



# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

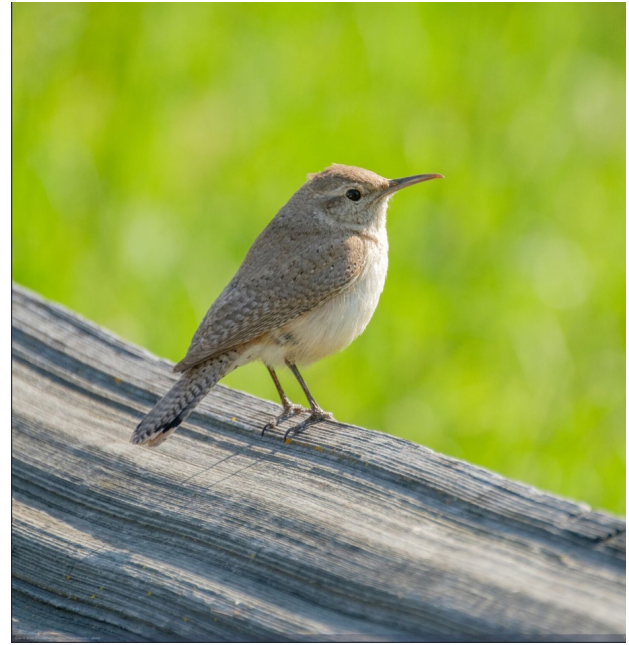
March-April 2019

## Birdathon is On! Are You Ready? *by Chuq Von Rospach, Birdathon Committee Chair*

**A**s we approach Spring Migration, our thoughts turn to Spring Birdathon - our annual fundraising event that kicks off Saturday, March 30th and runs through May 5th. This is the most fun you will ever have fundraising, and your contributions help fund our education programs throughout the year.

It's easy to get involved: if you want to learn more about birds and birding in Santa Clara County, you can join one of the organized groups and go out with experienced leaders who will share their knowledge with you during the outing. If you want to support the fundraiser without joining a group, set yourself as a solo participant and go out and bird and report in your results. Have a group of friends you want to bird with? Set up your own team and have a good time while helping Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society fund its ongoing projects.

**Ready to sign up?** Just go to [scvas.org/birdathon](http://scvas.org/birdathon) to find dates and team descriptions, and register as a participant or create your own team. Then, all you need to do is find sponsors and go birding! There are events for all levels of birders, from brand new, enthusiastic learners to our most experienced people. For those just starting out, consider one of our big sits, where we find a good place to hang out and wait for the birds to come to us. Like bird photography? Join a photography team!



Rock Wren from Birdathon 2018 by Chuq Von Rospach

*cont'd on page 4*

### Key Birdathon Dates

- **March 30, 2019: Kick-off Dinner** We'll start off with a catered dinner and some friendly competitive birding.
- **March 31-May 5: Competition Window** Pick a team or start your own! Get out and bird!
- **June 1: Awards Dinner** Time to recognize the biggest fundraisers and best birders, and hand out a few prizes.

## Monthly Speaker Series

**NEW Location:** Redwood Hall at The Terraces in Los Altos; for directions go to [scvas.org/SpeakerSeries](http://scvas.org/SpeakerSeries)  
**NEW Time:** Doors open 7:00PM; Program begins 7:30PM

### Wed. 3/20 with Bruce Lyon - "Reconsider the Coot"

Coots are often overlooked because they are so common, but Bruce Lyon, professor of Evolutionary Ecology at UC Santa Cruz, has been studying the unique reproductive behaviors of American Coots for two decades. This talk will highlight some of his discoveries, from both a natural history and scientific perspective.



### Wed. 4/17 with Norman Kikuchi, M.D. - "Birds of the American West"

This program will feature photographs of iconic birds of the Western U.S. from birding hotspots in New Mexico, Oregon, and California. When he's not out photographing all of the breeding birds in the U.S. and Canada, Norman Kikuchi practices Urgent Care and Occupational Medicine. He is also a Santa Cruz Bird Club lifetime member and SCVAS field trip leader.

## March-April Field Trips

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

*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](http://scvas.org/FieldTrips), then find your trip and follow the easy registration directions. A confirmation email will follow. If you have any questions, please email Eve Meier, the Field Trip Coordinator, at [scvasfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:scvasfieldtrips@gmail.com).

#### **Saturday, March 2; 8:00AM**

##### **Coyote Point,**

##### **San Mateo County Bayside**

Half day. **Leader:** Al Eisner, [days and voicemail: (650) 926-2018]. **Directions:** From 101-N, exit at Peninsula Ave. Turn right immediately at the "T," then left at the next "T" (traffic lights at both), which is Peninsula Ave, and into the park (admission charge). Continue along golf course fence and beyond to end of road. Meet at the parking lot adjacent to the yacht club. **Highlights:** Coyote Point is a prime San Mateo County birding location, with bayside, marsh, and landbird areas. This trip should be good for shorebirds (including "rock-birds" more typical of the ocean coast) and waterfowl (Harlequin Duck is possible). **Difficulty:** Mostly level walk. **Notes:** Scopes will be very useful. **RC**

#### **Tuesday, March 5; 9:30AM**

##### **Pearson-Arastradero Preserve**

##### **Birding with the Board!**

Half day. **Leaders:** Mike Armer and John Richardson, (650) 450-1788. **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. **Highlights:** Join SCVAS Board members Mike and John on this trip to bird grassland and oak woodland habitats. We'll be on the lookout for raptors, woodpeckers, and wintering sparrows. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous hiking. **Notes:** Limited to 20 participants. **RC**

#### **Wednesday, March 6; 12:00PM**

##### **City of Sunnyvale Landfill**

One hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer. Contact landfill coordinator, Silviana 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 Porta Potty. **Difficulty:** Birding geared toward beginners. **Notes:** Bring binoculars; loaners available. **RC, KF-10+**

#### **Saturday, March 9; 8:00AM**

##### **Almaden Lake (East Side) and Los Alamitos Creek Trail**

3 hours. **Leader:** Mary Wisnewski, (408) 887-0738. **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 fee. Meet near blue bathrooms. **Highlights:** We'll look for waterfowl and wading birds at the lake then explore the riparian habitat of the creek looking for sparrows, finches, and other songbirds. **Difficulty:** Easy 2-3-mile walk on paved bike path. **RC**

#### **Sunday, March 10; 8:00AM**

##### **Stevens Creek County Park**

Half day. **Leader:** Dave Zittin, (408) 515-7104. **Directions:** From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south and follow Foothill Blvd south (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd) for 2.1 miles. Turn left into first park entrance and meet in Chestnut Picnic Area parking lot. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous walk looking for migrants and local breeding birds in a riparian area. **Notes:** Vehicle entry fee required. **RC, KF-AA**

#### **Wednesday, March 13; 8:30AM**

##### **Calero Creek Trail**

3 hours. **Leader:** Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** From San Jose, take Almaden Expwy southeast until it ends at Harry Rd. Turn right onto Harry, then make the first left onto McKean Rd. Travel 1.3 miles to Fortini Rd. Turn left onto Fortini Rd toward the Santa Teresa Hills. At the end of Fortini, turn left onto San Vicente Ave. Parking is on the right. **Highlights:** This flat trail runs along the bottom of the Santa Teresa Hills passing through grassland, chaparral, riparian habitats, and an old orchard. We'll look for Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Wrentits, returning swallows, and Wood Ducks. **Difficulty:** 2-3-mile walk over possibly muddy/uneven trails. **Notes:** Closest facilities at Calero County Park at the Rancho San Vicente entrance. Beginners welcome! **RC, NF, KF-10+**

#### **Sunday, March 17; 8:00AM**

##### **Ed Levin County Park (North) Birding with the Board!**

3 hours. **Leader:** Bill Walker, (408) 887-4572. **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:** Join SCVAS Board member, Bill Walker, to look for park regulars (magpies, eagles, goldfinches), and spring activity in Milpitas' prime birding hotspot. **Difficulty:** 2-mile walk over grass and unpaved trails. Trail is steep in places. **Notes:** Entrance fee. **RC**

