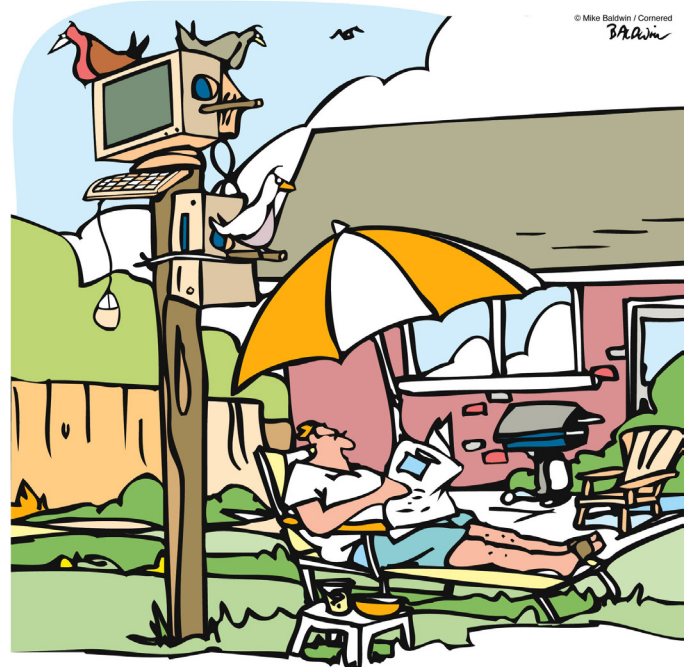


Online Resources for Santa Clara County Birders *by Chuq Von Rospach*

Are you interested in improving yourself as a birder? Are you curious about what other birders around you are seeing? Are you looking for ways to get more organized or learn new skills? Is there a species you really want to add to your life list, but you haven't been able to lay eyes on it? The internet can help.

The internet has transformed many things, and birding is no exception. From bird identification help to population data and information on birding hotspots, the internet is home to many tools that can help birders improve their skills and better connect with local birding communities. There are many resources available to Santa Clara County birders that can enhance your birding activities. In this article we will highlight three such resources that we think can make your birding more effective and enjoyable. eBird will simplify record keeping and help identify the best birding spots around you, while South Bay Birds will connect you to local birders to hear what they are finding and share what you have found around the county. Finally, All About Birds is an online guide you can use to learn more about the birds you are watching and help you puzzle through those challenging IDs.



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BRAIN

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Monthly Speaker Series

NEW Location: Redwood Hall at The Terraces in Los Altos
NEW Time: Doors open 7:00PM; Program begins 7:30PM
Further details and directions at scvas.org/SpeakerSeries

Wednesday, May 15
"An Evening of African Predators, Including Raptors"
with Doug Cheeseman



This year marks 41 years of leading African safaris for Doug Cheeseman since 1978. Years ago Doug was shooting 200 rolls of film every safari to document the exciting behaviors of predator/prey action and the amazing diversity of predators and their prey. Here at home we see dogs chasing cats and cats chasing birds, but in Africa it's a whole different world with cats chasing dogs, eagles attacking mammals, reptiles drowning equids and much more. This past year Doug and his wife, Gail, led three safaris to East Africa and marveled at all the new behaviors they witnessed, especially interactions among predators who come up with new techniques of survival as they adapt to ever-changing conditions. This evening we invite you to an evening of exciting safari action full of the enthusiasm that Doug is famous for delivering.



You're invited!

Annual SCVAS Member Dinner

When: Saturday, July 13
5:00-8:30PM

Where: The Garden House
400 University Avenue
Shoup Park, Los Altos

Tickets: \$25

May be purchased online at
scvas.org/MemberDinner or
by calling (408) 252-3747

- Catered dinner
- Guest speaker and book signing
- Silent auction
- Bird walk
- Volunteer awards
- Chapter updates
- Board member elections

Further details and registration at scvas.org/MemberDinner

May-June Field Trips

****Please Note: RSVP Required****

On occasion, trips change. Visit scvas.org/FieldTrips or call (408) 579-9590 for the most current trip information and to RSVP. Questions? Email scvasfieldtrips@gmail.com or call (408) 579-9590.

Key to Symbols

For all trips: Heavy rain cancels. Carpool if possible. Bring binoculars. No unaccompanied minors.



Parking fee required



Wheelchair accessible



Kid-friendly, 10 yrs and older



No facilities



Kid-friendly, all ages



Kid-friendly, 14 yrs and older

Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant Wednesday, May 1; 12:00PM

1 hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer, 408-288-7768. **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:** 1-mile walk on flat trail. **Notes:** Good for beginners, call ahead for loaner binoculars.



Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve Birding with the Board

Saturday, May 4; 8:00AM

4 hours. **Leaders:** Diane & Peter Hart, (650) 766-4252. **Directions:** From Hwy 280, take the Sand Hill West exit and go 2 miles to the Jasper Ridge main gate (on the left), 100 yards before Portola Rd. We'll meet at 8:00AM sharp and enter through the locked gate as a group - late arrivals may be locked out. **Highlights:** We'll check out the historic and now-controversial Searsville Dam, then scan Searsville Lake for waterfowl, and search varied habitats for woodpeckers, raptors, and songbirds. **Difficulty:** Easy, 2-mile walk. **Notes:** Limited to 12 participants.

Henry Coe State Park

Sunday, May 5; 8:00AM

4 hours. **Leaders:** Bill Pelletier and Kitty O'Neil, (408) 644-5583. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill, take East Dunne Ave exit and go east past Anderson Lake to the end of the 10-mile winding road to park headquarters. If using a navigation system, use full address to get to the right entrance: 9000 East Dunne Ave, Morgan Hill. **Highlights:** Many difficult birds to find in Santa Clara County, including Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pileated Woodpecker, Band-tailed Pigeon, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-chinned Sparrow. **Difficulty:** 4 miles, strenuous.



Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Monday, May 6; 8:00AM

Joint Event by OSA and SCVAS

5 hours. **Leader:** Dani Christensen, (408) 781-5530. **Highlights:** Explore a preserve normally closed to the public, where endangered and threatened plants and animals thrive on serpentine soils. Possible Horned Larks, Western Meadowlarks, Golden Eagles, and Burrowing Owl. **Notes:** Limited to 15 participants. For a

full event description and to RSVP, visit scvas.org/fieldtrips or call (408) 579-9590.



Rancho Cañada del Oro Wednesday, May 8; 8:00AM

3 hours. **Leader:** Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** From Hwy 101, go west on Bailey Ave, left on McKean Rd, right on Casa Loma Rd, and find the preserve at the end of this road. **Highlights:** Vireos, flycatchers, orioles, and grosbeaks. **Difficulty:** 0.5-mile flat paved Llagas Creek Loop Trail, followed by the flat dirt Longwall Canyon Trail up to the creek crossing. **Notes:** You may shorten this trip by returning after the 0.5-mile loop trail.



Beginners Bird Walk: McClellan Ranch Saturday, May 11; 9:00AM

2 hours. **Leader:** Robin Chen, (908) 433-7558. **Directions:** 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino. **Highlights:** Learn your backyard birds and more while we start at the bird feeders and then stroll along a paved trail. **Difficulty:** 1.5 miles of flat, paved bike path.

Charleston Slough + Google Egret Colony Sunday, May 12; 9:00AM

2.5 hours. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Mountain View take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Blvd parking. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. **Difficulty:** 2 miles, flat trails, some mud after rain. **Notes:** Optional visit to egret colony afterwards. For beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend.



Mitchell Canyon (Mount Diablo State Park) Sunday, May 12; 8:30AM

Joint Event by Golden Gate Audubon Society and SCVAS

3.5 hours. **Leaders:** Bill Pelletier and Steve Lombardi, hotrock175@gmail.com. **Directions:** Meet at Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center. **Highlights:** We'll walk 4 miles through oak savannah, woodland, riparian habitat, and chaparral/sage scrub. We hope to see residents and early migrants, including warblers, nuthatches, vireos, flycatchers, and hummingbirds. We'll also refresh our birding by ear skills. The trail is famous for wildflowers, including the rare endemic Mount Diablo globe lily, and butterflies. **Notes:** For a full event descrip-

tion and to RSVP, visit scvas.org/fieldtrips or call (408) 579-9590.



Valle Vista Staging Area (Upper San Leandro Reservoir)

Sunday, May 12; 1:00PM

Joint Event by Golden Gate Audubon Society and SCVAS

2 hours. **Leaders:** Bill Pelletier and Steve Lombardi, hotrock175@gmail.com. **Directions:** Meet at the Valle Vista Staging Area. **Highlights:** This EBMUD watershed features many habitats: chaparral/scrub, grassland, woodland, marsh, and the top of the reservoir. Likely raptors, California Thrasher, nuthatches, wrens, and Wood Ducks. **Notes:** For full description and RSVP, visit scvas.org/fieldtrips or call (408) 579-9590.

Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve Wednesday, May 15; 8:30AM

3 hours. **Leaders:** Barry and Ginger Langdon-Lassagne, (408) 594-5913. **Directions:** From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Blvd south 3.3 miles (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd). Turn right on Monte Bello Rd, go about a mile, and turn left past winery entrance into preserve parking lot. **Highlights:** We'll walk to the ephemeral pond, forest, and hillsides to enjoy nature. If the pond is full, we may see waterbirds and Rough-skinned Newts. Expect woodpeckers, flycatchers, warblers, towhees. Possible California Thrasher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Warbling Vireo. **Difficulty:** 2 miles, dirt trails, some hills. **Notes:** Free parking, restrooms, beginners welcome!

The History and Birds of Coyote Creek (Anderson Lake County Park)

Saturday, May 18; 8:30AM

Joint Event by Santa Clara County Parks and SCVAS

2 hours. **Leaders:** Mike Monroe and Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** From Hwy 101, exit east on Cochrane, turn left on Malaguerra Ave and continue into Anderson Lake County Park, with parking lots (free) on the left. Meet in front of the Visitor Center. **Highlights:** We'll look for migrants and learn about Anderson Dam, Klinke Barn, and Charles "Bird Man" Kellogg. **Difficulty:** 2 miles of paved bike path. **Notes:** Limited to 12 participants.

Field Trips

cont'd

Shoreline Lake

Sunday, May 19; 9:00AM

2 hours. **Leader:** Bob Hirt, (408) 821-2732. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 take San Antonio Rd north to Terminal Blvd parking. **Highlights:** Surf Scoters and terns. **Difficulty:** Easy 1-mile walk on paved path. **Notes:** Limited to 12 participants.

Backyard Birds at McClellan Ranch

Friday, May 24; 1:00PM

1.5 hours. **Leader:** Eve Meier, (408) 569-9391. **Directions:** 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino. **Highlights:** Learn backyard birds and more while we start at the bird feeders and then stroll along the trail. **Difficulty:** 1-mile walk on paved path. **Notes:** Limited to 10 participants, binoculars available.



