25 Oct (OA). Another was on Mt Umunhum on 26 Nov (WGB). An invasion of **Mountain Bluebirds** began in November. On the 12th, two were at the Shoreline Park kite flying area (DZ, ST). This is the earliest date Mountain Bluebirds have arrived in the winter. On the 17th, five were hunting from fence lines along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley (STu). Four were still present there on 21 Nov (SPz, TB), and sightings have continued in December. Single **Phainopepla** were noted at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 23 Nov and opposite the Mockingbird Hill entrance to Quicksilver CP on 25 Nov (both JPa). A **Chestnut-collared Longspur** frequented the Shoreline Park kite-flying area between 10 Nov and 15 Nov (SCR, m. ob.). They occur a few times each decade, the last sighting being in 2004.

MacGillivray's Warbler through Scaly-breasted Munia

October saw the end of warbler migration, and a few hardy species were found in November in addition to the regularly wintering Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers. Migrant **MacGillivray's Warblers** visited Ulistac NA on 2 Oct (PB) and Stevens Creek north of Hwy 101 on 14 Oct (SCR). An **American Redstart** at Sunnyvale Baylands on 7 Oct (SCR) was the second this fall. A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Ulistac NA on 5 Oct (OA, m. ob.), the second sighting this fall from that location, a haven for migrants. **Palm Warblers** were found in exceptional numbers beginning in late October. On the 21st, one was at Los Capitancillos Ponds (JPa, KB); on the 29th, one was at the Don Edwards EEC (AMa). Between 10 and 13 Nov, one to two were at Byxbee Park (SCR, m. ob.), and at least one has remained into December (WGB). San Jose's Hogue Park hosted one between 13 and 24 Nov (KB, m. ob.). Finally, one was at the Shoreline Park kite-flying area on 15 Nov (ChH) and two

were near the Moffett Field Golf Course on 16 Nov (SCR). The only **Yellow-breasted Chat** noted this fall was one at the Coyote Creek Field Station on 3 Oct (DWn, WH). Staying late, possibly for the winter, were a **Yellow Warbler** at Ulistac NA on 19 Nov (JRu), a **Black-**

Yellow-headed Blackbirds joined the large blackbird flocks along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley between 8 Oct and 12 Oct (JPa, m. ob.). And on 18 Oct, three **Scaly-breasted Munias** were at a feeder in Morgan Hill, a new location in the county for this exotic species (SCR).



Palm Warbler by Gary Woods

throated Gray Warbler along the Guadalupe River opposite Ulistac NA on 16 Nov (PLa) and another in New Almaden on 25 Nov (JPa), and a **Wilson's Warbler** at the Palo Alto RWQCP on 10 Nov (SCR). Two **Clay-colored Sparrows** were among the attractions at the SCRWA outside Gilroy on 6 Nov (JPa et al.). **Swamp Sparrows** away from the bay outnumbered those wintering near it (or at least were easier to find). The first to arrive, on 23 Oct, was one at Los Gatos CP (JVs). Another was along the Guadalupe River Trail north of Blossom Hill Rd on 20 Nov (JPa, KB) and nearby on 23 – 24 Nov (AVe, EvM). Bayside, one was at the Sunnyvale WP-CP's Moffett Channel on 20 and 21 Nov (PDu, PL). This location is just within the San Jose CBC count circle. The first **White-throated Sparrow** of the season turned up at Sunnyvale Baylands on 9 Oct (PKe). The period brought single **Summer Tanagers** to West Valley College on 30 Oct (OA) and to the Arizona cactus garden at Stanford University on 18 Nov (JU). Neither was found again. A few **Western Tanagers** have chosen to stay in the area as temperatures drop. One has frequented a neighborhood in Mountain View into December (GZ), and two were in a Los Gatos neighborhood on 30 Nov (EvM). One to two