#### **Monday, March 18; 8:30AM**

##### **Oka Ponds**

##### **(Los Gatos Creek County Park)**

3 hours. **Leader:** Dani Christensen, (408) 781-5530. **Directions:** From Hwy 17 take the Camden Ave/San Tomas Expwy exit. Go west on San Tomas, then take Dell Ave. Follow Dell to the park entrance, on the left. Meet in the parking lot near restrooms. **Highlights:** We'll be walking around Oka Ponds looking and listening for breeding songbirds, waterbirds, and lingering wintering waterfowl. **Difficulty:** Easy, flat walk on gravel or paved trails. **Notes:** Use county pass or purchase \$6 day pass at parking lot. **RC**

#### **Friday, March 22; 1:00PM**

##### **Backyard Birds at McClellan Ranch**

1.5 hours. **Leader:** Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** McClellan Ranch Preserve is located at 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino. From 280-S in Mountain View, take the Foothill Expwy Exit onto N Foothill Blvd. In 1.3 miles, turn left onto McClellan Blvd. The ranch will be on your left in 0.4 miles. **Highlights:** Learn your backyard birds and more at this beginner's bird walk while we start by watching the bird feeders then stroll along a paved trail. **Difficulty:** 1-2-mile walk on paved path. **Notes:** Binoculars available. **RC, KF-10+**

## Field Trips

cont'd

### Saturday, March 23; 8:00AM

#### Palo Alto Baylands (Photowalk)

Half day. **Leader:** Chuq Von Rospach, (408) 221-0797. **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 Duck Pond (paved lot on the left). **Highlights:** We'll look for bird photography opportunities and interesting species (lots of shorebirds and waterfowl migrants). **Difficulty:** Some flat land walking but accessible to all. **Notes:** Open to photographers of all levels and any type of camera. Questions about photography? Bring them to discuss with the leader and other participants. **RC**

### Sunday, March 24; 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+**

### Wednesday, March 27; 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, March 30; 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 with the parking in the main park if necessary. **Highlights:** We'll check out Grant Lake and other park locations for early migrants and resident birds. **Notes:** Entry fee required (\$6 or SC County Park pass) for main park area. **RC**

### Wednesday, April 3; 12:00PM

#### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer. Contact landfill coordinator, Silviana Ruiz, with questions at (408) 730-7545. See write-up for March 6. **RC, KF-10+**

### Saturday, April 6; 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. Possible Great Horned Owl, Hermit Thrush, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, California Thrasher, Acorn Woodpeckers, raptors. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous 3-mile walk. **RC, KF-14+**

### Wednesday, April 10; 8:30AM

#### Santa Teresa County Park

3 hours. **Leader:** Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** Take Hwy 101 or Hwy 85 to the Bernal Rd exit. Continue on Bernal past the golf course and uphill, turning left at the entrance. Meet at Pueblo Picnic Area near bathrooms. **Highlights:** We'll explore the upper grassland areas and rocky hillsides of the Santa Teresa Hills and look for Western Kingbirds, Ash-throated Flycatchers, and Lark Sparrows. **Difficulty:** 2-mile walk over possibly muddy/uneven trails. **Notes:** Use county pass or purchase \$6 day pass at first parking lot. Beginners welcome! **RC, KF-10+**

### Friday, April 12; 8:30AM

#### Coyote Creek Trailhead

#### (Anderson Lake County Park)

3 hours. **Leader:** Dani Christensen, (408) 781-5530. **Directions:** Take Hwy 101-S to Cochrane Exit, turning left on Cochrane. After about a mile, turn left on Malaguerra Ave and continue into Anderson Lake County Park, with parking lots on the left. Meet in front of the Visitor Center. **Highlights:** We'll explore the southern part of the meandering Coyote Creek Trail, and look for Wood Ducks, Common and Hooded Mergansers, and listen for breeding songbirds. **Difficulty:** ~2.5-mile out-and-back walk over a mostly flat trail. **Notes:** Use county pass or purchase \$6 day pass at parking lot. **RC**

### Sunday, April 14; 8:00AM

#### Stile Ranch Entrance to Santa Teresa County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Mary Wisnewski, (408) 887-0738. **Directions:** From Hwy 85 exit Almaden Expwy and follow until it dead-ends; turn right onto Harry; go 1 block, go left onto McKean. In 1.3 miles, turn left onto Fortini Rd. Travel to end of road, turn left, and park at Stile Ranch trailhead. **Highlights:** We'll climb switchbacks among the wildflowers and look for thrashers, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and spring activity. **Difficulty:** Trail is steep and rocky. **Notes:** Closest facilities at Calero County Park at the Rancho San Vicente entrance. Bring water. **NF, RC**

### Saturday, April 20; 8:00AM

#### Cañada de los Osos Ecological Preserve, Gilroy

Half day. **Leader:** Rick Herder, (408) 930-1029. **Directions:** Meet for carpooling at 8:00AM in the parking lot behind Subway at 6981 Cameron Blvd, Pacheco Pass Hwy (152 East) east of Gilroy. Cañada de los Osos is a Dept. of Fish & Wildlife facility open by invitation only, located at the east end of Jamieson Rd. **Highlights:** Oak woodlands, grasslands, wetlands with possible Tricolored Blackbird colony. **Difficulty:** Mostly level walk, some creek beds to explore. **RC**

### Saturday, April 27; 9:00AM

#### Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. See write-up for Mar 24. **RC, KF-10+**

### Sunday, April 28; 9:00AM

#### Santa Clara Valley Water District

1.5 hours. **Leaders:** Robin Chen and Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** SCVWD is located at 5700 Almaden Expwy, San Jose. From Hwy 85, take the Almaden Expwy Exit south. Continue south on Almaden Expwy. At the first light after crossing Blossom Hill, turn left onto Via Monte Dr to enter the SCVWD parking lot. Park in visitor parking or other unmarked parking, meet in front of the main building towards the north end of the lot. **Highlights:** We'll bird the pond, if it is full, and Guadalupe River in search of ducks, wading birds, and song birds. **Difficulty:** 1-2 miles easy walking. **Notes:** Beginners welcome! **RC, NF, KF-10+**



## Team Categories

- **Single-participant Teams** – Bird on your own time at your favorite location!
- **24-hour Teams** – Include all outings longer than 4 hours. These often run ten-twelve hours and may start in the pre-dawn hours for some owling, and are often built around one-day big days (chasing the most species).
- **4-hour Teams** – These are shorter events that usually explore one area of the county. They tend to have a slower pace than the 24-hour events and work well for new birders and those hoping to learn the good birding areas in the county.
- **Big Sits** – These are four-hour events where we sit and let the birds come to us - perfect for new birders, those who can't do a lot of hiking, or who want to be social and talk birding while we identify as many species as we can without leaving the sit circle.
- **24-hour Photography Teams** – Just like the 24-hour teams, a photography team has one day to photograph as many species as possible for fun and bragging rights.
- **4-hour Photography Teams** – Just like the 24-hour photography challenge, but shorter, and less intense.

Most important... Don't forget to submit your results to the Birdathon Coordinator so you can be eligible to win some amazing prizes! Prizes are awarded based on the amount of donations raised, number of species seen, number of species photographed, and so on. For more information on award categories and prizes, check out the "Rules" and "Prizes" tabs at [scvas.org/birdathon](http://scvas.org/birdathon).

## How to Get Involved

- **Join a Guided Team:** Pick a team or intensity level that interests you and register online for a \$50 donation (\$15 for participants 18 years or younger).
- **Form Your Own Team:** Grab a friend, choose a date, team name, and location, and head out to record the birds you see.
- **Go Solo:** Don't want to join a team? Sign up, pay your donation, and go out and bird during the event. You can do whatever type of outing you want – it's your outing!
- **Sponsor:** Want to help SCVAS but can't get out and bird? Do a feeder watch and donate with the results, or just send in a donation to support the organization. You can also make pledges based on the results of other participants or teams.
- **Encourage Others to Sponsor:** Talk to friends, family, and co-workers about pledging a donation based on the results of your outing. Many members get pledges based on the number of species they see.