Ulistac Natural Area

Sunday, May 26; 8:00AM

3 hours. **Leader:** Chris Johnson, (831) 601-8260. **Directions:** From Hwy 237 take Great America Pkwy south for 0.8 miles, turn left on Tasman Dr for about 1 mile, right on Lick Mill Blvd, and meet at the south park entrance on the left. **Highlights:** We'll look for migrants and local breeding birds in diverse habitats. **Difficulty:** 2 miles, flat dirt trails and paved ramps up to the levee. **Notes:** Limited to 15 participants. Nearest facilities across street at Lick Mill Park.

Mt. Madonna County Park

Saturday, June 1; 8:00AM

4 hours. **Leader:** Steve Tracey, (408) 966-3860. **Directions:** Meet at the Henry Miller site parking lot. If you need directions, email stracey53@yahoo.com. **Highlights:** We'll bird trails at the top of Mt. Madonna, looking for breeding birds and lingering migrants. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous, 2 miles. **Notes:** Prepare for cooler weather - temperatures vary.



Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve

Monday, June 3; 7:30AM

3 hours. **Leader:** Dani Christensen, (408) 781-5530. **Directions:** From Hwy 101, take the Bailey Ave exit and go west. Turn left on Santa Teresa Blvd. Continue for about 2 miles, then turn right on Palm Ave. Preserve is at the end of the road. **Highlights:** Explore grassland and Blue Oak woodlands, looking for Yellow-billed Magpie, orioles, kingbirds, and Golden Eagles. **Difficulty:** We'll explore the meadow for 0.5 miles on a flat dirt path, then if time permits we'll continue up the Arrowhead Loop Trail to the overlook

(moderately strenuous), 0.75 miles one-way. **Notes:** Limited to 20 participants. Beginners welcome!



Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

Wednesday, June 5; 12:00PM

1 hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. See write-up for May 1.



Bugs, Snails, and Salamanders

Wednesday, June 5; 10:00AM

2 hours. **Leader:** Merav Vonshak, (408) 252-3740. **Directions:** 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino. Meet at the bird feeders in front of the SCVAS Office. **Highlights:** We'll explore different habitats along the preserve looking at bugs, snails, salamanders, and other critters! Best for kids 4+



Nature Walk at McClellan Ranch

Saturday, June 8; 8:30AM

3 hours. **Leaders:** Julie Amato and Mary Ann Robertson, (408) 579-9590. **Directions:** 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino. Meet at the bird feeders in front of the SCVAS office. **Highlights:** Explore the plants, birds, and other living things that call McClellan home during spring. You'll learn about some of the key species found here, and their seasonal life cycles, on this leisurely walk along Stevens Creek. Naturalists of all levels are welcome! **Difficulty:** 2-mile walk on level ground. **Notes:** Binoculars recommended, photography welcome.



Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve, Horseshoe Lake

Sunday, June 9; 7:30AM

1.5 hours. **Leader:** Mary Wisniewski (408) 887-0738. **Directions:** The preserve entrance is located about 1 mile south of the Page Mill Rd/Alpine Rd and Skyline Blvd (Hwy 35) intersection. The turn-off is on the west side of the road. Meet at the northern most parking lot (lot with restrooms). **Highlights:** Possible Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager. **Difficulty:** Easy with little elevation change. **Notes:** Bring layers - temperatures vary. Limited to 19 participants.

Charleston Slough + Google Egret Colony

Saturday, June 15; 9:00AM

2.5 hours. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. See write-up for May 12.



Alum Rock Park

(with optional extension to Alviso Environmental Education Center - EEC)

Sunday, June 16; 8:00AM

Joint Event by Golden Gate Audubon Society and SCVAS

Full day. **Leaders:** Bill Pelletier and Kitty O'Neil (408) 644-5583. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd north-east 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:** Diverse habitats, including chaparral, riparian, forest, grassland, and rocky terrain. Possible Great Horned Owl, Hermit Thrush, Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Optional extension to the EEC - possible Hooded Oriole, American White Pelicans, American Avocet. **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous 3-mile walk; Alviso is flat, easy walking on dirt and boardwalk.



Beginners Walk: McClellan Ranch

Saturday, June 22; 8:00AM

2 hours. **Leader:** Dave Zittin, (408) 515-7104. **Directions:** 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino. Meet in front of the SCVAS Office. **Highlights:** Learn backyard birds and more while we start by watching the bird feeders then stroll along Stevens Creek Trail. **Difficulty:** 1.5 miles, flat paved path. **Notes:** Limited to 12 participants.



John Nicholas Trail (Sanborn County Park)

Saturday, June 29; 8:00AM

4 hours. **Leader:** Chris Johnson, (831) 601-8260. **Directions:** From CA-17 S take the Bear Creek Rd exit, continue straight onto Montevina Rd, in 0.3 miles make a left onto Black Rd. Drive for 3.8 miles. Small parking lot on your right with additional parking in pullouts before and after park entrance. **Highlights:** We'll bird the redwood habitat and small lake looking for vireos, flycatchers, and woodpeckers. **Difficulty:** 4 miles round trip, moderately strenuous, some steep sections. **Notes:** Free parking, porta potty at trail head.

Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

Wednesday, July 3; 12:00PM

1 hour. **Leader:** Allen Royer, (408) 288-7768. See write-up for May 1.



Online Resources cont'd from page 1

eBird

eBird (ebird.org/home) is a service run by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology that allows you to track outings and sightings and keep a record of what you have seen and where. If you keep lists of your birding activities, eBird is a great way to organize those and allows you to track what you have seen across time and locations. You can do a lot more with eBird than just that - it allows you to look at locations and species if you want to know what to expect at a place you are going to bird, or when birds are most often seen at a given location throughout the year.

eBird has become a key resource for birders worldwide, and the data submitted to this website is used in research to help better understand birds and the environments they live in and depend on.