Observers: Ozzie Altus (OA), Dorian Anderson (DA), Noah Arthur (NoA), Patrick Baglee (PB), Terry Blows (TB), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KB), Angela Conry (ACo), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDu), Bob Foehring (BF), Chris Hayward (ChH), Rick Herder (RH), William Hoppes (WH), John Hull (JHu), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Brian Johnson (BrJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Pat Kenny (PKe), Mike Kinberg (MKi), Peter LaTourrette (PLa), Garrett Lau (GL), Patricia Lynch (PL), Aaron Maizlish (AMa), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), multiple observers (m. ob.), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Clarence Quindipan (CQ), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Judy Rudolph (JRu), Jennifer Rycenga (JRy), Michael Todd (MTd), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Julien Ueda (JU), Frank Vanslager (FV), Jason Vassallo (JVs), Ann Verdi (AVe), Dan Wenny (DWn), David Zittin (DZ), Gena Zolotar (GZ)

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

SCVAS Classes & Excursions

We are pleased to offer the following classes to our members and community. For more information, please call the Office at (408) 252-3747 or visit our website at scvas.org.

Get Started Birding in Santa Clara Valley

Classroom Session: Thursday, January 10 at McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino; 7:00-9:00PM

Field Session: Saturday, January 12 at Charleston Slough, Mountain View (meet at the end of Terminal Blvd); 8:00-11:00AM

Cost: Free! **Register:** Find the class on our calendar at scvas.org and RSVP to reserve your spot.

Description: If you are curious about identifying and observing birds around your neighborhood, dig into your local environment with this introductory class. We'll cover birding basics - families of common birds, their habitats, how to tell them apart, and how to use binoculars. You'll learn where to find birds in different seasons and tides. Instructor Mary Wisnewski started birding just over twenty years ago after taking a class just like this one. She has long been a fan of SCVAS field trips, which introduced her to many of her favorite birding destinations in California. Mary is a longtime participant in local Christmas Bird Counts, Jack Laws' Nature Journal Club, and the SCVAS Birdathon. She has just completed a course in Ecology of the Sierra Nevada at West Valley College.



Get Started Birding Field Session at Charleston Slough



Sandhill Cranes and White-faced Ibises
by Chuq Von Rospach

Merced National Wildlife Refuge with Chuq Von Rospach

Date: Sunday, January 13

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

Location: Merced National Wildlife Refuge

Cost: \$15 for members, \$25 for non-members

Register: Find the class on our calendar at scvas.org and register through the form.

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.

Cavity Nesters Recovery Program

Monitor Training Sessions (pick one session):

Saturday, February 23 OR March 9

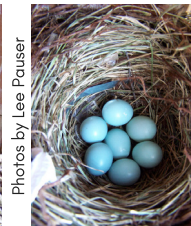
10:00AM-1:00PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

We will start with general information for potential and 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 various ways to volunteer. This session is open to all new monitors as well as any current monitors who would like a refresher.

Please RSVP online at scvas.org/cnrp.



Photos by Lee Pauser

Attention Current Monitors:

Don't forget to clean out your nest boxes by the end of February!

Conservation Corner: Check In With Our Environmental Advocate

by Shani Kleinhaus

In the November-December issue of *The Avocet*, we described the options evaluated by the City of Palo Alto for the **Emily Renzel Wetlands and ITT property in the Palo Alto Baylands**. We are glad to report that the “Preferred Alternative” recommended by the Parks and Recreation Department looks to remove derelict infrastructure and fully restore the site to wetlands and habitat, while allowing access on the perimeter. SCVAS submitted a letter to the California Restoration Authority Governing Board in support of the allocation of Measure AA funding for the Renzel Marsh Restoration and Enhancement Project. Stay tuned as this process continues through City, public, and permitting processes, and looks to integrate into the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Palo Alto Baylands.