## How to Donate

Donate online at [scvas.org/birdathon](http://scvas.org/birdathon), or send a check to:

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

*If sending a check, please write "Birdathon" and your team/participant's name (if applicable) on the memo line.*

## Questions?

Contact Birdathon Coordinator, Carolyn Knight at [scvasbirdathon@gmail.com](mailto:scvasbirdathon@gmail.com).

## Events Calendar

**Wed. 3/6 & 4/3; 7:30-9:00PM**

### **Bay Area Bird Photographers**

Embarcadero Room, Rinconada Library  
1213 Newell Rd, Palo Alto

Topic 3/6: "Southern Arizona Bird Photography & Hotspots" with Tom Ingram  
Topic 4/3: "Birding, Island Style" with Vayun Tiwari

See [scvas.org/babp](http://scvas.org/babp) for details.

**Sat. 3/9; 10:00AM-1:00PM**

### **Cavity Nesters Recovery Program Orientation and Training**

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino  
See details on page 5.

**Tues. 3/12 & 4/9; 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 3/12: Tanagers

Topic 4/9: Sharp-shinned & Cooper's Hawks

**Fri. 3/15 & 4/12; 12:00-1:30PM**

### **Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws**

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

\*Note: New time!!\*

Free workshops for all ages! No RSVP required; please be on time. See calendar at [scvas.org](http://scvas.org) for details.

**Sat. 4/27; 10:00AM-3:00PM**

### **Rummage Sale!**

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino  
See details on page 12 (back page).

## Young Audubon

**Sat. 4/7; 10:00, 10:30, and 11:00AM**

### **Elephant Seal Walks**

Año Nuevo State Park

Register now for a guided walk to see the Elephant Seals! Families with children ages 7 and older are welcome to attend.

Cost: \$5/member; \$10/non-member

Space is limited, details and registration at [scvas.org/YoungAudubon](http://scvas.org/YoungAudubon).

### **Audubon Naturalist Training for High School Students**

Please note: We are sad to announce that due to recent transitions, we are unable to offer Audubon Naturalist Training in the summer of 2019. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused and look forward to a new class of Audubon Naturalists in 2020!

## SCVAS Classes & Excursions

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

### Cavity Nesters Recovery Program - Nest Box Monitor Training

**Date:** Saturday, March 9 **Time:** 10:00AM-1:00PM **Instructor:** Mike Azevedo

**Location:** McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

**Cost:** Free! **Register:** RSVP online at [scvas.org/CNRP](http://scvas.org/CNRP).

**Description:** We will start with general information for 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 trail at McClellan Ranch and learn how to open nest boxes, identify species, and troubleshoot. This session is open to new monitors and current monitors who would like a refresher.

### Get Started Birding in Santa Clara Valley

**Classroom Session:** Thursday, March 14 at McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino; 7:00-9:00PM

**Field Session:** Saturday, March 16 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](http://scvas.org) and RSVP to reserve your spot. **Instructor:** Mary Wisniewski

**Description:** Are you curious about identifying and observing birds here in the Bay Area? Dig into your local environment with this introductory class and associated field trip. In our evening 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, and then practice what we learned in a weekend field trip.

### Beginner's Bird and Plant ID Walk Series

**Date:** Sunday, March 24 **Time:** 9:00AM-12:00PM **Instructors:** Vicki Silvas-Young (SCVAS) and Arvind Kumar (CNPS)

**Location:** Lake Cunningham Park - 2305 South White Road, San Jose; meet at the Marina building

**Cost:** Free! \$6 parking fee. **Register:** RSVP via "California Native Plant Society - Santa Clara Valley Chapter" Meetup for directions and details.

**Description:** As spring begins, join us for a beginner's bird and plant identification walk through Lake Cunningham Park, a major destination for waterfowl and migratory birds. **Note:** Please meet at the Marina building at 9:00AM. The Marina is on the western shore of the lake, next to Raging Waters, at the opposite end of the park from the main entrance on White Road. In Google Maps, search for "Lake Cunningham Marina."

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

### Yuba Pass and Sierra Valley Excursion

**Date:** Saturday-Sunday, June 8-9 **Time:** 8:00AM - approx. 4:00PM **Leader:** Dave Zittin

**Location:** Meet at Bassett Station (100 Gold Lake Rd, Sierra City, CA 96125)

**Cost:** \$30/member, \$50/non-member. \*Lodging and meals *not* provided. It is highly recommended that participants secure lodging immediately. For a partial list of lodging and more information, email [dzittin@gmail.com](mailto:dzittin@gmail.com).\* **Register:** Find the excursion on our calendar at [scvas.org](http://scvas.org) and register through the form.

**Description:** Come explore one of the Sierra Nevada's summer birding jewels. On Day 1 we will explore the Yuba Pass area and on Day 2 we will explore Sierra Valley. For a list of potential birds, check the event description at [scvas.org](http://scvas.org). **Note:** Rain or snow cancels, with refund.

## *Bon Voyage to Kelsey Frey, Education Programs Coordinator*

Dear Friends,

I have very much enjoyed working for SCVAS for the past 2 years, and, of course, getting to know all of you! Thank you for making my job that much more enjoyable, and for all the help I've received with our education programs – we really couldn't have done it without our wonderful volunteers!

I started out as a volunteer, and after two days was hired as an intern. Then I became an Education and Outreach Associate, Birdathon Coordinator, and finally, Education Programs Coordinator. At first, I was not what you'd call a "birder." I enjoyed nature, sure, but I didn't know the difference between a chickadee and a junco. Now, I'm happy to say that I've fallen in love with birds. I want to know their names, habits, where they live and sleep... (I'm becoming convinced that "bird watcher" should be changed to "bird stalker.") I secretly drag my friends out on birding excursions disguised as "nature hikes." I've even earned the nickname "birdbrain" in one friend group (not sure if this is a compliment or something I should find offense from; although after reading *The Genius of Birds* I'm convinced it's the former.)

I am grateful for all that I've learned and done while working here, all the young lives I've introduced to the joys of birding, and all the wonderful people I've met and worked with. It's been a good run, but after growing up in and then returning to the Bay Area, I'm ready to spread my wings and continue my migration. I will always hold a fond place in my heart for SCVAS, and will always know where I can fly home to.



*Kelsey Frey*



# Field Notes

(December 2018-January 2019)

by Pete Dunten

## Greater White-fronted Goose through White-faced Ibis

At least one **Greater White-fronted Goose** frequented Shoreline Park between 4 Dec and 24 Jan (m. ob.). The high count was four at the Shoreline kite-flying area on 3 Jan (WBr, JL). Three were found at Palo Alto Baylands on 2 Jan (CnB), 4 Jan (BM), and 27 Jan (DBp, JSu). Single 'speckle bellies' were also on the north VTA mitigation pond on 11 Dec (RJ) and at Arzino Ranch on 12 Jan (AR).

High counts of **Cackling Geese** included four at the north end of Coyote Valley on 7 Dec (KON, WP), seven at Penitencia Creek Park on 16 Dec (AVe), three at Arzino Ranch on 25 Dec (SPv), and six at Noble Park in the Berryessa neighborhood of San Jose near Penitencia Creek Park on both 22 Jan (WP, KON) and 26 Jan (SPz, GRy). One of the seven was a smaller "minima" Cackling Goose. The only other "minima" was first noted 29 Dec in Coyote Valley near Laguna Ave (RPh). Small numbers of **Snow Geese** frequented the margins of SF Bay between 11 Dec and 7 Jan. The high count was four at Arzino Ranch on 4-5 Jan (RJ, SPz, WP, KON) and flying over the Don Edwards NWR EEC on 7 Jan (BLL, VLL). Further afield, three Snow Geese were present at Calaveras Reservoir on 16 Jan for the San Jose CBC (TO), five were at Guadalupe River Park on 29 Dec (SPz), and one joined the geese in Coyote Valley between Bailey Ave and Laguna Ave on 3 Jan and 5 Jan (KP, BM, GL). The last of the geese to arrive was **Ross's Goose**. One visited Byxbee Park on 31 Dec (JHy) and one was on Alviso salt pond A10 on 26 Jan (RJ, MJM, MMR). Two groups of **Tundra Swans** overflow neighborhoods in southwest San Jose. A bevy of ten passed over the Almaden area on 29 Dec (THa) and a whiteness of

eight flew over the Cambrian area on 12 Jan (AVe). One to two **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** are wintering at the north VTA mitigation pond again this year. One was spotted on 7 Dec (RJ) and two were found on 21 Dec (MDo). Another was found on San Tomas Aquino Creek near Hwy 237 on 22 Dec (KON, WP). A **Eurasian Green-winged Teal intergrade** (KG) joined the group of teal on the VTA mitigation pond on 23 Dec (KG). A solo **Long-tailed Duck** on Alviso salt pond A15 graced the San Jose CBC on 16 Dec (MMR) and stayed through 25 Dec (SPv). Long-tailed Ducks are found in the county roughly two years in every five. **Redhead** counts reached record levels this winter, with 3075