Silicon Valley Birding/South Bay Birds

If you are interested in getting reports from other birders in Santa Clara County about what they are finding right now, then you may want to subscribe to the South Bay Birds mailing list. This list has existed for over twenty years. I took over managing it in 2002 and the list now has over 1,000 subscribers. It exists to allow sharing of interesting sightings and trip reports in real time, so that if a birder finds something interesting they can help others see it as well.

The Avocet 4

South Bay Birds is part of a few online locations for local birders to chat and share. There is also a Facebook group (“Silicon Valley Birding”) for discussions about birding and an experimental Flickr group (flickr.com/groups/siliconvalleybirders) for photo sharing. These are all tied together by the Silicon Valley Birding site (siliconvalleybirding.org) which was created about a year ago to make it easy to find everything in one place.

The Silicon Valley Birding site also has information about Santa Clara County’s most popular birding locations and specialty species people often want to find. Over time we are trying to add content to the site to allow it to supplement and update the Birding at the Bottom of the Bay book’s information (available at the SCVAS Nature Shop.)

All About Birds

When out birding, most birders carry a field guide, whether a printed paper copy or phone application. It never hurts to have other references to supplement that guide if you are trying to study a target species or figure out a confusing identification challenge. The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology has an online guide called All About Birds, which is full of the kind of information you need while studying a species - range maps, behavior details and field marks, as well as vocalizations and a strong library of sample images of the birds at various points in their life.

Want to improve as a birder? The lab has created a series of courses in their Bird Academy to help improve your skills or pick up new ones. These run from the basics of birding essentials to understanding bird behavior, to tricky warbler or duck identification.

Enhance Your Birding Activities

Whether you want better information about what is happening now in Santa Clara County, want to improve your birding skills, sort out that challenging identification, or spend some time chatting with other local birders - there are online resources you can leverage to become a better birder. Check them out and see which ones are best for you!

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 or call the Office at (408) 252-3747.



American Avocet by Mary Ann Robertson



Wilson's Warbler by Dave Zittin

Get Started Birding in Santa Clara Valley

Classroom Session: Thursday, May 16 at McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino; 7:00-9:00PM

Field Session: Saturday, May 18 at Almaden Lake Park and Los Alamos Creek Trail, San Jose; 8:00-11:00AM

Cost: Free! **Register:** Find the class on our calendar at 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 and field guides. You'll learn where to find birds in different seasons and tides, and then practice what we learned in a weekend field trip.



Spring 2019 Walk by Arvind Kumar

Beginner's Bird and Plant ID Walk Series

Date: Sunday, June 23 **Time:** 9:00AM-12:00PM **Instructors:** Vicki Silvas-Young (SCVAS) and Arvind Kumar (CNPS)

Location: Lake Cunningham Park - 2305 South White Road, San Jose

Cost: Free! \$6 parking fee. **Register:** Space is limited. RSVP via "California Native Plant Society - Santa Clara Valley Chapter" Meetup or openspaceauthority.org/visitors/events.html

Description: As summer begins, join us for a beginner's bird and plant identification walk through Lake Cunningham Park, a major destination for waterfowl and migratory birds. Please meet at the Marina building at 9:00AM. The Marina is on the western shore, 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.* **Register:** Find the excursion on our calendar at 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. **Note:** Rain or snow cancels, with refund.



Humpback Whale by Ted Cheeseman

Sail Monterey Bay with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

Date: Sunday, June 30 **Time:** 7:30AM - 4:00PM

Leaders: Doug, Gail, and Ted Cheeseman

Location: Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey

Cost: \$160/person **Register:** Contact Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris at (408) 741-5330 or info@cheesemans.com

Description: Join us for a full day of wildlife and whale watching with marine specialists from Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris. We'll observe seabirds such as shearwaters, jaegers, skuas, alcids, and even Black-footed Albatross. Sea Otters play around in the kelp forests and Humpback Whales often feed and breach close to the ship! Bring binoculars to look for Pacific White-sided, Common, and Risso's Dolphins and perhaps even a Northern Right Whale Dolphin or Blue Whale.

Field Notes

(February-March 2019)

by Pete Dunten

Geese through Gulls

Groups of three **Greater White-fronted Geese** visited Sunnyvale Baylands from 5 – 6 Feb (KSc, SW) and Byxbee Park between 9 – 22 Mar (MJM, TS). The high count was 22 in a flock over Newby Island on 11 Feb (AR). A group of fourteen **Cackling Geese** settled in at Arzino Ranch on 4 Feb (WGB) and stayed through 10 Feb (GL) before dwindling to ten geese on 14 Feb (GL), then to two geese on 24 Feb (MJM, RJ, MMR). Two were nearby at the Don Edwards EEC on 21 Mar (TH). Lake Cunningham hosted the only other sizable group of Cacklers, with six present on 28 Feb (SPz). A single **Snow Goose** was found in Coyote Valley along Bailey Ave in the first week of January and again on 28 Jan (MJM, JPa) and 30 Jan (RWR). A **Long-tailed Duck** on 24 Feb on a closed refuge pond added another record for this winter (MMR, MJM, RJ). A **Red-throated Loon** was seen at Palo Alto Baylands on 9 Mar (BF) and one visited Adobe Creek for a short period between 14 – 15 Mar (BLL, VLL, ST).

ter was at Almaden Lake on 6 - 7 Feb (WP, DPe). On 11 Feb, one was at the Newby Island recycling facility (AR). From 16 - 21 Feb, one was at Alviso Pond A16 (MJM, m. ob.); it was found dead on 22 Feb (MJM). Three more Glaucous Gulls were reported in late February and early March. Different individuals were at Alviso A16 on 23 Feb (ST, JTh) and 24 Feb (RJ, MMR, MJM). The latter bird moved to Almaden Lake on 1 Mar (STu). And on 2 Mar, a Glaucous Gull moved between Sobrato HS in Morgan Hill early in the day (SCR) to Anderson Reservoir, where it was enjoyed by members of a Palo Alto Adult School field trip (MDo et al.). The latest report of a Glaucous Gull was from New Chicago Marsh on 23 Mar (NoA). The number of individuals seen this winter was at least as many as seen in any previous year in the county.

