

The

# AVOCET

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

Spring 2020 • Vol 68 Num 2



Photo: Carolyn Knight

## Monthly Speaker Series

**LUIS VILLABLANCA**

THE BIRDS OF THE SIERRA

Wed, March 18 at 7:30 pm

Redwood Hall at  
The Terraces in Los Altos



A world traveller, accomplished photographer, and long time member of Bay Area Bird Photographers, Luis' images represent his determination to live his passion. His awe inspiring presentation will focus on the Sierra Nevada and the spectacular bird life found there, as well as the challenges a photographer faces when trying to get that perfect image. Join us!

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

## Get Ready for Our Birdathon

*Sponsor a team and join in the birding fun!*

### Why I Birdathon

I was already committed long before I found a Lapland Longspur in the sunset light at the summit of Sierra Road in San Jose's east hills; it was cemented for me much earlier, still dark and starry, when the Common Poorwills called on the back slopes of Black Mountain at the headwaters of Stevens Creek during my first Dawn Chorus. I had never so much as signed up for an Audubon Field Trip when I impulsively decided to enroll in my first Spring Birdathon in 2004. I'm so glad I did!

I was what you might call an introverted birder back then, so I'm not sure what led me to sign up for a Birdathon. I picked Mike Rogers' team, the "Varied Twitchers," since it sounded challenging and fun. I didn't even know what a "twitcher" was, and I had no idea that this was a team that consistently ranked at the peak of two of the Birdathon's top categories: Most Birds and Best Bird. I was diving into the deep end of the birding pool. That Dawn Chorus was one of the most extraordinary events I'd ever witnessed—even though I'd been birding for years and heard birds call before sunrise, I'd never fully appreciated its beauty. And surrounded by expert birders calling out bird names, I was learning to bird by ear like never before.

In the years following that intense first Birdathon experience, I've been part of a wide variety of teams, from leading four-hour trips for beginners to scouring the county with Ginger on our own self-guided two-person team. I've joined the Varied Twitchers a few more times, and I've been part of the Sharpies (both of these teams are participating this year). Every year is different; every experience

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White-throated Sparrow on sign  
Garrett Lau



Willow  
Matthew Dodder

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Since the winter edition of *The Avocet*, the Ranch has been an even busier place. We've had planning meetings for everything from how to streamline field trip registration, how membership can mean more, how to get our education programs into more schools, how to broaden our adult education offerings, how to encourage more native plant gardens, how we can improve the website and the Birdathon experience, all the way to how do we know we're doing things right. What we haven't done is stop thinking about our future. Not for a moment.

This month we launch our annual Birdathon, perhaps the most important outreach and fundraising effort of our fiscal year. This year we hope to make it even more successful than the ones before. You'll find a wonderful selection of teams, and many ways to get involved. We're making materials available to our members that help explain the Birdathon concept, and why it is so important to SCVAS. You may have experienced that puzzled look from co-workers and family when you ask them to sponsor your Birdathon team. With any luck, the materials available on our website will help you respond to that puzzled look on the face of a potential donor.

There will be traveling teams, big-sit teams, a museum team, a drawing team, teams for youngsters, and teams for the less mobile among us. There will be teams that are perfect for experienced birders, and for brand new birders, birders that love the competition, and those that don't. In short, there is a team to fit everyone's taste.

## A Season For the Future

Truly we've been actively focused on the future as a non-profit should be. How can we grow and prosper? How can we accomplish everything our mission promises? How can we build on our legacy? For that reason, this last note saddens me deeply.

We lost a dear friend recently. Ruth Troetschler passed away peacefully on December 29 at the age of 94. Anyone who ever attended a CBC dinner will remember Ruth as a warm and generous friend, as well as a heroic advocate for the environment. For decades, she volunteered for SCVAS because of her deep love of birds and nature. She worked countless hours on environmental issues until quite recently, making her one of the most adored members in our 94-year history. We will miss her greatly and wish the very best to her family during this difficult time. Please read the wonderful tribute to Ruth in this issue of *The Avocet*, written by Cassie Ohms, her granddaughter.

My sincerest wish is that Ruth would be happy with how SCVAS has matured and evolved, and that she would approve of our education and conservation efforts, because we do this work, in large part, because she had such high standards for success, such a clear image of our world's future, and she inspired us to have the same.

**Matthew Dodder**  
Executive Director



Wilson's Warbler  
Tom Grey

*Continued from cover*

unique. One year we failed to ever see a Great Blue Heron and once we never found a single Mourning Dove. Another year it snowed on us at dawn on Mount Hamilton. Last year we started by camping out at Coyote Lake so we could hear owls calling before we even got out of bed. Also last year, I joined the Birdathon Committee so I could help organize this amazing event. This year I'm also continuing to lead the Wandering Kestrels, a 4-hour team for beginning and intermediate birders.

Back in 2004, I kept a checklist on paper, writing in pencil so it wouldn't smear in the rain. I had just bought an iPod and copied an album of bird songs onto it so I could listen in the field and improve my birding by ear. Birding technology has improved at a remarkable pace since then. Now we carry electronic field guides in our phones, with high-resolution drawings and photographs, songs and calls, and detailed range maps. We have checklisting apps, like eBird, which allow us to upload lists and contribute to a worldwide database of bird observations. The eBird app also helps by letting us know what's common or rare in the area we are birding. The maps in our phones tell us how to avoid traffic, making our driving between birding sites more efficient. Digital cameras allow us to capture high-resolution photos of birds more easily than ever, and we have Merlin Bird ID which uses machine learning to identify photographs of birds, making field identification that much quicker.

The constant across all the years has been the great work of SCVAS in educating the public, providing field trips and birding classes, working to protect wildlife habitat all around the Bay and fostering a community of birders and friends with

the common goals of enjoying and caring about our birds. By participating in the Birdathon, you can give back to SCVAS and help further those goals.

I love enjoying birds in their natural setting, sharing the joy of birds with friends and with those new to birding. I love the work that SCVAS does, I love learning more about birds and I love being part of this vibrant birding community. That's why I Birdathon.

## How to Help

Your contributions support all the efforts of SCVAS, especially the education and conservation programs. Pledges and donations can be made any time. To count toward a team or individual competing for prizes, get your pledge in before May 10. You can sponsor a team via the "Sponsor" buttons on the teams page: [scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-teams](https://scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-teams), or you can write a check and send it in to our office at 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino, CA 95014, or call our Office Manager April Austin at 408-252-3747.

How can you join the fun? Everything you need is on our website at [scvas.org/birdathon](https://scvas.org/birdathon). You can request to join a team, or create a self-guided team of your own. It doesn't matter if you've never held a pair of binoculars before, or if you've been birding your entire life—there's a team for every style and skill level. And if you're an introverted birder like I used to be, or if you just want to bird on your own, you can be your own single-person team.

We especially want to encourage photographers this year. We've been updating the SCVAS website with amazing photos, all from our members and taken either within the county or nearby. We'll have a gallery of photos from everyone who does a photography birdathon, and we will highlight the best photo on the front page of our website.

For those competing, we have a fabulous list of prizes and sponsors this year, with prizes including binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, birding expeditions, field trips led by eminent local experts, wine tasting, and much more. Prizes are given to those teams and individuals that raise the most money to support SCVAS. Take a look at the prize list at [scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-prizes](https://scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-prizes). We are grateful to our many prize sponsors, including Los Gatos Birdwatcher, Alvaro's Adventures, Cheeseman's Ecology Safaris, Zeiss Sports Optics, Kowa Sporting Optics, Orion Telescopes & Binoculars, Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards, Beauregard Vineyards and Sports Basement.

We want to hear everyone's stories this year, so we've added a rule that all teams submit at least one photo and a brief write-up of their adventures — we'll be sharing some of those in

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# WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Matthew Dodder  
Executive Director

Spring is the best time to go birding—which is what I say about every season actually... but it's what's different about spring that makes it especially worthwhile. We experience the warmer temperatures, and the longer days. We notice the budding of trees and flowers. We see more insects, and we hear singing! Not the short call notes heard year round, but full songs! The very nature of spring is sound.

Annie Dillard wrote in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* about spring and the cacophony of bird songs. Her description of the Mockingbird is particularly wonderful.

*"His invention is limitless... he is tireless, too; ... he will begin his daily marathon at two in the morning and scarcely pause for a breath until eleven at night. I don't know when he sleeps. This is what I have on my chimney; it might as well keep me awake out of wonder as rage."*

I couldn't agree more.