Summer Tanager by Karen Burnson

Redhead on Alviso salt pond A11 on 26 Dec (SCR) and 4058 on ponds A10 and A11 on 26 Jan (MMR, MJM, RJ). A single male **Barrow's Goldeneye** and a male **Barrow's x Common Goldeneye** both visited Shoreline Lake beginning in mid-November. On 2 Dec a male Barrow's Goldeneye moved to nearby pond A1 (BM). A female was found on Alviso salt pond A11 during the San Jose CBC on 16 Dec (SCR). Two different male Barrow's x Common Goldeneye hybrids were on Shoreline Lake through the period (m. ob.). **Brown Pelicans** remained in the area in good numbers, with 42 counted at Shoreline Lake

on 14 Dec (RPh). A flock of thirteen **Cattle Egrets** flying over Saratoga on 6 Dec were the first record for the year (RPh). Their destination - unknown. Cattle Egrets occur annually in the county; the last year Cattle Egrets were missed was 1986. Single **White-faced Ibis** visited Alviso salt pond A16 on 5 Dec (LC) and 16 Dec (ST) and nearby Alviso Slough on 25 Dec (ErS).

## Swainson's Hawk through Barn Swallow

A **Swainson's Hawk** over Newby Island on 18 Dec was the first record in the county for December (AR). **Snowy Plovers** were concentrated on Alviso salt pond A12 on 26 Jan, when 72 were tallied during a census (RJ, MJM, MMR). Single

**Ruddy Turnstones** were sighted on 7 Dec at Gold St and Elizabeth St in Alviso (MDo) and on 20 Dec at salt pond A12 in Alviso (WGB). Turnstones are least likely in winter, though they can be found in the county in any season. A count of fourteen **Sanderling** on A12 during the San Jose CBC on 16 Dec was a nice tally (SCR, MMR). **Black Skimmers** favored locations further north in SF Bay this winter; all sightings in the South Bay were of single birds. One was seen at Shoreline Lake on 1-2 Jan (WGB, RJ, GL, EdG) and one was at salt pond A16 on 26 Jan (RJ, MJM, MMR), while as many as 61 were at the Foster City shell bar in San Mateo county during the period. The only report of **Short-eared Owls** this winter came on 19 Jan when a pair were courting along Marsh Rd (WP, KON). High counts of **White-throated Swifts** are possible in the winter when large numbers gather at dusk to roost together. The count of 290 over Coyote Valley OSP on 2 Dec was exceptional (STu). Not long after the beginning of the new year our first spring migrants arrive, well ahead of the vernal equinox. The first **Allen's Hummingbirds** was spotted on 23 Jan at McClellan Ranch Preserve (GL), followed on 24 Jan by two in a Mountain View neighborhood and two at Whisman Park (both MDo). A quiet

## Field Notes *cont'd*

tap-tap-tapping this time of year may be the first clue a sapsucker is wintering. Fresh sap wells are another clue, often revealed by other small birds, the hummingbirds, kinglets and warblers attracted to the insects which are drawn to the sap. Finding a sapsucker is only the first challenge. Sorting out which species or hybrid is present is the second. A few of the sapsuckers spending the winter with us have been cooperative, returning to the same trees repeatedly. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** at Guadalupe Creek along Hicks Rd has been present from 2 Jan through the end of the period (WP, KON, m. ob.). Another was found during the Palo Alto CBC in Monte Bello OSP on 17 Dec (DPy). **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were present at four locations. The immature found at the Santa Clara Valley Water District headquarters on 23 Oct remained at least through 27 Jan (GRy). The immature at Ulistac NA first noted on 26 Oct stayed through at least 10 Jan (PLa). Two more immature Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were discovered during the period, one at Lake Cunningham present between 8 – 16 Dec (WP, KON) and one at Hellyer CP on 29 Dec (VT et al.). A **Cassin's Kingbird** at Los Gatos CP on 2 Jan (BM) was a nice find. Late December brought flocks of **Tree Swallows**, with forty over Byxbee Park on 26 Dec (JD) and 25 over Lake Cunningham on 6 Jan (WP, KON). **Violet-green Swallows** outnumbered Tree Swallows over Lake Cunningham on 6 Jan (WP, KON) when 100 were present. A flock of eighty Tree/Violet-green Swallows over the Coyote Creek Field Station on 26 Dec were too distant to identify (DWn). For the third winter in a row, **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were found in December, with one at Lake Cunningham on 16 Dec and two along the Penitencia Creek Trail on 26 Dec (both GL). **Barn Swallows** were found early in the winter, with two at Lake Cunningham on 9 Dec (BLL, VLL), two at Almaden Lake Park on 11 Dec (BM), one over Charleston Slough on 14 Dec (SPv, RT), three along Clayton Rd near Mt Hamilton on 5 Jan (WP, KON), and one at Lake Cunningham on 16 Jan (KON).

### **Pygmy Nuthatch through Cassin's Finch**

Sixteen **Pygmy Nuthatches** at Cuesta Park in Mountain View on 14 Jan was

a record high count for the park (GL). A small number of **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** stayed for the winter. One was noted at Santa Teresa CP on 12 Dec (PL, EvM) and 22 Dec (MFa), three were along Arroyo Hondo on 16 Dec (PDu), and one was heard along the Mule Trail on Mt Hamilton on 2 Jan (BMa). Two **Townsend's Soli-**



Summer Tanager by Brooke Miller

**taires** near Loma Prieta were a nice surprise on 29 Dec during the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC (BBz). The **Mountain Bluebirds** along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley since 17 Nov stayed into the first week of December. A male was last seen on 2 Dec (JWm) and a female was still present on 3 Dec (JSt). Both **Phainopeplas** found in late November remained into January. The Phainopepla at Almaden Quicksilver CP was found through 9 Jan (JD) and the Phainopepla at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park through 26 Jan (STu). Additional sightings were of single birds in Stevens Creek CP on Charcoal Rd on 23 Dec (MPy) and along Guadalupe Creek near Via Lugano on 13 Jan (BLL, VLL). Phainopeplas are rarely found as far west as the Stevens Creek CP location in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The sighting along Guadalupe Creek was a good example of the "Patagonia rest stop effect," wherein the discovery of one rare bird (a Summer Tanager in this instance) leads to more discoveries soon thereafter. A **Nashville Warbler** along San Francisquito Creek near Stanford was a nice find on the Palo Alto CBC on 17 Dec (WBr, JL). A **Blackburnian Warbler** along Coyote Creek near Silver Creek Valley Rd was only the sixth record for

the county. First seen on 2 Dec (JPa), the warbler remained through 9 Jan (JRg, KBy). **Yellow Warblers** are found during winter in four of every five years. This winter one was along Coyote Creek above Silver Creek Valley Rd on 14 Dec and 7 Jan (both PDu) and another was at Ulistac NA on 17 Dec (JRu). The remarkable number of

**Palm Warbler** reports that began on 21 Oct continued into December and January. Six reports between 2 Dec and 14 Jan came from the vicinity of Byxbee Park (WGB, MMR, NM, WBr, GL) and one sighting on 27 Jan came from Whisman Park (FV). The five **Black-throated Gray Warbler** sightings were about average for the winter. Single warblers were found at West Valley College on 6 Dec (OA), Blackford Elementary on 16 Dec (RJ), San Francisquito Creek near Stanford on 17 Dec (WBr, JL), Rancho San Vicente in New Almaden on 17 Dec and 21 Dec (JPa, KB), and along Guadalupe Creek near Via Lugano on 25 Dec (BH). A **Hermit Warbler** graced a Mountain View neighborhood on 4 Dec (MDo), and a **Wilson's Warbler** enjoyed Ulistac NA on 15 Dec (JTr). **Chipping Sparrows** were present at TJ Martin Park through winter after arriving on 7 Nov (JPa). The high count was twelve on 5 Jan (BM).