Swifts through Kingbirds

There were scattered reports of early **Vaux's Swifts** beginning in February. Six passed over Almaden Lake on 12 Feb (RWR, FV, SPz), six were over the Guadalupe River at the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) on 3 Mar (AVe), one was over Lake Cunningham on 5 Mar (BM), and two were over Al-

OSP on 12 Mar had wandered outside its known breeding range (DgJ). A **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Frenchman's Park at Stanford on 6 and 10 Feb was out-of-place in time and likely a wintering bird (TGr). The first Pac-slope spring migrant was at J Grant CP on 16 Mar (MDo et al.). The first **Hammond's Flycatcher** of the spring was about a week early on 26 Mar at Belgatos Park in Los Gatos (RbC). The earliest spring arrival date in previous years was 1 Apr. The **Cassin's Kingbirds** in the south county appear to be increasing in numbers, and it will be interesting to see if they expand their breeding range. They've nested at two locations for several years. This year one to three Cassin's Kingbirds have been seen at the SCRWA ponds outside of Gilroy, as well as at their traditional location on San Felipe Rd. One was at the SCRWA Ponds on 12 Feb (MJM), three were present on 20 Feb (SPz), and one was still there on 21 Mar (MJM). A pair returned to San Felipe Rd on 14 Mar (ST). A single Cassin's Kingbird was further north along Dougherty Ave in Morgan Hill, west of Ogier Ponds, on 24 Feb (GL, WP, KON). February also brought our first winter record of a **Western Kingbird**, one photographed along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road on 10 Feb (JWm, MHs). The first returning Western Kingbird arrived at Rancho San Vicente on 15 Mar (JPa).

Vireos through Finches

Both **Cassin's Vireo** and **Warbling Vireo** returned in March, with the first Cassin's at the Cooley Picnic Area in Stevens Creek CP on 29 Mar (ST, MDo) and the first Warbling Vireos along the Calero Creek Trail (HM) and at McClellan Ranch (PDU) on 16 Mar. A wintering **House Wren** was along Matador Creek bordering the Palo Alto FCB on 29 Jan (PDU). Another, at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 28 Feb was also likely a wintering individual (WGB). The **Phainopepla** at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park since late November was seen through 6 Mar (DW, AVe). The latest sighting from Almaden Quicksilver CP, where another Phainopepla arrived in late November, was on 7 Feb (JPa). On Feb 10, one was discovered at the Stanford Dish (SPv). On 18 Feb a wintering **Yellow Warbler** was found along the Coyote Creek Trail below Anderson Reservoir (JH). The last report from the phenomenal winter bonanza of **Palm Warblers** was of one in San Jose's Silver Leaf neighborhood on 19 Feb (MCo). The first returning **Black-throated Gray Warbler** graced Palo Alto's Foothills Park on 25 Mar (GHa). A **Hermit Warbler** at Sanborn

Red-throated Loon by Barry Langdon-Lassagne



A **Ruff** was present from mid-October into the third week of November along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road. After a long absence, on 12 Feb the Ruff returned (ABo). It was found through 1 Mar (m. ob., EH). Among the hundreds of roosting gulls on Alviso A16, a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was a nice find on 19 Feb (AR). The gull returned on 22 and 23 Feb (MJM, ST, JTh). The **first Glaucous Gull** of many found this win-

ter was at Almaden Lake on 9 Mar (BW). The **Red-naped Sapsucker** wintering at Guadalupe Creek along Hicks Rd was seen as late as 24 Feb (JPa). Another was seen at Townsend Park in San Jose on 2 Feb (MSm). Two of the locally wintering **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were found as late as 11 Feb and 5 Mar, at Lake Cunningham (KON) and at the SCVWD (BLL, VLL), respectively. A **Pileated Woodpecker** at Coyote Valley

Field Notes *cont'd*

CP on 1 Mar (ST) and 11 Mar (MJM) may have wintered locally. The wintering **Chipping Sparrows** at TJ Martin Park remained through the period (m. ob.), with a high count of fifteen on 26 Jan, and twelve still noted on 18 Mar (both JPa). Another small flock of Chipping Sparrows with as many as eleven birds was discovered at Penetencia Creek Park on 6 Feb (WP, KON). At least one Chippie remained at the park through 18 Mar (TKP). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** staying for the winter at Sierra Azul OSP was a nice find on 5 Feb (BLL, VLL). At least one of the **Swamp Sparrows** at Alviso Marina remained through 20 Mar (DW). On 31 Mar one was along the Guadalupe River below Blossom Hill Rd (JPa). The **Summer Tanager** found near Guadalupe Mines Rd and Lavender Creek in late December stayed in the area through 20 Mar (KJ). At Vasona CP the Summer Tanager first noted in early January was last observed on 2 Feb (TB). Another of the flood of returning migrants was a **Black-headed Grosbeak**, first sighted at Anderson Reservoir on 26 Mar (SCR). One that wintered locally in San Jose's Dry Creek neighborhood was last recorded on 3 Feb (JaJ). The 15th of March brought both **Hooded** and **Bull-ock's Orioles**. A single Hooded Oriole was in a West San Jose neighborhood on that date (fide LM) and a single Bull-ock's Oriole was at Coyote Valley OSP (DCn). A tally of 32 **Purple Finches** on 29 Mar along Mines Rd in the Dia-

blo Range in the northeastern corner of the county was a nice count (WGB). The finches range widely in search of blooming trees before the beginning of the nesting season.