## SOUNDS

On January 26th I posted a brief message on SouthBayBirds about the songs I had been hearing around the Ranch. Dark-eyed Junco and Oak Titmouse sounding as if it was mid-spring, and they were calling for mates. Most notably, the descending trill of an Orange-crowned Warbler which always reminds me of warmer weather. But this was still winter!

Resident birds often begin singing quite early because they have the freedom to nest before the migrants arrive—before the competition ramps up and nest sites become harder to find—before all the properties are taken. Late January, I watched as a female Anna's Hummingbird sat on her nest, and I reflected on that advantage—the ability to get started early in the season, and even have time for a second or third brood before the fall. Residents have a head start.

Still, the fields and forests of January are generally rather quiet. Now of course it is officially spring, and bird songs and sounds are all around us. The Orange-crowned Warbler's dry decelerating trill is now heard constantly, the staccato song of the Wilson's Warbler which rises and falls in volume, echoes through the wood and willows. The softly-colored Warbling Vireo and its rushed "*Rosita Rosita Rosey*" becomes familiar again—but good luck getting a look at this subdued and slow-moving Vireo! I find that every spring presents the challenge of re-familiarizing myself with all these sounds. It's always an effort, but I find that year after year, I shave off a day or two from the time it takes me to recognize each song. And I am always learning.

There is an app I have found helpful. *Larkwire: Learn Bird Songs 1* is available in the Apple App Store and on larkwire.com. It has a unique gamified approach that presents songs in regionalized small groups (Warblers and Sparrows, Trilled and Buzzy, Robin-like, and even Drumming, etc.) It then asks the user to identify the song from a group of four choices. The questions become more difficult as one learns, and the scoring helps make it fun and motivates us to get better. Of course, nothing is more helpful than hearing a song in the field and then locating the bird that it comes from. That first-hand connection of song and bird stays with you better than any other kind of practice.

## TERRITORIES

Consider each season at its essence—what makes spring different from other seasons, in other words. The prominence of song and sound in spring has a reason, and that reason is territory. The myriad ways which birds advertise their presence, their claim to an area is often expressed through song or sounds. Territories are held through visual cues as well. Think how visible the red epaulettes of a Red-winged Blackbird are from across the marsh. That visual signal accompanies the male's famous "*Konk-ka-reee!*".

Territories come in many forms depending on whether a bird is solitary, colonial, whether it is monogamous, polygynous, polyandrous, or promiscuous. A territory can be a patch of willows or reeds (Marsh Wren), an entire marsh (Northern Harrier), a flowering tree or even a single branch (Anna's Hummingbird), or a small circle defined by how far a bird can reach from its nest to peck its neighbor (Cormorants). Some territories are aggressively defended, and others not so much. Think about the defensive behavior of Stilts, Terns, Kites or Kingbirds, as opposed to the relative subdued nature of Towhees or Bushtits. Appreciating the many ways birds acquire, reinforce and retain their territory is an important part of knowing spring at its core.

Territory is defended not just with action, but with color. The hues of our spring birds are beautiful to us, but more importantly, they are clearly visible to rivals—I'm thinking Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's and Hooded Oriole. Oh, and Lazuli Bunting and Blue Grosbeak! Overwhelming color is spring's response to the grays and browns of winter.

## PAIRS

Finding and keeping territory is about more than attracting a mate. It is about a bird demonstrating it can provide good real estate for a home, a place that affords protection for eggs,



Allen's Hummingbird  
Tom Grey



Pacific-slope Flycatcher  
Tom Grey

and access to a supply of food. The pairing of birds belies the flocks we see in winter. Now, the safety that numbers provided during the cooler months is replaced by partnerships for the purpose of raising young—that is for monogamous birds such as Bushtits. We remember this tiny lint-ball-of-a-bird and its large twittering flocks—20-30 birds at a time during winter. In spring however, they pair off and seek some semblance of privacy. Colonial birds like Cliff Swallows are, despite their numbers, still bound by the contract with another individual, their mate. In their case, the large colonies are as much a matter of safety for the nesting site (bridge or wall), as it is the safety of each individual nest in the colony. They are paired off, and gathered together simultaneously.

I recommend *The Birdwatcher's Companion to North American Birdlife*, by Christopher Leahy for a more articulate account about Territory, Pair Formation, and Mating Strategies.

## FUTURE

Perhaps spring is mostly about a specie's future. The annual nesting, if successful, will bring more representatives to the floor where they will carry on after the adults have passed. Look for those adults attempting to replenish their numbers, to ensure continuity for another year. If successful, they have done their job. To me, winter seems mostly about survival. With that comes the flocking behavior, the huge noisy groups of Snow Geese in the Central Valley announcing where the food can be found, the American Pipit gathering in large flocks and watching for predators, and the reclusive habits of our rare winter Swamp Sparrow—each of these working in its own way to find food and remain safe from predators.

Spring is also about survival, every season is in fact. But the urgency to establish territory, find a mate, and successfully rear young suggest that the **future** is actually at the center of spring's design.

## TRAVEL

I end with an acknowledgment that spring is also about **travel, particularly arrival**. Over the years, we have had more than 400 species occur in our county, 177 of which are breeding birds. Roughly 50 of those breeding birds come from somewhere else and then leave again in fall (Lazuli Bunting). Among the earliest to arrive are Allen's Hummingbird, and Pacific-slope Flycatcher. Others simply pass through our area in spring (Hammond's Flycatcher), continuing north to breed elsewhere, and still others show up mostly on their way to their wintering grounds in the south (Willow Flycatcher). Every season contains an element of transition. But spring sees the appearance of our most important birds, the ones that choose our county to raise their families and guarantee their future—the ones that waited through winter, survived the dangerous journey here (sometimes thousands of miles or even south of the equator like Cliff Swallow), produce marvelous sounds that confuse us, and build nests in unending variety. Head outside this spring, find the sights and sounds it brings, and as Annie Dillard wrote, "keep awake out of wonder". ●

**Recommended** *Living on the Wind* by Scott Weidensaul for a beautifully written account of migration. *How Birds Migrate* by Paul Keerlinger for the mechanics of migration. *A Season on the Wind* by Kenn Kaufman, because it's Kenn Kaufman and he's great.

Are you curious where the "good" birds are? Interested in learning new places to bird near you? *eBird* can help.

*eBird* is a system that lets birders record and report what they see when they're birding. For someone who is interested in finding new birds and birding locations, it's a treasure trove of information, but it can be intimidating figuring out how to search for it if you're new to the site. Here are a few of the things you can do with *eBird* that will help you find the interesting birds and locations around you:

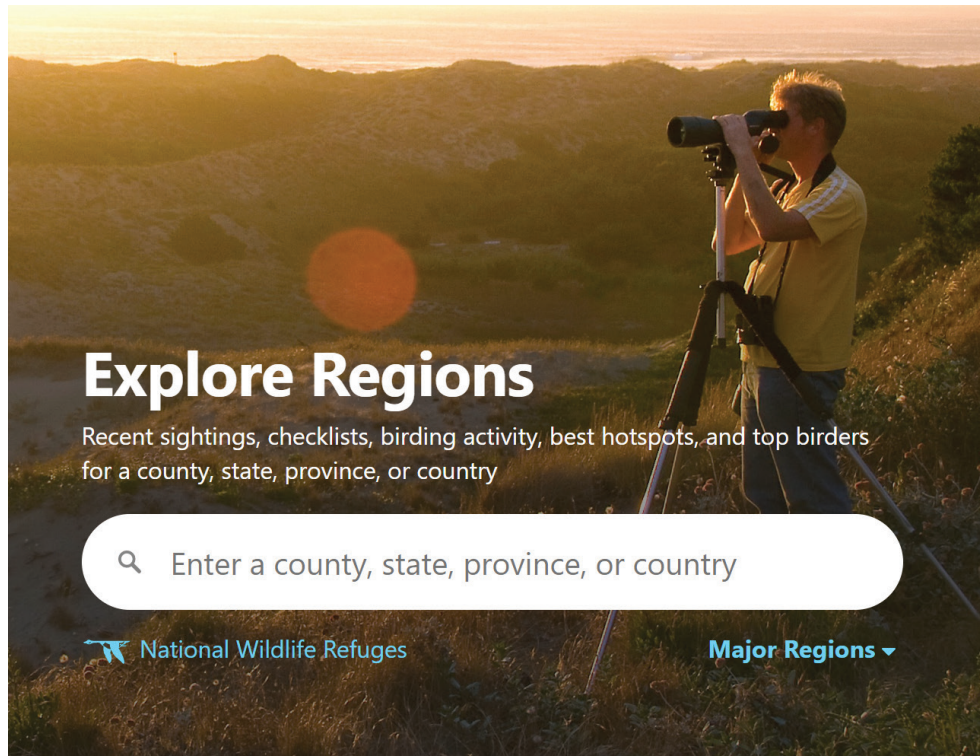
## Alerts

There are two types: rare bird alerts and needs alerts. The rare bird alert will send you an email whenever a bird of ABA code 3 or rarer is reported. If you're not familiar with the ABA codes, a "3" is a bird that is seen annually in low numbers, a "4" is a bird that is seen less than annually, a "5" is one that's been seen 3 or fewer times in the last 30 years, and a "6" has never been seen.