*cont'd on page 8*



## Field Notes *cont'd*

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was near Santa Teresa CP's Stile Ranch trailhead on 18 Dec (JPa). Two Grasshopper Sparrows photographed at J Grant CP on 25 Jan (SPz) added a rare record for the Diablo Range in winter. The **Swamp Sparrow** found at Isabel Ranch on 2 Jan during the Mt Hamilton CBC was another rare record for the Diablos (MMR, MJM). Swamp Sparrows were found at eight locations in December and January, a remarkable number. Two **Summer Tanagers**, both males, delighted many observers. The first, an adult, was discovered on 23 Jan near Guadalupe Mines Rd and Lavender Creek (JPa). It was still present on 19 Jan (JPa). The second, an immature, was found at Vasona CP on 9 Jan (SLC) and has remained through January (PLa). **Western Tanagers** were found at eight locations, with two at Whisman Park on 28 Jan (MDo, ABr) and the remainder all singletons. A **Black-headed Grosbeak** has spent the winter at a feeder in San Jose's Dry Creek neighborhood (JaJ). The location is unfortunately outside the local CBC count circles. Three

**Bullock's Orioles** in December and January placed this winter in the top quartile of the 25 years with records. They are absent during winter about four years of every ten. One at the Sunnyvale Golf Course contributed to the Palo Alto CBC on 17 Dec (DbJ), one along the Penetencia Creek Trail participated in the Calero-Morgan Hill CBC on 29 Dec (MSm), and one at the Santa Clara Valley Water District headquarters on 19 Jan (JPa) was too late to join the counts. An **Evening Grosbeak** recorded calling at West Valley College on 4 Dec (OA) was the first and only record this winter. A **Cassin's Finch**, a bird of the Sierra Nevada, was found on the Mt Hamilton CBC on 2 Jan along San Antonio Valley Rd near Skye Ranch (JWg). Cassin's Finch is rare this close to the coast in winter, with fewer than ten records in the county.

**Observers:** Ozzie Altus (OA), Keith Bailey (KBy), Bonnie Bedzin (BBz), Cynthia Berg (CnB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Andrew Bradshaw (ABr), Will Brooks (WBr), Daniel Bump (DBp), Karen Burnson (KB), Lilian Chou (LC), Jim Dehnert (JD), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunt-en (PDU), Marion Farber (MFa), Ed Gasi-

rowski (EdG), Kevin Gin (KG), Tom Hamel (THa), Bob Hirt (BH), John Hurley (JHy), Deborah Jamison (DbJ), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Jane Jordan (JaJ), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Virginia Langdon-Lassagne (VLL), Peter LaTourrette (PLa), Garrett Lau (GL), Susan LeClair (SLC), Jasen Liu (JL), Patricia Lynch (PL), Nateri Madavan (NM), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Bruce Mast (BMA), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), Tom Olson (TO), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Kathryn Parker (KP), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergey Pavlov (SPv), William Pelletier (WP), Devin Peyton (DPy), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Michael Pyle (MPy), Jason Riggio (JRg), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Judy Rudolph (JRu), Gordon Rydquist (GRy), Marc Simmel (MSm), John Sterling (JSt), Eric Storms (ErS), Joanna Suits (JSu), Jason Tanner (JTr), Vivek Tiwari (VT), Steve Tracey (ST), Ryan Treves (RT), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AVe), James Weigand (JWg), John Weismuller (JWm), Dan Wenny (DWn), multiple observers (m.ob.)

Please send notice of rarities to Pete Dunt-en via email at [pdunt-en@gmail.com](mailto:pdunt-en@gmail.com)

## Friends of SCVAS

(Gifts received December 1, 2018 through January 31, 2019)

### California Quail (Up to \$99)

Phillip Acker  
Patricia Anderson  
Lorraine Bailey  
Julie Barney  
Diane Bates  
Jean Batryn  
Robert & Marion Blumberg  
Barbara Boyington  
Juliette Bryson  
Luke Camery  
Mimi Carlson  
Dan Chapman  
Doug Cox  
Kenneth & Elna Cunningham  
Jim Dehnert  
David Depew  
James Estes  
Jean B Fordis  
John Fowler  
Mary Gill  
Tom Gough  
Aaron Grossman  
John Gurley  
Laura Haberin  
Nancy Hay  
Lucia Heldt  
Margaret A Hinebaugh  
James & Margaret Hohenshelt  
Sue Hunt  
Constance Hunter  
David Lewis  
Donald & Nancy Lorenzen  
Peter & Christina

Maltbaek  
Karen McCreddin  
Steve McHenry  
Eileen McLaughlin  
Francesco Meschia  
Luz M. Molina De Mulero  
Mary Louise Moses  
Isaac Munro  
Kathleen Nunes  
Thomas Olson  
Heidi Paessler  
Barry Patrick  
Lee Pauser  
RD Penn  
Donna Poulos  
Emily Renzel  
Christine Robson Weaver  
Betty J. Rogers  
Kathryn Ryczkowski  
Richard Stovel  
Lucy Tompkin  
Leslie Train  
Maria Valdez  
Andrea Vedanayagam  
Betty Wyatt  
Mary Yates

### American Avocet (\$100-\$249)

Edwin Aiken  
Sylvia Alderman  
Michael Armer  
Janet Bertaina  
James & Carolyn Bliss  
Dan Bloch  
Penelope Bowen  
Phyllis Browning  
Louis Caputo  
Allen Carkner

John & Agnes Caulfield  
Lyn Chambers  
Dina Cheyette  
Jennifer Couperus  
Morteza Danesh  
Karen DeMello  
Peggy Don  
Diane Ducey  
Donald & Elaine Dvorak  
Alan Eisner  
Charlotte Epstein  
James Estes  
Suzanne L. Fellenz  
Jean B Fordis  
Justin Fritz  
Ursula Gallichotte  
Marlene J Gordon  
Elaine Gould  
Rose Green  
Waldo Griffin  
Herbert Gross  
Marge Haley  
Brian Hart  
Ray and Elsa Heald  
Ross & Karen Heitkamp  
Konrad Herman  
David Hinson  
Kirsten Holmquist  
Intel Corporation  
Mark & Petra Kinsman  
Chris & John Knight  
James & Judy Kuhl  
Ann Lam  
Jeff & Maureen  
LaTourrette  
Ann Latta  
Julia Lewis  
Bernard Lint  
Thomas Lipkis  
Jim & Sue Liskovec

Joan & Gregory Loney  
Steven Longcor  
Andy Lott  
Margaret MacNiven  
Linda & Jerry Mar  
Joseph & Dorian Martinka  
Hugh & Debbie McDevitt  
Joanne & Doug McFarlin  
Shannon McMahon  
Microsoft  
George & Lilo Miller  
Chris Mousing  
Jakub Mracek  
Susan Niemi  
Rita Norton  
Brian O'Connor  
Christopher OConnell  
Janna Pauser  
Tina Pettrigni  
Ellen Ratner  
Lenore Roberts  
Mary Ann Robertson  
Ruth & Ed Satterthwaite  
Jeffrey Segall  
Indranil Sircar  
Michael Smith  
Elinor Spellman  
Marcella Stauber  
Kathryn Strachota  
Jane Tatchell  
Virginia Timmerman  
Bruce W Tolley  
Samson Tu  
Barbara Tyler  
Shawna Veach  
Villages Hiking Club  
Chug Von Rospach  
William & Linda Wilson