Measure T in San Jose wins, what next? SCVAS endorsed Measure T, the Disaster Preparedness, Public Safety and Infrastructure Bond aimed at reducing stormwater pollution of creeks and the bay, preserving open space in Coyote Valley, and repairing streets to increase San Jose’s resilience. In November 2018, San Jose voters approved the bond, which included \$50 million for flood protection provided by Coyote Valley. On January 22, the San Jose City Council is bringing the future of the valley to a special study session to discuss the allocation of funding for the purchase of land in Coyote Valley. Please join us for a **Rally for Coyote Valley on January 22 at noon outside of the San Jose City Hall** (contact advocate@scvas.org to sign up). We need your help to show City Council there is broad public support for the protection of Coyote Valley.



Both photos: Coyote Valley by Merav Vonshak



Coyote Highlands becomes Coyote Canyon

In 2012, SCVAS fought the Coyote Highlands Cluster Subdivision, a luxury home development proposed on the last undeveloped hillside east of Morgan Hill. This site contains three creeks and is important for nesting raptors, including Golden Eagles. We were able to convince the County Supervisors to require a wildlife-friendly perimeter fence to allow the property’s bountiful wildlife to thrive. In 2015, the property was acquired by Santa Clara County Parks, and thus became permanently protected. Now, the County Parks and Recreation Department looks to open the site (renamed Coyote Canyon) to the public. The County is working on a Natural Resources Management Plan which currently includes multi-use trails, as

well as grazing, and fencing that is not wildlife-friendly. We have expressed concerns and will continue to advocate for fencing that allows wildlife access to drinking water and escape routes from fire. **Please join us at the County Parks Commission meeting on the evening of February 6, 2019** (contact advocate@scvas.org to sign up).

We are also following: Google’s plans for North Bayshore (Mountain View) and the Diridon Area (San Jose); wildlife-friendly fencing in Los Gatos, the Light Tower Project in San Jose, Sargent Ranch sand quarry proposal in South County, Stanford expansion and General Use Permit, and much, much more.

Friends of SCVAS

Gifts received October 1st through November 30th, 2018

California Quail (Up to \$99)

Diane Bates
Laurie Bechtler
Martha Bond
George & Debra Doeltz
Nikhil Kalyankar
Chris & John Knight
David Lewis
Eve Meier
Ann Myers Dolan
Laura Neault
Margaret & Fred Parkes
Don & Dee Price
Alex Ross
James Rumbaugh
Bradford & Janice Santos
Ted Tawshunsky
Sally Teeple
Gerald & Virginia Tuft
Steven Zamek

American Avocet (\$100-\$249)

Lawrence Baer
Patti Beck
Bonnie Bedford-White
John Colwell
Charles Coston
Monica Donovan
Michael Firenze
Lavonne Hardy
Christine & Richard Jeffers
Jerry & Ginny Kaminski
Mary Kamprath
Kim Lemmer
James Little
Cindy Lockhart
Lisa Miller
Curtis & Betty Mitchell
April Pufahl
Edward Reed
Annemarie Rosengreen

Michael Smith
Barbara Tyler
Ann Verdi

Burrowing Owl (\$250-\$499)

Steve Beyer
George Clifford
Mike Danzenbaker
G. C Edgerton
Jan Hintermeister
Michael & Leslie
Schroeder
David Sparks
Don & Robin Watenpaugh
Shirley Wodtke

Peregrine Falcon (\$500-\$999)

Brian Carr
Bob Hirt

John Richardson
Stephen Robie
Vrishali Wagle

Golden Eagle (\$1000-\$4999)

Gail & Doug Cheeseman
Tricia Clark
Fenton Family Foundation
David Simon

Young Audubon

For more information and to register, go to scvas.org/YoungAudubon.

Community Service Day at McClellan Ranch

Monday, January 21 (MLK Day!); 9:00AM-12:00PM

Start out the new year by helping your local environment! We'll work with Grassroots Ecology to remove invasive weeds and learn about the wildlife and habitats of McClellan Ranch.



Elephant Seal Walks at Año Nuevo State Park

Saturday, April 6; walks begin at 10:00, 10:30, and 11:00AM for 2.5 hours each

Register now for an unforgettable guided walk to see the Elephant Seals! Families with children ages 7 and older are welcome to attend. Space is limited, so sign up early!