*eBird* has two types of this alert, one that will show you all of the current rare bird sightings in North America, and one you can set for a specific region. If you sign up for the Santa Clara County rare bird alert, any time one of these unusual birds is found in the county, you'll get an email with the information about it and links to the *eBird* report, which will show you where and when it was found.

*eBird* also lets you subscribe to a needs alert. The needs alert is similar to the rare bird alert, but is personalized to you: it will send you an email showing all of the birds being reported that are not on your *eBird* lists for that location for that year -- it will point you at the birds currently being seen you haven't listed yet. This can let you know when a bird is near you that you haven't seen, so you can see if you can find it and add it to your year list.

In a report, there is a summary of the species, followed by the individual reports. Those reports show who reported them and where they were seen, with links to the hotspot



## Explore Regions

Recent sightings, checklists, birding activity, best hotspots, and top birders for a county, state, province, or country

🔍 Enter a county, state, province, or country

🗺️ National Wildlife Refuges

Major Regions ▾

the report was reported at, and the *eBird* checklist that includes the sighting.

Some of the reports are tagged CONFIRMED, which means the *eBird* volunteer reviewer has looked at the report and considers the report valid, either through reporting evidence or photos of the bird in question.

## Signing up for alerts

To sign up for an *eBird* alert, log onto your account and go to the **Alerts** page (<https://ebird.org/alerts>). Reports can be requested for a specific county, a state or province, or a country.

By default, *eBird* will send you these alerts daily, if there is information to send. You can change your subscription to send them to you hourly if you want the chance to go out and chase a bird as soon as it's reported.

## Finding new places to bird

If you're curious about finding new places to bird near you, the *eBird* Explore page (<https://ebird.org/explore>) is your friend. Plug in your local county, state or province, or country to the Explore Regions section, and it will take you to a page that contains a summary of the birding information *eBird* has on that region.

The region summary page has a lot of useful information on it. I typically set it to only display data from the current year, so that what I'm seeing is more likely to be relevant

for deciding where to bird now. The main section of the page shows you the species seen in this region sorted by most recent.

If you click on a species name, it will bring up an overview page about the species including a map that shows the areas where it's more likely to be seen in the region along with photos and recordings of the bird. Click on the date to the right of the species and it will take you to the *eBird* report where the species was reported, including the map to the hotspot and all of the other species seen at that time. Click on the reporter name to get a summary of the birder's results in *eBird*.

To the right are three other lists of information:

- ▶ **Recent Visits** show the 10 most recent *eBird* reports submitted in the region. You can click on the date for each to get to that *eBird* report with hotspot location.
- ▶ **Top eBirders** shows the *eBirders* who have submitted the most checklists into *eBird* for the time period you chose at the top. Click on one to get to a summary page of their data in *eBird*.
- ▶ **Top Hotspots** shows the ten most popular hotspots in the region, determined by how many checklists have been submitted for that location.

Each of those three has a link to take you to the entire set of information as well. The lists for **Recent Visits** and **Top Hotspots** are also available in tabs at the top. The final tab, **Illustrated Checklist**, shows a checklist of the species seen in the region, along with submitted photos and recordings (if any), and a date chart to show you when the birds have been reported as seen. This can help you see if a species you want to chase is being seen now, and if not, what months are best for planning a chase for it.

## How I use this data

Here are some ideas of how to use this information to help you find new and interesting birds and locations. I get the daily rare bird and needs alert emails for Santa Clara County,

so I can look at both to see if there's a bird of interest. They give me a hotspot and the map will help me get to that location if I want to try to find that species.

I also use the explore page to see who is submitting checklists and what they're finding. If a location looks to have interesting birds being found, I can decide to go and bird it. Or I can use the popular hotspot listing to see which of the more commonly birded locations I haven't been to recently – or at all – and take a trip to visit.

## Planning a trip

I find these tools very useful when planning a trip where I'm going to bird. I recently took a trip where I spent a few days in southern California and did some birding. I'm fairly familiar with Orange County, having grown up there, but not San Diego County. I used the *eBird* explore page and the **Top Hotspots** to identify birding locations to explore. By tracking the rare bird alert and the most recent checklists, I could see where the local birders were going and what they were finding, using that to adjust my plans based on what they were doing and what birds they were finding. The **Needs Alert** wasn't much use, of course, since my seen list for the county was empty, so everything was a need.

I ended up identifying four places I wanted to bird and visited three, and had a very successful short trip in the county.

## Add eBird to your birding life

*eBird* is a critical resource for birders today. It can seem complicated and hard to use – because sometimes it is – but by learning how to take advantage of it and use some of its capabilities, you can learn a lot about what's going on around you and use that to make your birding time more effective, and learn about new places to bird near where you live, or where you're planning to travel.

I hope this guide will help you get started and point you are a few key pieces of *eBird* that can quickly make a difference in knowing what's going on near you so you can go out and bird those special species and places as well. ●

## NEW MEMBERS Nov – Jan

Thank you and Welcome!

Annie Adams • Don Albert • Nidhi Bansal • Judith Barnes • Jason Barry • Bradford Baugh • Lea Bavaro • Michaela Bennington • Sandip Bhattacharya • Liz Boepple • Susan Bremond • Mike

& Kristin Bucci • Adam Burnett • Luke Camery • Barbara Canup • Jack Carter • Pam Clark • Laura Coatney • Anne & Jon Cross • Paul Dankert • Srinivas Deeduvanu • Ralph DeVoe • Sue Dileanis • Thomas Elias • Gerardo Escobedo • Mary Espinoza • Sue Eubank • Steven Finney • Mary Fitzpatrick • Michele Fuetsch • Larry Ganton • Betsy Gifford • Kevin Gin •

Elizabeth Gin • Marilyn Glover • Werner Goese • Jacqueline Graham • Peggy Griffin • Rose Grymes • Meenu Gupta • Cynthia Hanson • Judy Hecht • Heising-Simons Fund • Maynie Ho • Arun Raj Kaprakattu • Mary Kenney • Fatha Khalsa • Joanna Koch • Roger Kokores • Preeti Kota • Dody Lapworth • Bill Lapworth •  
*Continued on back cover*



# Conservation Corner

*Shani Kleinhaus*  
Environmental Advocate



Stevens Creek Canyon  
Matthew Dodder

## Cupertino

At least once every decade, a developer comes to the **City of Cupertino** with a proposal to develop properties along the Stevens Creek Canyon. Recently, we joined Cupertino residents and successfully argued against a proposed the **Canyon View General Plan Amendment** that would change the permitted building requirements on hillsides, and allow 29 units where four units are currently allowed on an 86-acre hillside property adjacent to Linda Vista Park. This development on the steep rim of the Stevens Creek Canyon, with an average slope of ~48%, would pave small tributaries and wildlife corridors! We wrote and spoke to City Council about this fragile landscape: how critical it is to the welfare of wildlife species in the area, and how development in the urban/wildland interface would burden the City of Cupertino with geological hazards and significant fire risks. We congratulate the City Council for rejecting the proposed amendment. Always vigilant, we will keep watching for renewed proposals.

## Lexington Reservoir

The 'massacre' of Pacific Newts continues on **Alma Bridge Road, at Lexington Reservoir**. This winter, iNaturalist volunteers documented over 3800 carcasses and found 27 other species that fell victim to this road, including deer, 5 species of rodents, 4 species of reptiles, 6 additional amphibian species, 4 species of birds (a barn owl, a yellow-rumped warbler, a hermit thrush, a house finch), and even a catfish! Santa Clara County signage, placed last year after the road claimed over 5000 newts, unfortunately seems ineffective. We are working with several agencies to identify solution and facilitate implementation.