David Wimpfheimer  
Nick & KC Yatsko  
James Yurchenco  
Gretchen Zane  
Scottie Zimmerman  
Gena Zolotar

### Burrowing Owl (\$250-\$499)

Peter & Patricia Biocini  
Dick & Sharon Blaine  
Linda Brownrigg  
Felix & Helen Charpentier  
Jitze & Nancy Couperus  
Dinesh & Joy Desai  
John & Georgiana Flaherty  
Marilynn Gallaway  
Nicola & Gary Gordon  
Terry Hart  
Larry & Marcia Hulberg  
James & Kathryn Johnson  
Ho Min Lim  
Kenneth Mamitsaka  
Pauline Marchon  
David McIntyre  
Eve Meier  
Andrew Melnick  
Marilee Miffilin  
Mary Murphy  
Laurence D. Nelson  
April Pufahl  
Michael Rogers  
Martin Sorensen  
Annette Teng

### Peregrine Falcon (\$500-\$999)

Laura Balkovich  
Becky Baybrook  
Ellyn Bush  
Constance Crawford  
Hewlett Packard  
Enterprise Foundation  
Bob Hirt  
Lawrence & Joan Johnston  
Jeffrey & Marcia Keimer  
Joan Leighton  
Marlene Macek  
Jim Meikrantz  
Jean & Gregory Myers  
Leighton Nakata  
Melanie O'Brien  
Franklin & Susan Orr

### Golden Eagle (\$1000-\$4999)

Apple Inc.  
Priya Balasubramaniam  
Gail & Doug Cheeseman  
Google Inc.  
Urs Hoelzle  
IBM Corporation  
Deborah Jamison & Steven Patt  
Enrique & Judy Klein  
Wayne V. Krill  
J. Holley Taylor  
Bill Walker



---

---

## Conservation Corner: Check In With Our Environmental Advocate

by Shani Kleinhaus

### Light Tower Corporation Plans for Arena Green Park

In our most recent *Avocet*, we discussed the ubiquitous impacts of light pollution on all living things, and our concern over the prospect of a monumental lighted structure in a San Jose park. The Light Tower Corporation initially proposed to resurrect the San Jose Light Tower (1881-1915) as an iconic tourist attraction. Wikipedia tells us that the tower was possibly the world's tallest free-standing iron structure at the time. It was so bright it cast distinct shadows a mile away, and impacts to wildlife were evident. Local police even sold birds that collided with the tower to restaurants. In May of 1900, the tower reportedly attracted a swarm of beetles, which were pursued by insectivorous birds; birds and beetles were electrocuted, causing stray cats to mob the base of the tower. Disruption of reproductive rhythms in birds were also reported by local farmers.



Loggerhead Shrike by Sergey Pavlov

SCVAS has effectively protested the plans to resurrect the Light Tower. Recently, the San Jose Light Tower Corporation decided to focus instead on an iconic structure at Arena Green Park (part of Guadalupe River Park). An international design competition will be conducted to select the structure. We remain concerned, since Arena Green is where Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek converge - an ecologically sensitive site where Steelhead Trout migrate, beavers are occasionally observed, and dozens of species of birds nest or migrate. We are also concerned by the use of parkland to support a large, lit structure. City Council is tentatively scheduled to approve the site selection (Arena Green) and the process for the design competition on March 12. **San Jose residents**, please sign up with [Advocate@scvas.org](mailto:Advocate@scvas.org) for updates!

### Dark Sky Policy

As our cities transition to LED lighting, light pollution and sky glow are increasing throughout our landscape. LED lights are excellent in saving energy, and are thus important in efforts to reduce emissions. However, we must also consider their impact on light pollution. SCVAS is asking

the cities of Sunnyvale and Mountain View to review their policies and operations with the goal of reducing light pollution and implementing dark-sky policies and practices. **Mountain View and Sunnyvale residents**, please sign up with [Advocate@scvas.org](mailto:Advocate@scvas.org) for updates!

### Coyote Valley

In January, our volunteers joined in with hundreds of people gathered in front of San Jose City Hall to **Rally for Coyote Valley** prior to the City Council discussion of Coyote Valley. At stake is the allocation of up to \$50 million in Measure T funding for the purchase of land in Coyote Valley - land that can conserve agriculture and open space, and provide critically important habitat for birds and wildlife. Staff presentation to the City Council clearly favored industrial development in the valley, but it seems that pro-development arguments are starting to shift from

the quest to develop the entire valley to more of a compromise. We believe that the undeveloped land in Coyote Valley should remain open space, and will continue to advocate towards the preservation of this important land.

Sally Jewell, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior, in a letter to San Jose City Council, January 22, 2019: *“As you study the future of your region and sharpen the vision you would like to make a reality, I encourage you to shape your policies and investments to preserve irreplaceable natural spaces, not only for today, but for the health and wellbeing of the people and critters for generations to come.”*

### Migrating Newts Killed by Traffic

We love birds, but sometimes we aim to protect migration routes for other species. In Coyote Valley, it's terrestrial mammals. In the Santa Cruz Mountains: Pacific and Rough-skinned Newts. In recent years, thousands of newts have been killed by traffic on Alma Bridge Road east of Lexington Reservoir as they migrate between the hills and breeding ponds. Our Environmental Advocacy group is working to raise awareness in the hope that solutions will be found to minimize this carnage.

---

---

## 2018 Christmas Bird Count Highlights

*We would like to extend a special thank you to all of the count compilers and volunteers who participated in the 2018 Christmas Bird Count, and to Bonnie Bedford-White for formatting the results tables. For complete CBC data, including full summaries and results, please visit [scvas.org/christmasbirdcount](http://scvas.org/christmasbirdcount).*

### **San Jose - December 16, 2018;** *Compiled and coordinated by Mike Azevedo*

Rainy weather threatened the count but held off for the most part. Write-up birds included Cackling Geese seen at Lake Cunningham, San Jose Sewage Outfall Channel, and Penitencia Creek Park. Snow Geese and a Ferruginous Hawk were both reported at Calaveras Reservoir. Another Ferruginous Hawk and a Yellow Warbler were seen along Warm Springs Trail. Lesser Yellowlegs was seen at Thompson Creek and Gold Street and a Blue-winged Teal was seen at Mallard Slough. A Long-tailed Duck was seen on Pond A15 and a White-faced Ibis was found on A16. Black Rail and Barrow's Goldeneye were also found in Alviso. Swamp Sparrows were reported at Guadalupe Slough and Alviso Marina. A Black-throated Gray Warbler was seen at Coyote Lagoon and in Willow Glen. Another cool bird found in two places was the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher reported in Alum Rock Park and Calaveras Reservoir along Arroyo Hondo. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was found at Lake Cunningham, and Great-tailed Grackles were seen at Thompson Creek and Alviso City Limits as well as the San Jose Sewage Outfall. The lack of owls was notable - no Burrowing Owls, Short-eared Owls, Northern Pygmy-Owls or Barn Owls were found. Great Horned Owls were heard at Ed Levin Park and one was even seen there by our first Christmas Bird Count for Kids held the same day. Western Screech-Owls were heard along Calaveras Road but they were not very talkative, keeping their temper tantrums to a minimum. In all 166 species were recorded for a total of 10,307 birds.

### **Palo Alto - December 17, 2018;** *Compiled and coordinated by Al Eisner*

The count was blessed with pleasant weather this year. The above-average species count of 169 was one less than last year. The only misses among species present in recent years were Cackling Goose, Blue-winged Teal (fifth miss in a row), Red-breasted Merganser, Common Gallinule, Red-breasted Nuthatch (an irruptive species usually found in small numbers), Swamp Sparrow (one was found for count week) and Brown-headed Cowbird. There was just a single report (two birds) of Pine Siskin, another irruptive species. On the other hand, a single Ring-necked Pheasant was the first found in six years. American Goldfinch and all blackbirds were found in remarkably low numbers, while notable new highs were reached for Eurasian Collared-Dove, Acorn Woodpecker, and White-breasted Nuthatch. Of course there were also rarities. A Caspian Tern along the Dumbarton Bridge was new to the count. A Nashville Warbler found along San Francisquito Creek was the fourth occurrence for the count, while three Chipping Sparrows (at Sylvan Park) and a Bullock's Oriole (at the Sunnyvale golf course, first in eighteen years) were both sixth occurrences. Great-tailed Grackle was found for the fourth year in a row at Shoreline. Bald Eagle was seen for the fifth year in a row, this time an adult flying over Stanford. A Ferruginous Hawk over Arastradero Preserve might be the same individual seen a year earlier at Felt Lake (after a gap of seventeen years from the previous count observation). A Snowy Plover at the "triangle" area near Crittenden Marsh was the fifth time on the winter count (they are regular on the summer count). Further information, including more frequent "good" species, will be provided in an online version.