(BM), Lisa Myers (LM), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergey Pavlov (SPv), William Pelletier (WP), Don Pendleton (DPe), Sergio Perez (SPz), Tracy K Pham (TKP), Bob Reiling



Swamp Sparrow by Teale Fristoe

Observers: Noah Arthur (NoA), Terry Blows (TB), Abe Borker (ABO), Bill Bousman (WGB), Robin Carle (RbC), Dani Christensen (DCn), Michael Costello (MCo), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Bob Foehring (BF), Tom Grey (TGr), Jane Haley (JH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Megan Hausler (MHs), Eric Hopson (EH), Tom Hurley (TH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Kent Johnson (KJ), Douglas Joo (DgJ), Jane Jordan (JaJ), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Virginia Langdon-Lassagne (VLL), Garrett Lau (GL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Hugh McDevitt (HM), Brooke Miller

(RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Kathie Schroeck (KSc), Tom Segarra (TS), Marc Simmel (MSm), Jim Thomas (JTh), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AVe), Bill Walker (BW), Dave Weber (DW), Susan Weinstein (SW), John Weismuller (JWm)

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

Events Calendar

Bay Area Bird Photographers Wed. 5/1; 7:30-9:00PM

Embarcadero Room, Rinconada Library
1213 Newell Rd, Palo Alto

Topic 5/1: "Video for Bird Photographers" with Bill Walker

See scvas.org/babp for details.

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group Tues. 5/14 & 6/11; 10:00AM

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

Topic 5/14: Your Own Bird Subject

Topic 6/11: Picnic (venue TBD)

Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws Fri. 5/17 & 6/14; 12:00-1:30PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

Free workshops for all ages! No RSVP required; please be on time. See calendar at scvas.org for details.

Birdathon Awards Dinner

Sat. 6/1; 6:00PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

See details on page 10.

Annual Member Dinner

Sat. 7/13; 5:00-7:00PM

The Garden House in Shoup Park, Los Altos
Enjoy a catered dinner, guest speaker, and more. We will also recognize outstanding Volunteers and vote for Board members.

See announcement on page 1.

Young Audubon

Kid-Friendly Field Trips Ongoing

Throughout Santa Clara County

If your family enjoys hiking and bird-watching, check out our Field Trips calendar (pages 2-3) for listings of kid-friendly field trips. These are free and open to the public - all you have to do is RSVP online at scvas.org/FieldTrips or by calling (408) 579-9590.

Learning Our Birds

Wed. 5/8; 1:00-2:30PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

Join former homeschooling parent Ginger Langdon-Lassagne for an early-elementary science course on bird observation and identification, appropriate for ages 6-9. Students must be accompanied by an adult. *Space is limited to 10 students (plus parents) and registration is required - visit scvas.org/YoungAudubon to sign up and for more details.*

Birding for Science

Wed. 5/22; 1:00-3:00PM

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

Join former homeschooling parent Ginger Langdon-Lassagne for a middle school science course focused on contributing citizen science, appropriate for ages 10-14. Students must be accompanied by an adult. *Space is limited to 12 students (plus parents) and registration is required - visit scvas.org/YoungAudubon to sign up and for more details.*

Conservation Corner: Check In With Our Environmental Advocate

by Shani Kleinhaus

Boston Properties Almaden Project: In San Jose, a block-long, 16+-story glass building of over 1.5 million square feet is proposed at the edge of the Guadalupe River. The proposed design includes bird safety measures but as proposed, it encroaches into the riparian corridor in a site where the river boasts a healthy native riparian forest. We are greatly concerned, and will engage and provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

In San Jose, we continue to advocate for the preservation of **Coyote Valley** as open space and habitat.

- With other advocates, we helped direct an energy storage project from the valley floor to a more appropriate location in an existing warehouse in San Jose. The project should allow the retirement of the Metcalf Gas Power Station.
- We endorsed and promoted Measure T, which included the possibility of allocating \$50 million to a pool of funds that would purchase land in Coyote Valley. We continue to advocate with the City to allocate the full \$50 million for this purpose.

The City of Mountain View rejected Google's suggested plans for the Shorebird Area of North Bayshore. Google asked the City to allow the transfer of office development from the area close to Highway 101 to the area of Shorebird Way, and to allow the building of a dense, mixed-use neighborhood there. As part of this development, Google offered to remove five buildings to regenerate ten acres of habitat between the Egret Rookery and Charleston Marsh (Retention Basin), and to build an environmental education center. We hope future plans for the area retain the removal of buildings and restoration of habitat in wetlands and open space.

In opposition to **Cargill's proposed filling of the Redwood City salt ponds**, SCVAS joined San Mateo County Supervisor, Dave Pine, and a growing number of organizations and political leaders, stating:

"We oppose development on the Redwood City salt ponds, because we don't build on San Francisco Bay. Cargill Salt and luxury home developer DMB have colluded with the Trump Administration to weaken Clean Water Act protections for San Francisco Bay. They are again proposing to build on Bay salt ponds where massive public opposition stopped their 12,000-home project in 2012. New housing on the Redwood City salt ponds would put people at risk from rising seas, destroy habitat for fish and wildlife, lack an adequate water supply, and worsen traffic. To combat climate change and create more resilient and equitable communities, the Bay Area needs more affordable housing near transit hubs and city centers, not on Bay wetlands. Redwood City Mayor Ian Bain has said publicly that he does not want to see the salt ponds re-zoned for housing and prefers to see Cargill donate or sell the land for wetlands restoration. We urge Redwood City to reject proposals for development on the salt ponds, and restore them as wetlands for Bay Area residents and future generations."