Audubon Naturalist Training for High School Students

Monday-Friday, July 15-23; 9:00AM-2:00PM

Cost: \$175/member or \$225/non-member

Improve your outdoor skills with training in navigation, wildlife and plant identification, and nature interpretation. An Audubon Naturalist certification will be awarded upon completion of training.



Registration is required for the events above. Please register at scvas.org/YoungAudubon.

Nature Shop

Hours:

Mon-Thurs 10:00AM-4:30PM

Sat 10:00AM-2:00PM

Volunteers are wanted to run the shop on Fridays - please call the office for details and up-to-date Friday operating hours.



SALE: \$13!
YOU SAVE \$2

Our 2018 Wildlife & Harvest Day T-shirts are now on sale! Stop by the shop and pick up yours today!

Thank you for your support! Don't forget that members receive a 10% discount, and volunteers get a 20% discount on purchases. We hope to see you soon!

BIRDATHON IS NEAR

More details in our next newsletter! See updates at scvas.org/birdathon.

Important Dates:

Kickoff Dinner: March 30

Window: March 31-May 5

Awards Dinner: June 1

RUMMAGE SALE

Saturday, Apr. 27 10:00AM-3:00PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve

Ready to clean out your closet, garage, car, etc. to get organized for the New Year? We are now taking donations for our next Rummage Sale! To donate gently used items, please stop by our office at McClellan Ranch. See the Nature Shop page for current operating hours.

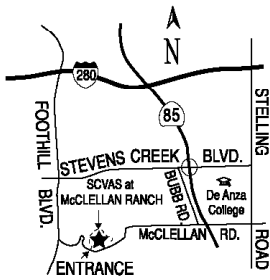
WE ARE ACCEPTING DONATIONS OF:

- Photography Equipment
- Household Items
- Appliances
- Artwork
- Electronics Accessories
- Framed Photographs
- Binoculars
- Clothing
- Outdoor Equipment
- Home Decorations
- Children's Toys
- Bird Feeders

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
22221 McClellan Road
Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: 408-252-3747
E-mail: scvas@scvas.org
www.scvas.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
San Jose, CA
Permit No. 5869



New Members of SCVAS

*Those who joined October 1st - November 30th, 2018.
We look forward to a great year with your support!*

Lawrence Baer	Karolyn Hartzman	Jan Null
Becky Beniares	Mitch Harwell	Heidi Paessler
Steve Beyer	Alison Kumpf	Joanne Petersen
Tricia Clark	Chris Lamm	Joel Scianna
Robert Cormia	Kim Lemmer	Jacob West
Tom Crock	Ivette Lopez	
Sarah Dudney	Niti Madan	
Paul Gareis	James Marguet	

And thank you to those who renewed their membership!

Check it out!

If you receive the mailed version of our newsletter, your membership expiration date is listed above your name in the mailing address. We will still send renewal notices prior to your due date, but we thought you might appreciate having a date to keep in mind. Thank you for your continued support!

STAFF

Transitional Executive Director

Kelly Alfrey, outreach@scvas.org
(408) 627-7172

Office Manager

April Austin, scvas@scvas.org
(408) 252-3747

Environmental Advocate

Shani Kleinhaus, shani@scvas.org
(650) 868-2114

Burrowing Owl Conservation

Sandra Menzel, sandmenzel@gmail.com
(831) 431-3301

Education Programs Coordinator

Kelsey Frey, programs@scvas.org
(408) 252-3740

Education and Outreach Specialist

Carolyn Knight, carolynscvas@gmail.com

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

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

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 - Thursday 10:00AM - 4:30PM
Friday *Call Office*
Saturday 10:00AM - 2:00PM

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 Diane Hart
Vice President Vivek Khazodé
Secretary Joan Leighton

DIRECTORS

Mike Armer John Richardson
Gabrielle Feldman
Peter Hart
Bob Hirt

2019 Volume 67, Number 1

C1ZC140Z

Avocet Editor: Kelly Alfrey
Assistant Avocet Editor: Kelsey Frey