We are also very concerned with the proposed **Mid-Peninsula Open Space District Beatty Parking Area and Trail Connections Project** on Alma Bridge Road – the traffic associated with this project is likely to exacerbate the hazardous conditions and the loss of tiny lives.

## Sunnyvale

Last year, we advocated with **Sunnyvale** City Council to minimize light pollution by developing a **Dark Sky/Lighting ordinance** for outdoor lighting. In the Council Study Issue

Prioritization process, Council initially voted in support of our request, but the issue was dropped during the budgeting discussions. We continue to advocate this year.

Also in Sunnyvale, at the request of Google and other Moffett Park landowners, the City has started the process that would update its current **Moffett Park Specific Plan** to add office space and include housing as a permitted land use. This area, North of 237, is currently an office park bounded by the landfill hills, the Sunnyvale water pollution control plant, Moffett Field and Sunnyvale parks along the Bay. SCVAS participated in several focus groups to provide input. We focused on:

- ▶ Potential changes to the Water District-approved Flood Control Project that includes tall walls on Charleston East and West Channels
- ▶ Protection of baylands and of open space near the baylands (the Yahoo Campus, Lockheed-Martin)
- ▶ Provision of parks and open space
- ▶ Native plant landscaping
- ▶ Preservation of large trees

We expect an Environmental Impact Report in 2020, and will continue to advocate for a bird-friendly district as the plans are formed.

## Burrowing Owls

**Burrowing owl** populations have suffered significant population decline in the Bay Area, as well as throughout most of their range. The main causes of the population decrease are linked to habitat loss, high mortality rates, low reproductive rates related to quality prey availability and human disturbance. Many organizations including SCVAS





Pacific Newt  
Merav Vonshak



Linda Vista Park  
Matthew Dodder

have played a pivotal role in trying to reverse the decline of burrowing owls through advocacy, education, conservation and research efforts.

“ In the local breeding population, the ultimate goal of the project is to reintroduce burrowing owls to new locations in Coyote Valley. ”

One organization that just recently came to the aid of burrowing owls is the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency, which adopted a Habitat Plan in 2013 that includes conservation measures to protect 18 species including burrowing owls. The Habitat Agency has funded extensive research on burrowing owls and implemented habitat management agreements to address burrowing owl declines in the South Bay, its main focus is in Santa Clara County. Our habitat management project in Alviso has benefited from this funding.

One project that the *Habitat Agency* is presently implementing is a *Juvenile Burrowing Owl Overwintering Project*. Burrowing owl chicks have an approximate 70% mortality rate during their first year, thus with an already low reproductive rate very few chicks are surviving to adulthood to reproduce. During 2019, ten burrowing owl juveniles were removed from the population (only two juveniles per family were removed) and all the juveniles were relocated to an aviary at the Peninsula Humane Societies' facility in Burlingame. The burrowing owls were overwintered at the facility and will be returned to

several existing breeding sites in Santa Clara County during the 2020 breeding season. The owls will be paired up based on DNA analysis, placed into a hacking aviary with artificial burrows until they lay a full clutch of eggs, then the aviary will be removed for the birds return to the wild as mature breeding adults. The purpose of the aviaries is to acclimate the birds back to the original breeding locations. Upon the success of this project and hopefully with an increase in the local breeding population the ultimate goal of the project is reintroduce burrowing owls to new locations in Coyote Valley in the future, to establish additional populations in more natural areas.

## North Coyote Valley

Following the purchase of 937 acres in North *Coyote Valley*, we now focus on the process of updating the *San Jose General Plan*. We are advocating for an updated plan that will change the zoning of the purchased lands from Industrial to Habitat and Open space designation. For the privately owned lands in the valley, we seek Agriculture zoning that should help avert development into the future. ●

*Join Us* Our Environmental Advocate and Action Committee are busy working in YOUR neighborhood and throughout Santa Clara County – please let [shani@scvas.org](mailto:shani@scvas.org) know if you'd like to get involved!



## Friends of SCVAS

### REMEMBERING JEAN



Some of our members are lucky enough to have known **Jean McNamara** before she passed away in 2018. Jean adored birds and watching them visit the feeders in her yard. Her niece Jennifer Juge recalls that above all else, her aunt “cherished her binoculars.” Jean was an elementary

school teacher who taught for many years in Los Gatos before retiring there. A generous volunteer and donor to many charities, she is remembered by friends and family for her love of animals, passion for art, and strong advocacy for women’s rights.

Recently SCVAS received a significant bequest from Jean McNamara’s estate. As unexpected as this gift was, we were even more surprised to learn that SCVAS was just one of 15 non-profit organizations remembered in her will. Her niece, however, was not at all surprised. Jennifer had seen how simply Jean lived, doing without such comforts as a dishwasher or air conditioning so that she would have more to leave to the causes she believed in. Jennifer also recalls that Jean carefully researched each charity before adding it to her bequest list. Knowing this, we are doubly pleased and grateful that SCVAS was one of her choices.

Jean McNamara’s gift, like all bequests to SCVAS, has been added to our Legacy Fund. This quasi-endowment fund supports SCVAS in its efforts to foster public awareness of our native birds and their ecosystems in a changing world. If you have already included a gift to SCVAS in your estate plan, we’d love to add your name to our Legacy Circle. And if not, we would be delighted to talk you with about the possibility.

### Gifts received Nov 2019 – Jan 2020

**CALIFORNIA CONDOR**  
\$5,000+

Robie • Vrishali Wagle •  
Nancy & Bart Westcott

Don Price

**GOLDEN EAGLE**  
\$1,000 - 4,999

Alan & Irene Adler •  
Apple Inc. • Gail & Doug  
Cheeseman • Fenton Family  
Foundation • Google Inc. •  
Thomas Grey • Heising-  
Simons Fund • Bob Hirt •  
Urs Hoelzle • Deborah  
Jamison & Steven Patt •  
Wayne V. Krill • Jim  
Meikrantz • J. Holley Taylor

**BURROWING OWL**  
\$250 - 499

Lawrence Baer • Peter &  
Patricia Biocini • Dick &  
Sharon Blaine • Ida Braun •  
Felix & Helen Charpentier •  
George Clifford • Joseph  
Coha • Ellyn Corey • Jitze &  
Nancy Couperus • Constance  
Crawford • Lee Hung &  
Mike Danzenbaker • Dinesh  
& Joy Desai • Matthew  
Dodder • G. C. Edgerton •  
Alan Eisner • John &  
Georgiana Flaherty • Lindy  
Fung • Marilyn Gallaway •  
Elizabeth Gin • Werner  
Goese • James P. Gray •  
Larry & Marcia Hulberg •  
James & Kathryn Johnson •  
Jerry & Ginny Kaminski •  
Julia Lewis • LinkedIn •  
Kristine & Jacques Gagne  
Long • Lyon Asprey Family •  
Kenneth Mamitsaka • Pauline  
Marchon • Andrew Melnick •  
Victoria Moore • Gary &  
Elisabeth Nielsen • Susan  
Niemi • Joseph Ribera • Mary  
Ann Robertson • Michael  
Rogers • Rumptz Family  
Foundation Fund • Teresa  
Scagliotti • Michael & Leslie  
Schroeder • Annette Teng •

**PEREGRINE FALCON**  
\$500 - 999

Linda Brownrigg • Brian  
Carr • Tricia Clark • Deanna  
Gomby • Hewlett Packard  
Enterprise Foundation •  
Harriett Huls • Lawrence &  
Joan Johnston • Jeffrey &  
Marcia Keimer • Michael  
& Roxanne Laine • Pete  
& Sue LaTourrette •  
Joan & Phil Leighton •  
George Schuttinger &  
Mary Murphy • Jean &  
Gregory Myers • Leighton  
Nakata • Melanie O'Brien •  
Michael Ogawa • Franklin  
& Susan Orr • Stephen

## BEQUESTS

Several years ago, the Board of Directors created the *Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund* to encourage members like Jean McNamara to include bequests to SCVAS in their estate plans. Since that time, the fund has grown substantially thanks to gifts both large and small.