Stanford University is currently negotiating its growth plans with the County of Santa Clara to determine what Stanford should be required to do to mitigate the impacts of that growth. SCVAS has been advocating for bird-safe design and responsible lighting policies, as well as for the extension of existing protections (requirement for super-majority vote) for the open space in the Stanford Foothills.

The calls for protection of open space brought County staff to recommend a 99-year extension of the super majority protections. SCVAS continues to follow the process to ensure that staff recommendations are implemented and the hills west of Junipero Serra Boulevard remain undeveloped.

Environmental Action Committee (EAC) Volunteer, Dashiell Leeds, has focused on the issue of light pollution and has encouraged responsible lighting in Santa Clara Valley cities. Dashiell has also engaged in the efforts to demand responsible planning for an iconic structure in Arena Green Park, on the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek in San Jose. Dashiell provides:



Yellow-rumped Warbler by Lauren Mitchell

- We are happy to report that the **Light Tower Corporation** has stated that the iconic structure will NOT be a light tower. They are moving forward with an international design competition for a structure, with guidelines provided by environmental consultant, HT Harvey, and with a jury that includes a representative that local environmental groups (including SCVAS) selected for this position. SCVAS will continue to monitor this project as it goes forward to make sure that these sensitive riparian and aquatic habitats are protected.
- We continue our advocacy for bird-safe design and **responsible lighting** (Dark Sky and Lights-out programs) in San Jose, Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Mountain View. Sunnyvale voted to prioritize the study of their LED lighting systems and to create a Bird-Safe Design/Dark Sky Ordinance. Similar policies are set to appear before the City Councils of Cupertino and Mountain View for work-priority voting.



Burrowing Owl by Marti Wright

EAC Volunteer, Eileen McLaughlin, has been following developments near Alviso. Eileen provides:

- As traffic clogs Bay Area roads, many agencies are looking for a public transportation solution. **In Alviso, two rail solutions are moving forward:** The Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) which brings commuters from the southern part of the Central Valley, and the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) that looks to connect the northern part of the state to San Jose. The Capitol Corridor plans are in the early stages of a study that will analyze rail alternatives to anticipate sea level rise and an increase in the future number of passengers. We are concerned because alternatives for both rail projects cut through the middle of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Together, the rail projects will bring 34 round-trip trains through the wetlands each day, and there will be additional freight trains at night. We raised a concern about wildlife “dead” zones near the tracks.
- Construction of the **first sea level rise levee on the San Francisco Bay** is beginning in Alviso. The Corps of Engineers will be stockpiling truckloads of soil to build Phase 1 of the new levee. That levee will replace and elevate the trail that is near the entrance of Alviso Marina County Park, running toward and along lands of the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge and parallel to the railroad. The project is expected to protect Alviso and to allow habitat restoration of former salt ponds on the Refuge to proceed.



Newt Crossing Signs along Alma Bridge Road

With volunteer Anne Parsons, we have been working to reduce Pacific Newt mortality on Alma Bridge Road. In response to our advocacy efforts, the County of Santa Clara placed signs along the road, while they are exploring additional solutions.

Interested in getting involved in local advocacy work to protect the birds and other wildlife and open spaces in your community? Contact SCVAS Environmental Advocate, Shani Kleinhaus to volunteer at advocate@scvas.org.

Spring Birdathon 2019 Updates

By Carolyn Knight, Birdathon Coordinator

Our annual Birdathon began on March 31, and we are well on our way! As of April 5, 20 teams have registered and raised over **\$4,600!** These funds provide crucial support for our education programs, including Wetlands Discovery Program, which reaches more than thirteen hundred elementary school students in Santa Clara County every year!

Upcoming Team Highlights

This year we have a number of new teams open to the public, led by some of our top birders. These teams are a great opportunity to explore birding hotspots, and meet new birders on the way. Who knows, you may find you want to bird with your team outside of the competition!

For those wanting to jump into Birdathon with both feet, Bob Hirt of the storied **Rock Wrens** will be leading a new team for beginning and intermediate birders called the **Rock Sitting Pigeons** at Shoreline Lake on **Saturday, April 27th**. This 4-hour team is open to all and is a great opportunity to experience the rush of competitive birding while delving deeper into a familiar locale.



The Cupertino Creek Cruisers are continuing the tradition of cruising down Stevens Creek.

Also on **Saturday, May 4**, the **Sharpies** will be darting around the county. Led by Bill Pelletier, this team is known for having fun while enjoying an intense day of birding. They are looking for new recruits and eager birders. This is an exciting opportunity for those up for a high intensity day, starting early at Ed Levin Park and moving across the bay to finish off the day with South County birds, including owls.

For the entire roster of participating teams, check out scvas.org/birdathon - click "Team Descriptions/Registration."



*Spotted Towhee by Barry Langdon -
Lassagne of Piratical Flycatchers*

The Avocet 10

Top Fundraisers as of April 5, 2019

Teams

1. Rock Wrens
2. Sitting Ducks
3. Wrong Terns

Individuals

1. Bob Hirt
2. Renée Polizotto
3. Barbara Millin

Prize Highlights

We have some fantastic prizes for our participants this year, all thanks to our generous sponsors!