### **Mount Hamilton - January 2, 2019;** *Compiled and coordinated by Bob Hirt*

For a change, we welcomed clear but chilly weather in the morning of our count. We had few weather-related access issues since the roads were open and dry. The result was a complete count. However, we had a below-average species count of 91, with a low count of only 6,200 individual birds. As to individual species we had a below-average year for Lawrence's Goldfinches with only 31 tallied. Lewis' Woodpecker came in at 63. The real shock was a first-time miss in the count's history: American Robin. Count notables included a Cassin's Finch, Swamp Sparrow, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. High counts were for Pied-billed Grebe (52! all-time high) and Eurasian Collared-Doves again breaking previous high counts. Good acorn crop produced good numbers for Band-tailed Pigeon and Acorn Woodpecker. Low counts were for American Robin, California Thrasher, California Towhee, (Sooty) Fox Sparrow, Black Phoebe, White-crowned Sparrow, and House Finch. Thanks to our leaders: Mike Rogers, Mike Mammoser, Mike Azevedo, Charles Coston, Terris Kasteen, Kirsten Holmquist, Dale Stahlecker, Bruce Mast, and Leighton Nakata. Our deepest thanks go to Elinor Gates for hosting a marvelous compilation feast again this year, and for finding our only Varied Thrushes and Red-breasted Nuthatches. She also spotted a back-lit flycatcher that might have been our first Ash-throated but it was not quite as cooperative as needed.

### **Calero-Morgan Hill - December 29, 2018;** *Compiled and coordinated by Beth Hamel*

*This was Beth's last year as compiler. Thank you for all of your support, Beth! And thanks to Rick Herder for taking over!*

The day was bright, clear and sunny, but also cold. Most species counts were low of average and the total number of count day species was 141, also below average. The team counting the Loma Prieta area were treated to an amazing view of San Francisco and two Townsend's Solitaires. Ten Tundra Swans were seen flying through the Almaden area. Tree and Violet-green Swallows were seen flying over Calero Reservoir; Burrowing Owls were found at Coyote Ridge and Rancho San Vicente; a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen at Hellyer Park; and a female Phainopepla was spotted at Almaden Quicksilver Park. A Cackling Goose was seen in Coyote Valley on count day, and a single Snow Goose was found there as a count week bird. We had a record high of seven Bald Eagles. The continuing leucistic Bald Eagle managed to swing by three different parties to say hello! It has been a privilege to be the compiler for this circle. Rick Herder is taking over now, and I know that he will do a tremendous job!



# 2018 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Species	SJ 12/16/18	PA 12/17/18	MtH 1/2/19	Cal-MH 12/29/18	Species	SJ 12/16/18	PA 12/17/18	MtH 1/2/19	Cal-MH 12/29/18
Snow Goose	3	1	-	CW	Marbled Godwit	179	890	-	-
Greater White-fronted Goose	-	1	-	-	Ruddy Turnstone	-	2	-	-
Cackling Goose	9	-	-	1	Sanderling	14	1	-	-
Canada Goose	1522	1089	-	572	Dunlin	3948	1217	-	-
Tundra Swan	-	-	-	10	Least Sandpiper	697	1156	-	17
Wood Duck	29	20	-	108	Western Sandpiper	15206	2547	-	-
Blue-winged Teal	3	-	-	-	peep sp	241	1015	-	-
Cinnamon Teal	96	7	-	6	Short-billed Dowitcher	6	44	-	-
Northern Shoveler	5639	10830	-	45	Long-billed Dowitcher	1305	47	-	1
Gadwall	444	171	2	80	dowitcher, sp	748	1384	-	-
Eurasian Wigeon	-	1	-	-	Wilson's Snipe	111	6	-	9
American Wigeon	2957	916	57	13	Spotted Sandpiper	5	8	-	6
Mallard	1699	966	79	726	Lesser Yellowlegs	2	-	-	-
Northern Pintail	179	277	-	-	Willet	147	480	-	-
Green-winged Teal	2459	866	3	19	Greater Yellowlegs	93	89	4	4
Canvasback	883	1214	-	13	Bonaparte's Gull	78	180	-	-
Redhead	3269	43	-	-	Mew Gull	301	5	-	3
Ring-necked Duck	53	54	36	63	Ring-billed Gull	512	156	-	44
Greater Scaup	892	20	-	13	Western Gull	29	10	-	-
Lesser Scaup	5565	1332	-	3	California Gull	5211	568	-	293
scaup sp	622	687	-	-	Herring Gull	1905	58	-	856
Surf Scoter	5	15	-	-	Iceland (Thayer's) Gull	81	3	-	95
Long-tailed Duck	1	-	-	-	Glaucous-winged Gull	39	17	-	30
Bufflehead	1994	266	78	171	Glaucous-winged x Western Gull	1	-	-	4
Common Goldeneye	676	102	-	7	gull sp	2483	189	-	340
Barrow's Goldeneye	1	5	-	-	Caspian Tern	-	1	-	-
Common x Barrow's Goldeneye	-	1	-	-	Forster's Tern	31	90	-	-
Hooded Merganser	21	41	7	21	Double-crested Cormorant	626	191	4	190
Common Merganser	2	7	39	88	American White Pelican	95	108	-	-
Red-breasted Merganser	122	-	-	-	Brown Pelican	-	24	-	-
Ruddy Duck	4149	17381	84	268	American Bittern	-	-	-	-
duck sp	406	3	25	-	Great Blue Heron	47	21	7	24
California Quail	250	301	567	310	Great Egret	85	45	2	24
Ring-necked Pheasant	3	1	-	-	Snowy Egret	118	75	-	16
Wild Turkey	93	115	39	141	Green Heron	6	5	-	2
Pied-billed Grebe	375	116	52	78	Black-crowned Night-Heron	217	96	2	28
Horned Grebe	10	5	-	-	White-faced Ibis	1	-	-	-
Eared Grebe	1078	51	-	60	Turkey Vulture	332	115	7	281
Western Grebe	252	19	-	45	Osprey	-	-	-	1
Clark's Grebe	110	18	-	15	White-tailed Kite	27	32	-	27
<i>aechmophorus</i> sp	14	11	-	70	Golden Eagle	14	3	4	9
Rock Pigeon	912	294	6	507	Northern Harrier	57	21	-	23
Band-tailed Pigeon	223	120	179	235	Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	9	2	8
Eurasian Collared-Dove	169	72	29	99	Cooper's Hawk	12	20	2	16
Mourning Dove	579	253	9	202	<i>accipiter</i> sp	2	3	-	1
White-throated Swift	61	53	-	85	Bald Eagle	5	1	5	7
Anna's Hummingbird	280	567	4	368	Red-shouldered Hawk	23	53	1	53
Black Rail	1	-	-	-	Red-tailed Hawk	232	168	45	188
Ridgway's (Clapper) Rail	-	2	-	-	Ferruginous Hawk	2	1	2	7
Virginia Rail	30	2	-	2	<i>buteo</i> sp	1	1	-	-
Sora	60	4	-	1	Barn Owl	-	2	-	5
Common Gallinule	3	-	-	5	Western Screech-Owl	4	1	5	4
American Coot	10391	3797	315	975	Great Horned Owl	3	24	8	6
Black-necked Stilt	1226	255	-	3	Northern Pygmy-Owl	-	-	-	-
American Avocet	2000	1752	-	-	Burrowing Owl	-	2	-	3
Black-bellied Plover	40	226	-	-	Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	-
Snowy Plover	47	18	-	-	Belted Kingfisher	8	6	7	9
Semipalmated Plover	232	249	-	-	Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	63	-
Killdeer	230	14	33	107	Acom Woodpecker	237	447	344	525
Whimbrel	5	4	-	-	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	-	-	1
Long-billed Curlew	116	31	-	-	Red-naped Sapsucker	-	1	-	-