Your Board views the Legacy Fund as a quasi-endowment fund established to ensure the long-term sustainability of SCVAS and its mission. We are guided in use of this fund by the following *Statement of Purpose*:

The *Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund* supports SCVAS in its efforts to foster public awareness of native birds and their ecosystems. The fund is dedicated to helping SCVAS meet future environmental challenges and undertake new educational and conservation initiatives in its fulfillment of this mission. Including the Legacy Fund in your estate planning is one of the best ways you can ensure that SCVAS remains a powerful advocate for birds and their habitats. Your bequest will create an enduring gift to future generations so that they might enjoy the natural beauty of the valley we all call home.



Merav Vonshak • Don & Robin Watenpaugh • David Wimpfheimer • Shirley Wodtke • Floy & Dave Zittin

### AMERICAN AVOCET \$100 - 249

Garnetta Annable • Michael Armer • John F. Atwood • Judith Barnes • Joyce Bartlett • Leonie Batkin • Patti Beck • Walter Beck • Michaela Bennington • Janet Bertaina • James & Carolyn Bliss • Dan Bloch • Joan Bose • Penelope Bowen • William & Ann Boylan • Phyllis Browning • Allen Carkner • Dudley Carlson • John & Agnes Caulfield • Lyn Chambers • Darya Chudova • John Colwell • Jennifer Couperus • Anne & Jon Cross • Peter & Melanie Cross • Colleen & Gary Cunningham • Paul Dankert • Jim Dehnert • Karen DeMello • Diane Ducey • Donald & Elaine Dvorak • Charlotte Epstein • Mary Espinoza • Sue Eubank • Mary Fainstat • Suzanne L. Fellenz • Steven Finney • Michael Firenze • Jean B. Fordis • Deanna Forsythe • Ursula Gallichotte • Betsy Gifford • Kevin Gin • Kathryn (Kit) Gordon • Marlene J. Gordon • Rose Green • Marge

Haley • Ross & Karen Heitkamp • Ann Hepenstal • Anita Herrmann • Philip Higgins • Jan Hintermeister • Maynie Ho • John Hodge • HPI • Intel Corporation • Alvaro Jaramillo • Robert & Lynn Kinsman • Mark & Petra Kinsman • Chris & John Knight • Barry & Virginia Langdon-Lassagne • Jeff & Maureen LaTourrette • Ann Latta • Bernard Lint • Thomas Lipkis • Jim & Sue Liskovec • Cindy Lockhart • Andy Lott • Margaret MacNiven • Nateri Madavan • Peter & Christina Maltbaek • Alice Martineau • Joseph & Dorian Martinka • Hugh & Debbie McDevitt • Joanne & Doug McFarlin • David McIntyre • Shannon McMahan • Microsoft • George & Lilo Miller • Douglas Moran • Cindy Morse • Jakub Mracek • Lisa Myers • Ann Myers Dolan • Brian O'Connor • Christopher OConnell • Everett & Rebecca Palmer • Janna Pauser • Tina Petrigni • Catherine Portman • April Pufahl • Clarence Quindipan • Ashish Parmeshwar Rathore • Ellen Ratner • Edward Reed • Lenore Roberts • Annemarie Rosengreen • Ruth & Ed Satterthwaite • Jeffrey

Segall • Pat Showalter • Indranil Sircar • Maksym Sloyko • Michael Smith • Marcella Stauber • Madeleine Stovel • Richard Stovel • Jane Tatchell • Bruce & Kim W. Tolley • Barbara Tyler • Ann Verdi • Luis Villablanca • Villages Hiking Club • Marilyn Walthers • Marilyn Waterman • William & Linda Wilson • Nick & K. C. Yatsko • James Yurchenco • Gena Zolotar

### CALIFORNIA QUAIL Up to \$99

Patricia A. Anderson • Julie Barney • Bradford Baugh • Laurie Bechtler • Frederick & Alice Bethke • Jean Bodine • Martha Bond • Judith Borlase • Juliette Bryson • John Bunnell • Luke Camery • Bernice Camuso • Louis Caputo • Joe Cernac • Marie Channa • Dina Cheyette • Justin Chung • Jack Cole • Doug Cox • Kenneth & Elna Cunningham • Anne O'Neil Dauer • David Depew • George & Debra Doeltz • Inge Duncan • Nancy Eranosian • Natalee Ernstrom • James Estes • Mary Fitzpatrick • Taylor Forester • Mary Beth Forrest • Mary Gill • Tom Gough • Elaine Gould • Meenu Gupta • John Gurley • Lucia Heldt • Janet Hoffmann • James & Margaret Hohenshelt • Kirsten Holmquist • Sue Hunt • Constance Hunter • Alice Kaufman • Michelle Kelsey • Roger Kokores • James & Judy Kuhl • Sally Kulakow • Marilyn Lassagne • David B. Lewis • Donald & Nancy Lorenzen • Lesley Lucas • Bill Lundgren • Chris MacIntosh • Donald B. Martindale • Janet Mathis • Diane McCoy • Steve McHenry • Eve Meier • James Mikus • Curtis & Betty Mitchell • Molly Molloy • Gerald & Katherine Mugnolo • Nvidia • Margaret & Fred Parkes • R. D. Penn • Nithya Ramakrishnan • Emily Renzel • Betty J. Rogers • Pat Rovegno • James Rumbaugh • Stephen & Lois Smallwood • Synopsys Inc. & The Synopsys Foundation • Ted Tawshunsky • Laura J. Thompson • Virginia Tuft • Andrea Vedanayagam • Marcia White • Richard Williams • Mary Wisnewski • Steve Wright & Rich Wright • Christine Yemoto • John Zeisler

# YOUR YARD AS HABITAT

**Mike Azevedo**  
Nestbox Coordinator

When I first signed on to be the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society nest box coordinator in 2009, I knew that there was one type of question I would be getting a lot. Why are no birds moving into this birdhouse I put up in my yard?

I've seen some people fairly upset about the lack of interest coming from the bird community in their attempt to help our feathered friends. Could there be something wrong with the birdhouse?

Well, yes. There could. But there could also be something wrong with your backyard. It may not be the appropriate habitat for native birds. I knew that. I knew that backyards were assumed to be a great place for birds and that they often aren't. When I began ten years ago, that's where I stopped thinking about it. Some backyards have it and some don't. I knew that it was all about habitat.

But more recently, I've come to realize that the system seems to be rigged against proper habitat for local birds. Imagine a field of native wildflowers dozed under to make way for your house. This has to happen, I suppose, to make way for your kitchen, bedroom and living area. But explaining why we insist on using plants from other countries and deny our native butterflies and moths the native plant hosts we scraped away is harder to fathom. If you go to any large retail nursery, especially those hardware chains, you will be hard pressed to find native plants that can operate as hosts to caterpillars.

Now, if you have non-native plants in your yard that are routinely covered in bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, allow me to applaud. There is nothing wrong with having excellent nectar or pollen producing plants. They can serve any of our pollinators. But sadly, caterpillars don't eat nectar. They don't eat pollen. They need to eat plant flesh and this takes a specialization to the plant they are eating. Plants don't want to be eaten and develop a defense that deters various insect species from having a meal. Native butterflies and moths have spent centuries and longer developing a taste and strategy for certain native plants. This allows them to dine on a select few plants and when those plants are uprooted and hauled away to make room for your house, it's not a small problem for our lepidopterans.

It is, however, a big problem for our birds. Ninety-five percent of birds feed insects to their young. Bluebirds, for example, grow from the size of the egg they came in to full adult size in about two weeks. That takes protein! And caterpillars play a big part of a young hatchling's diet. When you see caterpillars in your yard, I hope you bristle with pride. When you look out on your beautiful, well manicured backyard, I hope you look to see how many native birds are back there. The plants you

choose for your landscape play a big part in whether you see white-crowned sparrows or just house sparrows.

The fact that our biggest sources of landscape plants make no attempt to give our natives a chance is a crying shame. Ten years ago, when I first started up as Nestbox Coordinator for the Cavity Nester Recovery Program, I would have not had a clue about the importance of native plants and even worse, I would have had no clue as to where to turn if I had wanted to change my ways.

You might be thinking to yourself that apparently Mike Azevedo wants you to bulldoze your backyard again and start over. That's not necessary. What I'd like to do is to prove it to you. Those of you who are birders can probably spend some time in your backyard and figure out what native birds show up. Go spend some time out there and keep a list of what you see. Do it several days in a row and keep track.