- Bob Hirt donated a compact Orion 12-36x50 spotting scope and tripod.
- Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris donated 2 seats on their upcoming June 30th Whale and Birdwatching Excursion in Monterey Bay.
- Mike Mammoser and Bob Hirt are giving their time for a custom birding adventure, and will help you track down a special species or explore a specific birding hotspot.
- The American Birding Association has donated a year-long membership to their organization, giving the winner access to ABA exclusive resources and events.
- And many more! Take a peek at scvas.org/birdathon - click on "Prizes."

Thanks to all of our participants, team leaders, prize sponsors, and donors for your support and enthusiasm! The **birding competition window is open until May 5**, and we will continue to **collect donations until May 13 at 5:00PM.**



The Birdathon Awards Dinner will be held at **McClellan Ranch at 6:00PM on Saturday, June 1**. Food and refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP at scvas.org/birdathon or call the main office at (408) 252-3747. Dinner will include prize announcements, games, and fun for all!

Questions? Email Birdathon Coordinator, Carolyn Knight, at scvasbirdathon@gmail.com.

Friends of SCVAS

(Gifts received February 1, 2019 through March 31, 2019)

California Quail (Up to \$99)

Carol Ach
Donald & Jean Arndt
Diane Bates
Jean Bodine
Gail Bower
Charlene Canger
Jean Carvalho
James Estes
Taylor Forester
Richard & Eileen Grindeland
Joey Hagedorn
Sherri Harrill
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Chuck Wilson
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Alfonso Banuelos
Margaret Barron
Connie Bowencamp
Constance Crawford
Gisela Evitt
Kathryn (Kit) Gordon
Christine Goritschnigg
David Hammond
Dave Johnston

Eve Meier
Michael & Erin Monroe
April Pufahl
Christine Robson Weaver
Christine & James Russell
Elinor Spellman
Nancy Teater - *In Memory of a Loyal Supporter*
Catherine (Kitty) Trejo *and Longtime Volunteer*
Doug & Pam Wong

Burrowing Owl (\$250-\$499)

Gordon & Carolyn Davidson
Vijay Janapaty
Bill McHenry

Peregrine Falcon (\$500-\$999)

Maidenherren Fund
Barbara Millin

Golden Eagle (\$1000-\$4999)

Patricia Brennan Foundation
Bob Hirt
Richard Johnson
Julio Mulero

Calling All Volunteers! We need your help!

Burrowing Owl Habitat Management – Help our local Burrowing Owl populations by removing invasive weeds on and around their burrows. This project takes place one day each month, from 9:00AM-12:00PM. Gloves and hand tools provided.

Field Trip Leaders - We need leaders for our “Backyard Birds at McClellan Ranch” walks. You don’t have to be an expert birder, and we are happy to train you. For more information, contact Field Trip Coordinator, Eve Meier, at scvasfieldtrips@gmail.com.

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

Facebook Roof Surveys - Birders are needed to help with monthly bird surveys of Facebook’s 9-acre living roof in Menlo Park. These take place the morning of the first Friday of each month, and space is limited. Please contact Shani Kleinhaus at advocate@scvas.org to sign up.

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

- In-Class Programs: Assist elementary students in a series of stations focused on wetland habitat, birds,

and changes in the bay. Docents are also encouraged to volunteer for other school activities as they are scheduled.

- Field Trips: Volunteers lead groups of students around Charleston Slough to bird, explore nature, and discuss topics students learned in school.

July 4th Burrowing Owl Guards - Volunteers are needed to assist the City of Mountain View with crowd management during the celebration and fireworks display at Shoreline Park, from around 6:00-10:30PM. Because of access and permitting requirements, **RSVPs are required** - contact Kelly Alfrey at outreach@scvas.org.

Brochure Design - The SCVAS Membership Committee would like to update our Membership Brochure. We are looking for volunteers with graphic design experience to help with this endeavor.

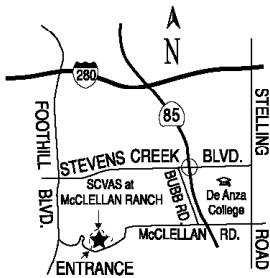
Newsletter Design - The SCVAS Outreach Committee is working on redesigning *The Avocet*, and we are looking for volunteers with newsletter design experience to help us create a new look for our newsletter.

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

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Cupertino, CA 95014

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E-mail: scvas@scvas.org
www.scvas.org

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New Members

2/1/2019 - 3/31/2019
Thank you and welcome!

Carol Ach	Vicki Kojola
Beverly Adams	Stephen Lester
Emily Allen	Lydia Lieb
Bertha Andrews	Michael & Erin Monroe
Keith Askoff	Jenny Murase
John F. Atwood	Hina Patel
Laurie Bishop	Ron Pauls
Nicole Buckley	Clarence Quindipan
Charlene Canger	Lidia Ramirez
Julia Casto	Stephen Rentmeesters
Harvey Darnell	Pierre Schwob
Karla J Enriquez	Bharat Sekar
Taylor Forester	Aman Sekhon
Norma Jean Galihier	Denise Stanford
Wilma Gardner	Eric Sweigart
Davena Gentry	Sue Umeda
David Hammond	Gerald Weltzin
Sherri Harrill	Jeanne Williams
John Harris	Chuck Wilson
Emma Koh	

And thank you to those who renewed!

Nature Shop

Hours:

Mon-Thurs 10:00AM-4:30PM
Friday *Call ahead*
Sat 10:00AM-2:00PM



Back in stock!

Our local field guides are back in stock and ready to join you on the trail. These compact and waterproof folding guides are the perfect pocket companion for your spring and summer walks!

\$8.95

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!

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Office E-mail

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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.

More info. at 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.

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