Species	SJ 12/16/18	PA 12/17/18	MtH 1/2/19	Cal-MH 12/29/18
Red-breasted Sapsucker	10	10	3	13
Sapsucker sp	1	-	-	-
Downy Woodpecker	7	14	1	18
Nuttall's Woodpecker	57	104	21	107
Hairy Woodpecker	5	50	11	15
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	90	168	45	158
N. (Yel-sh) Flicker	5	1	-	-
(intergrade)	9	3	-	1
unidentified form	-	-	4	-
Pileated Woodpecker	-	4	-	-
American Kestrel	93	33	15	74
Merlin	15	6	2	6
Peregrine Falcon	16	10	-	9
Prairie Falcon	4	-	-	5
falcon sp	-	1	-	-
Black Phoebe	300	334	10	252
Say's Phoebe	49	26	6	66
Loggerhead Shrike	6	2	-	8
Hutton's Vireo	1	60	-	19
Steller's Jay	119	271	17	155
California Scrub-Jay	242	395	312	532
Yellow-billed Magpie	160	-	58	122
Aerican Crow	775	1235	28	1079
Common Raven	89	172	85	301
Horned Lark	10	-	-	35
Tree Swallow	-	-	-	1
Violet-green Swallow	-	4	-	2
Barn Swallow	-	CW	-	-
swallow sp	1	2	-	-
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	116	836	-	248
Oak Titmouse	136	410	159	314
Bush tit	556	1143	76	644
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	-	1	-
White-breasted Nuthatch	55	155	101	194
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	46	-	-
Brown Creeper	1	57	2	19
Rock Wren	9	-	-	8
House Wren	-	3	-	4
Pacific (Winter) Wren	-	3	-	-
Marsh Wren	107	17	1	4
Bewick's Wren	60	254	18	105
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4	-	1	-
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	8	-	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	159	453	29	319
Wren tit	12	159	59	40
Western Bluebird	137	264	147	238
Towson's Solitaire	-	-	-	2
Hermit Thrush	36	153	21	65
American Robin	500	1532	6	663
Varied Thrush	-	30	3	25
California Thrasher	5	50	12	29
Northern Mockingbird	90	32	-	56
European Starling	3160	597	194	2536
Cedar Waxwing	621	1373	27	169
Phainopepla	-	-	2	1
Scaly-breasted Munia	-	-	-	4
House Sparrow	94	16	-	55
American Pipit	79	134	-	347
House Finch	895	793	13	900
Purple Finch	3	103	2	37
Cassin's Finch	-	-	1	-

Species	SJ 12/16/18	PA 12/17/18	MtH 1/2/19	Cal-MH 12/29/18
Red Crossbill	-	4	-	-
Pine Siskin	-	2	-	-
Lesser Goldfinch	179	524	76	344
Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	-	31	-
American Goldfinch	18	14	1	58
goldfinch sp	-	-	-	2
Spotted Towhee	36	216	57	129
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	7	-	-	17
California Towhee	226	290	49	270
Chipping Sparrow	-	3	-	-
Lark Sparrow	155	15	-	30
Bell's Sparrow	-	-	7	-
Savannah Sparrow	183	61	13	75
Fox Sparrow	9	42	21	18
Fox Sparrow (Sooty)	-	-	6	-
Fox Sparrow (Slate-colored)	-	-	10	-
Song Sparrow	222	139	4	97
Lincoln's Sparrow	33	39	-	25
Swamp Sparrow	3	CW	1	-
White-throated Sparrow	3	2	-	2
White-crowned Sparrow	1729	1019	155	1383
Golden-crowned Sparrow	678	907	246	1076
sparrow sp	124	20	2	78
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	457	1284	954	756
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	-	-	-	1
Western Meadowlark	177	229	191	432
Hooded Oriole	-	-	-	-
Bullock's Oriole	-	1	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	275	27	106	854
Tricolored Blackbird	1	-	358	54
Brown-headed Cowbird	11	-	6	179
Brewer's Blackbird	489	53	179	1273
Great-tailed Grackle	51	1	-	73
blackbird sp	200	70	72	905
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	3	-	-
Nashville Warbler	-	1	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	66	14	-	8
Yellow Warbler	1	-	-	-
Palm Warbler	CW	1	-	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)	80	548	4	137
(Myrtle)	12	36	-	8
(form unidentified)	901	932	-	961
Black-throated Gray Warbler	2	1	-	-
Townsend's Warbler	4	95	-	10
Western Tanager	-	3	-	-

Total Species 166 169 91 141  
Total individual birds 10,307 74,426 6,200 27,954

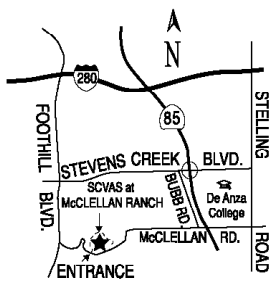
Key:  
sp = species undetermined  
CW = Count Week  
  
SJ = San Jose: compiled by Mike Azevedo  
PA = Palo Alto: compiled by Al Eisner  
MtH = Mount Hamilton: compiled by Bob Hirt  
Cal-MH = Calero-Morgan Hill: compiled by Beth Hamel and Ann Verdi

Data entry and chart format by Bonnie Bedford-White. Listing order has been adjusted to reflect the most recent ABA checklist, version 8.0.5 (12/19/2018).

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

Phone: 408-252-3747  
E-mail: [scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org)  
[www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org)

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



## New Members

12/1/2018 - 1/31/2019  
*Thank you and welcome!*

Christina Armstrong	Jen Jelincic
Peter Arnold	Jared Keyes
Lorrayne Bailey	Cate Levey
Laura Balkovich	Julia Lewis
Becky Baybrook	Susan Lewis
Emily Berk	Wei Li Lin
Jared Bernstein	Julie MacKinnon
Dan Bloch	Melissa Maglio
June Cancell	Jakub Mracek
Miles Colman	Laurence D. Nelson
Belem Escalante	Karen O'Brien
Flor Escobar	Christopher O'Connell
Justin Fritz	Francisco Pacheco
William Gardner	Emma Jane Shelton
Kiran Gopinath	Emily Southerton
Brian Hart	Virginia Timmerman
Terry Hart	Jacqueline Valencia
Urs Hoelzle	Shawna Veach
John Holback	Larry Volpe
John Hurley	Hershell West
Donna James	

*And thank you to those  
who renewed!*

# 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.\*

## \$35.00

Our denim shirts  
are BACK in stock!  
Pick yours up today!



Choose  
any book from  
our donation  
library!



Stop by the shop, drop \$1 in  
our donation box, and grab  
a FREE book!

Don't forget about our **RUMMAGE SALE!** Come to our office at McClellan Ranch Preserve on Saturday, April 27th from 10AM-3PM and for some fun (and cheap!) finds! We also welcome donation items prior to the sale.

### STAFF

#### Transitional Executive Director

Kelly Alfrey, [outreach@scvas.org](mailto:outreach@scvas.org)  
(408) 627-7172

#### Office Manager

April Austin, [scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org)  
(408) 252-3747

#### Environmental Advocate

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

#### Burrowing Owl Conservation

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

#### Education and Outreach Specialist

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

#### Office Fax

(408) 252-2850

#### Office E-mail

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

#### Website

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

More info. at [scvas.org/SpeakerSeries](http://scvas.org/SpeakerSeries).

#### 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 Khanzodé

##### Secretary

Joan Leighton

#### DIRECTORS

Mike Armer

Gabrielle Feldman

Peter Hart

Bob Hirt

John Richardson

Bill Walker

2019 Volume 67, Number 2

C1ZC140Z

Avocet Editor: Kelly Alfrey