Now, we are ready to get started. As we approach spring, we need to find out what native plants should be living in your neighborhood. The California Native Plant Society is only too happy to help. Go to [www.calscape.org](http://www.calscape.org) and enter your address in the search field. You will be presented with a list of all the native plants once found in your area. The list includes trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and goes into detail about shade-loving plants, sun-loving plants and gives you a chance to see what they look like. Some of those native plants may not look like much but, odds are, there are some real lookers on that page that will look fabulous in your yard.

A good way to plant annuals is to go to the web and enter some of your favorites among your newly discovered local natives. I was able to find seed packets for most of the plants I searched for and ordered them to be delivered. Some of the plant seeds were even available on Amazon but others required seed companies that specialize in native seeds. The benefit of planting seeds is that a good pollinator garden isn't limited to one or two plants of a variety but rather has a large patch of one kind of flower that will allow those pollinators flying overhead a chance to see your garden from a distance and zero in to a nectar-filled delight.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with skipping the seed process and going with native plants from pots. There are nurseries that specialize in natives and others that are quite willing to order natives specially for you. There are also native



Tree Swallow  
Mike Azevedo

specialty nurseries that are willing to ship to you as well.

And now back to “proving it.” I’ve been converting my backyard over to natives and those non-natives known for their tremendous pollen or nectar generation. The change is having a clear effect on the insect and bird life in my yard. So I would ask you to compare your backyard experience before and after giving natives a chance. You may once have thought that your backyard can’t be habitat for birds. Yes it can. ●

## YARD RESOURCES

### Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants

Douglas W. Tallamy

### The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden

Douglas W. Tallamy and Rick Darke

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Advocacy Writer

SCVAS’s Advocacy team is looking for a volunteer writer to keep our website up-to-date on advocacy news. Contact *Shani Kleinhaus* at [advocate@scvas.org](mailto:advocate@scvas.org).

### Audubon Archives Digitizer

SCVAS is looking for a volunteer to scan and archive our entire catalog of *The Avocet* newsletter (since 1929). Contact *Matthew Dodder* at [director@scvas.org](mailto:director@scvas.org).

### City Watch

SCVAS is looking for volunteers to monitor upcoming agendas for City Councils, Parks and Recreation Commissions, Planning Commissions, etc.) Contact *Shani Kleinhaus* at [advocate@scvas.org](mailto:advocate@scvas.org).

### Event Committee

SCVAS is looking for volunteers to join our Event Committee. Contact *Diane Hart* at [dianehart@mac.com](mailto:dianehart@mac.com).

### Facebook Rooftop Survey

SCVAS is looking for a volunteer to record data for our monthly rooftop bird survey at Facebook headquarters. Contact *Shani Kleinhaus* at [advocate@scvas.org](mailto:advocate@scvas.org).

### Taxidermist

Know a taxidermist interested in donating their skills and time? Contact *Carolyn Knight* at [programs@scvas.org](mailto:programs@scvas.org).

For more information visit [scvas.org/volunteer](http://scvas.org/volunteer)



Tree Swallow Nest  
Mike Azevedo



# Bird Notes

Please report rarities to  
pdunten@gmail.com

*Pete Dunten*  
Santa Clara County eBird Reviewer

## Loons through Vireos

Single **Common Loons** visited bayside locations late last year, with one on Alviso pond A16 on 16 Nov (GG) and one on pond A4 on 2 Dec (ST). The late October sightings of **Sandhill Cranes** overhead were followed by a report of two flying above Alviso pond A17 on 3 Nov (RJ, MJM, MMR). The first (and to date only) **Glaucous Gull** of the winter turned up at Alviso A16 on 11 Jan (SCR) and was found there again on 22 Jan (MJM) and 25 Jan (MJM, STu). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was a nice find at Alviso A16 on 11 Jan (SCR). A **Short-eared Owl** was sighted over the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin on 22 Nov (JD), and sightings in that area continued through the end of January (m. ob.). A solo **Lewis's Woodpecker** was found west of the Diablo Range crest at J Grant CP on 20 Jan (WP). Sapsuckers wintering in the area include a **Red-naped Sapsucker** returning for the second winter to Guadalupe Creek in Los Gatos. It was seen on 26 Nov along Guadalupe Creek Trail above Camden Ave (JPa) and again on 26 Jan near Guadalupe Mines Rd and Lavender Creek (MJM). Another Red-naped Sapsucker was photographed in Morgan Hill on 25 Dec (CDv). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** returned to winter again at the Santa Clara Valley Water District HQ on 2 Jan (JPa). A second Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, an immature spending its first winter in the area, was found near the border of Santa Clara and Sunnyvale on 3 Jan (BLL, VLL). A **Pileated Woodpecker** at Henry Coe SP on 31 Dec was only the 7th record for the Diablo Range (JY, AL). An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** along Yerba Buena Rd near Evergreen Valley College on 22 Nov (HF) remained in Northern California much later than most, though there are a few previous records in the county during all the winter months. One of the two **Tropical Kingbirds** found in October has stayed in the vicinity of Byxbee Park through the end of January, to the delight of many observers. The three months stay, and counting, is the longest period a **Tropical Kingbird** has visited the county. A **Plumbeous Vireo**, loud in voice if not in plumage, moved around the Charleston Rd marsh and nearby Stevens Creek between 4 Nov and 16 Dec (KG, m. ob.). The vireo is only the 9th county record.

## Phainopepla through Finches

A single **Phainopepla** was found wintering on the Santa Clara Valley floor, at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park. It was first noted on 8 Nov (JPa) and has remained through the end of January



Palm Warbler  
Tom Cho



Summer Tanager  
Mike Danzenbaker



Plumbeous Vireo  
Dorian Anderson

(m. ob.). The wintering **Palm Warbler** that arrived at the Palo Alto WTP at the end of October has remained into January, with the latest sighting on 17 Jan (DBp). A **Green-tailed Towhee** was banded at the Coyote Creek Field Station on 13 Nov (DO). An **American Tree Sparrow** visited a bird-friendly home where seed was provided NW of J Grant CP between 18 Nov and 4 Dec, for only the 3rd county record (WP, KON). In a manifestation of the Patagonia rest stop effect, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found at the Charleston Rd marsh by lucky observers looking for the Plumbeous Vireo. The sparrow was seen between 14 Nov (EGo) and 16 Nov (BT). A **Summer Tanager** was attracted to a feeder offering fruit in Mountain View near Stevens Creek between 15 Jan and 19 Jan (MDa). A second Summer Tanager returned to winter again along the section of Guadalupe Creek above Camden Ave in Los Gatos. It was first noted on 25 Jan this winter (JPa) and seen again on 26 Jan (MJM, GL). In yet another testament to the value of a bird feeder, a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** graced a feeder in San Jose on 13 Dec (fide LM). A single **Yellow-headed Blackbird** has been present at the Sunnyvale WPCP and nearby locations from 1 Jan (BM) through 23 Jan (m. ob.). Yellow-headed Blackbirds are found most frequently during spring migration; they are rare in winter, with only two previous records during January. This has been a good winter for **Evening Grosbeaks**, unlike the winters of 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 when the Grosbeaks were absent. A group of up to 13 Grosbeaks visited Stanford campus between 8 Dec and 13 Dec (AxG, JsC, ABu, m. ob.). In downtown Los Altos the Grosbeaks arrived on 11 Dec (MAA) and were last reported on 18 Jan, with a high count of 16 on 12 Jan (FP). The calls of the Grosbeaks at both locations were type 1, from the Pacific Northwest, and the band number on one of the Grosbeaks in Los Altos indicated it had been banded in Lane county, Oregon in May of 2015 (STu, CGi). This winter has also seen an invasion of **Red Crossbills**, after an absence spanning the preceding three winters beginning in 2016, 2017, and 2018. They were first reported from Sanborn CP on 10 Nov (RJ, MMR) and have been present there through the end of January (m. ob.). The extent of the invasion is evidenced by the sighting of three Red Crossbills at the Gilroy SCRWA on 15 Nov (SPz, BLL, WP, KON, GRy) and a group of five at Cuesta Park in Mountain View on 6 Jan (BLL, VLL). Recordings of flight calls indicate the Red Crossbills are type 2, the Crossbill with a preference for Ponderosa Pines (BM, JVs).

**Observers** Mary Ann Allen (MAA), Daniel Bump (DBp), Adam Burnett (ABu), Jason Chou (JsC), Mike Danzenbaker (MDa), Jim Dehnert (JD), Chris Devillers (CDv), Alexandre Gauthier (AxG), George Gibbs (GG), Kevin Gin (KG), Howard Friedman (HF), Casey Girard (CGi), Eric Goodill (EGo), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Virginia Langdon-Lassagne (VLL), Garrett Lau (GL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Brooke Miller (BM), Lisa Myers (LM), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Debbie Ottman (DO), Federico Pacheco (FP), Janna Pauser (JPa), William Pelletier (WP), Sergio Perez (SPz), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Gordon Rydquist (GRy), Bob Toleno (BT), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Jason Vassallo (JVs), James Yurchenco (JY)

## REMEMBERING RUTH



Ruth Gene Troetschler was born on October 9, 1925 in Riverton, Wyoming, to Estella May and Peter Thomas Meyers. Her family moved west making several stops along the way, prior to settling in Hayward, CA where Ruth graduated from Hayward High School.

Ruth graduated Stanford University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology & Child Development and San Jose State with a Master of Science in Biology, which led to her career as a research biologist. While at Stanford, she met Eugene William Troetschler who brilliantly volunteered to drive her sorority members to church. They found they shared a love of folk dancing, became engaged, married in her parents' garden and moved to Los Altos, where they raised their family. Ruth and Gene celebrated 62 years of marriage together, during which they enjoyed camping, hiking, bird watching and world travel.

Ruth was a staunch advocate of the natural world. She published her book "Rebugging your Home and Garden" in 1996. Her personal life included a rich interest in insects, native plants, and birds, much of which she documented through her lifelong hobby of photography. She was an active member of the California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, SFBBO and a donor to many other conservation nonprofits.

She worked tirelessly in the conservation field and her passion was infectious even into her old age. She fostered a shared stewardship of the environment that continues through the many people who loved her, including her children and grandchildren. We will fondly remember her as a person who never stopped learning, the "go to" person for information and solutions and, if needed, a force to be reckoned with. We will miss her!

Ruth Gene Troetschler passed away peacefully on December 29, 2019 at the age of 94, in Castro Valley, CA. She is survived by her 3 children, David Troetschler, Thomas Troetschler and Sandra Ohms; 3 grandchildren, Jason Ohms, Cassandra Ohms-Correa, Dylan Troetschler and great-grandchild, Lainey Ohms.

# CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Barry Langdon-Lassagne  
CBC Collator



I expect every Christmas Bird Count Circle is a little bit different, but let me give you a taste of what it was like for me being a participant in the San Jose Circle's count. My day began with a lakeside parking lot gathering where the sector leader broke us up into groups making sure each of us had an official counter, a photographer, and enough expertise to cover our area. We were part of a volunteer team covering the Evergreen Sector, a half-eaten-pie-slice-shaped portion of the San Jose Count Circle that includes Lake Cunningham, Thompson Creek, residential parks, farmland and grassy hills up as far Mount Hamilton Road.

My group spent the morning hiking along Thompson Creek, driving through residential neighborhoods, and scaling the grassy mound in the middle of Groesbeck Hill Park, tallying every single bird we could find. Other Evergreen teams covered the lake, the creek around the lake, the foothills, and the other suburban parklands. Still more teams covered other San Jose sectors: Alum Rock Park, Sierra Road, the Baylands, Guadalupe River, Ulistac Park...the list goes on. And all of that is just San Jose. There are three other circles in the South Bay, each with their sectors, areas and teams. In all, nearly three hundred volunteers contributed to this snapshot of our local bird population this year.

After all the birding was done, we had a dinner gathering in the Community Room at the Educational Park Branch Library in San Jose. Sector leaders brought the checklists they received from each of the area teams and combined them into a single spreadsheet while eating pizza, salad and dessert brought by still more volunteers. The circle compiler, in our case Mike Azevedo, then began a meeting where we found out from everyone what was seen. He started with a list of likely birds, calling out each one by name, and there was usually a chorus of yeses from the leaders that found that species in their sector. Sometimes there was an odd silence, as a bird no one saw was called out. Those silences became more common as the birds became more rare. And in the end we got a count. The San Jose circle found 163 species this year. See the included table listing for totals for each of the four count circles, along with the total number of birds seen in each circle.

Photos L to R:  
Evening Grosbeak *Luis Villablanca*, Grasshopper Sparrow  
*Serge Pavlov*, Bald Eagle *Mike Mammoser*, Short-eared  
Owl *Dorian Anderson*, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Huge thanks to Carolyn Knight for organizing the CBCs, rounding up volunteers for counting and finding volunteers to bring food for the dinners.

Below are the highlights from each of our four Christmas Bird Count Circle compilers. Our counts are part of a massive international data collection effort that's been contributing to Citizen Science since the turn of the previous century. You can find more information about the Christmas Bird Count in general on the National Audubon Society's website.

## San Jose Count Circle

Mike Azevedo — Compiler

On December 15, 2019, 109 birders spread across San Jose to count birds for the San Jose Christmas Bird Count. Despite good weather, one car got stuck in the mud. Thank you to the San Francisco Water Department watershed keepers for coming to the rescue.

Mike Rogers and Steve Rottenborn found 46 **Cackling Geese**, 2 **Eurasian Wigeon** at the Alviso salt ponds, and 2 **Swamp Sparrow** at the Alviso Marina. Swamp Sparrow was also seen by Dave Weber at Calabasas Ponds. **Blue Winged Teal** was reported at Coyote Slough by Kirsten Holmquist and Mallard Slough by Steve Tracey and Bruce Barrett.

A **Tree Swallow** showed up for Steve, Bruce, Kate Gudmundson and Sarah Chan, **Barn Swallow** for Dani Christensen and 26 **Violet Green Swallow** for Mike Ambrose, Sonja Kramer, Barry & Ginger Langdon-Lassagne.

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** appeared for Richard Jeffers along the Los Gatos Creek Trail. **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen by Ann Verdi and Richard Page at Penitencia Creek.

Two **Ferruginous Hawk** were sitting in trees during the cool of the morning near Calaveras Reservoir, seen by most of the Calaveras Section birders and reported by Tom Olsen.

It was kind of an average year. Although there were several birds that we print in bold to indicate they are often missed, there were no birds not listed.

In all, 163 species were seen totaling 108,574 birds.

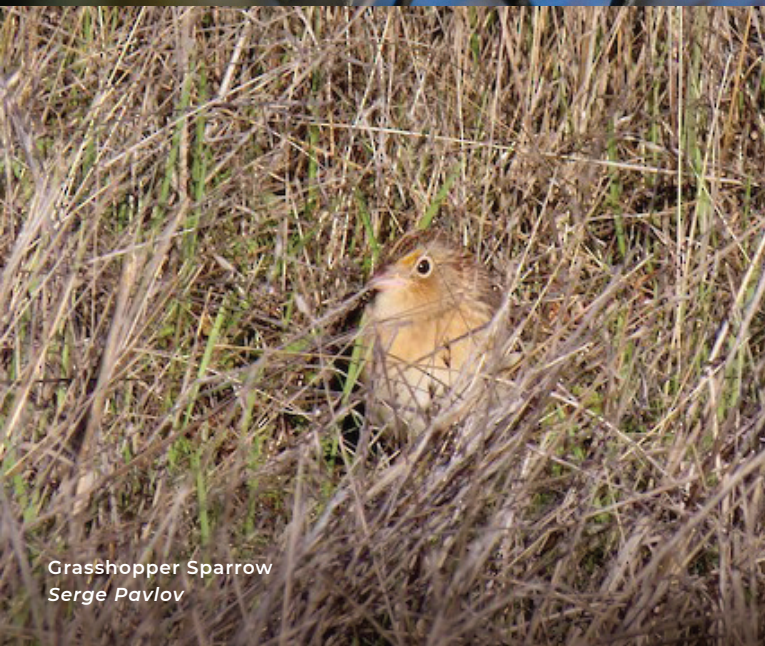




Golden Eagle  
Mike Azevedo



Evening Grosbeak  
Luis Villablanca



Grasshopper Sparrow  
Serge Pavlov

## Palo Alto Count Circle

Al Eisner — Compiler

The good weather on December 16, 2019 likely played a big role in the success of the Palo Alto count. Not only did the total of 173 species tie the second highest in the history of the count (the other highs were in the early 1980s), but regular landbirds were widespread and in mostly good numbers; even owls had a nice showing (for which weather affects not only their behavior but also the effort put in to find them). Of the species found on at least 2/3 of recent counts, only four were missed: **Cackling Goose**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, and **Ring-necked Pheasant**. At the other extreme, **American Crow** reached another new high.

Two species were new to the count. Dorian Anderson saw a **Black Oystercatcher** at Salt Pond SF2 by the Dumbarton Bridge (San Mateo Co.), the location where a pair was reported breeding earlier in the year, and was a newcomer to the Palo Alto summer count. And in Santa Clara County a **Plumbeous Vireo**, first reported at the Charleston Road marsh by Kevin Gin in early November, was seen both there (by Kevin) and along Stevens Creek nearby (Mike Rogers and Naten Madavan). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** near the Stanford dish (Sergey Pavlov and Jacob West) was only the second appearance for this species (the first was in 2003).

Several species on the count have been found only infrequently in the past 15 years: **Snow Goose** (4 at Mountain View Shoreline Park); **Snowy Plover** (a nice concentration at Dumbarton salt pond R1, where regular on the summer count; **Short-eared Owl** (2, one in each county, first on count in 12 years); **Red Crossbill** at two higher-elevation locations; **Palm Warbler** (one in Palo Alto was likely a returning bird). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** made its fifth-ever appearance (this one at Windy Hill OSP), all fairly recent. Several other species have only recently joined the avifauna (**Great-tailed Grackle** first turned up at Mountain View Shoreline about five years ago, with a few since regular) or rejoined it (the always-fun **Evening Grosbeak** in downtown Los Altos). It is a challenge to evaluate the number of **Bald Eagle**, with 5 reports totaling 6 adults, along with one juvenile. Finally, **House Wren**, which winters in southern California, tallied more than 1 (with a high of 3) previously. This year's 5 is only part of the story, because several more reported were omitted due to lack of documentation. An effect of climate change? We'll see.

Two irruptive species were of note. With the exception of 2004, when 58 **Red-breasted Nuthatch** were found, their number has always been between 0 and 8, so this year's 29 was a notable event. They were well-scattered, with larger concentrations near Skyline. **Pine Siskin** was also well-distributed; their total was not dramatically high, but was in fact also our highest since 2004.

*Continued on next page*

## NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES

SCVAS has not increased its membership fees for over a decade. Faced with rising costs, the SCVAS Board of Directors has chosen to keep our *\$35 individual membership* and *\$60 family membership* stable while ending the \$25 student/senior membership.

This decision was not made lightly as we value all of our members and rely on their commitment to our mission.

## BIRDATHON *Continued from page 3*

a future issue of *The Avocet* as well as on our website [scvas.org](http://scvas.org). Many teams also do a write-up for our South-Bay-Birds mailing list and you are encouraged to post there too. The list's purpose is to get news about bird sightings to as wide an audience as possible. More information at <https://groups.io/g/southbaybirds>.

## The Timeline

Signing up for and creating teams has already begun and will continue until the participation window begins on March 21. We already have some great teams lined up for this spring, which you can read about on our Team Page: [scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-teams](http://scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-teams)

The kickoff potluck supper is on **Saturday, March 21, 6pm** at McClellan Ranch, where you can learn the rules, meet the other teams and socialize with fellow birders. Before eating we'll have some fun birding the trails around McClellan Ranch and nearby Blackberry Farm.

The Birdathon *participation window is from March 21 through May 3*. All Birdathons must happen between these two dates.

The *last day to turn in pledges* from your sponsors and send in your results is **Sunday, May 10**. Details are on our website at [scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-rules-and-guidelines](http://scvas.org/spring-birdathon-2020-rules-and-guidelines).

The Awards Dinner is **Saturday, May 30, 6pm** at McClellan Ranch. Find out who won the competitions: most bird species, best bird, best bird photograph, and most money raised by teams and individuals. We'll present prizes, play games, share stories and enjoy dinner & dessert outdoors together.

I look forward to your support and participation this spring!

**Barry Langdon-Lassagne**  
Birdathon Committee Chair

**CBC** *Continued from previous page*

All in all, an excellent day. Thanks are due to all the participants and especially to our hard-working region coordinators. You made it all possible.

## Mount Hamilton Count Circle

Bob Hirt — Compiler

We had our count on Thursday, January 2, 2020 and, for a change, welcomed clear but chilly weather in the morning. Even the smaller ponds which are normally initially frozen were open. We had very little weather-related access problems since the roads were open and dry.

The result was a complete count. We had an average species count coming in at 94 species, but with a low count of only 5,274 individual birds. As to individual species we had a very nice year for **Lawrence's Goldfinch** with 187 tallied. One other target was the **Lewis' Woodpecker** and we had a total of 97 which was our highest in the last 13 years. Charles Coston's team heard a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** on Hwy 130 near Skye Ranch and spotted a **House Wren** further down the road. Mike Rogers and Richard Jeffers found a **White-throated Sparrow** on the Isabel Ranch (private property) which also produced our only **Wood Duck** and **Merlin** this year. Bruce Mast had two of our ten reported **Golden Eagle** on the Mule Trail (UCSC private property) and our only **Golden-crowned Kinglet**.



Lawrence's Goldfinch  
Mike Azevedo

All time high counts were recorded for **Common Raven** (99), **Pine Siskin** (83), **Brown-headed Cowbird** (77) and **Eurasian Collared-Dove** (28). These doves first showed up in 2006 (with only 6) when **Mourning Dove** (at 111) were by far the most common. The Mourning Dove count this year was only 4 birds versus the 28 Eurasian Collared-Doves. A very good acorn crop produced near record high numbers of **Acorn Woodpecker** (396) but not as much for **Band-tailed Pigeon** (89 this year but which had a record high of 458 reported in 2014).

Mount Hamilton also had high SCVAS area counts for: Lewis' Woodpecker (97), **CA Thrasher** (32), **Phainopepla** (3), Lawrence's Goldfinch (187), **Bell's Sparrow** (4).

Low counts were for **American Wigeon** (12), **California Quail** (260), **American Robin** (16), **Fox Sparrow** (16), **White-crowned Sparrow** (107) and **Tri-colored Blackbird** (4). A beautiful but quiet day with a good species count but a low number of birds considering the good weather.

Thanks to our leaders again: Mike Rogers, Mike Azevedo (leading one of our owling teams), and Charles Coston (co-compiler), and especially, Kirsten Holmquist, Rich Page and Jennifer Rycenga for doing the long hike on one of the large ranches and to Bruce Mast, Petra Kinsman, Leighton Nakata and team for tackling the arduous Mule Trail.

Our deepest thanks goes to Elinor Gates for hosting a marvelous compilation feast again this year and leading the

team at the top of Mount Hamilton which found our only **Brown Creepers**.

## Calero-Morgan Hill Count Circle

Rick Herder — Compiler

Ninety observers enjoyed a clear, almost windless count day on Saturday, Dec. 28 and recorded 144 species, a few more than last year. Rare birds for the count included **Greater White-fronted** and **Cackling Geese**, **Tree, Violet-Green**, and **Barn Swallow**, **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, **Phainopepla**, and **Chipping Sparrow**. Bird of the day was a **Couch's/Tropical Kingbird** in Coyote Valley at Laguna and Dougherty. The census recorded at least 10 different **Bald Eagle** individuals in the circle, including 2nd-year, 3rd-year, and adult birds. After a hiatus of several years, County Parks Ranger Brian Christensen took a boat of counters out onto Anderson Reservoir. Besides Bald Eagles, the north end of the lake had many aechmophorus grebes and **Spotted Sandpipers**. During count week a **European Wigeon** was found at Calero Reservoir.

We had new highs this year for **Bufflehead**, **Hooded Merganser**, **Western Grebe**, **Bald Eagle**, **Ferruginous Hawk**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, **Say's Phoebe**, **Golden-crowned Kinglet**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **Orange-crowned Warbler** and **Purple Finch**. ●

**Notes** Volunteer counts – CASJ: 109, CAPA: 58, CAMH: 23, CACR: 96  
For full results by CBC circle, see following two pages.



Lewis' Woodpecker  
Tom Grey



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

# 2019-2020 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Species	MOUNT HAMILTON			
	San Jose 12/15/19	Palo Alto 12/16/19	Mount Hamilton 1/2/20	Calero Morg-Hill 12/28/19
Snow Goose	-	4	-	-
Greater White-fronted Goose	2	5	-	2
Cackling Goose	46	-	-	3
Canada Goose	2381	1217	37	877
Wood Duck	-	12	1	60
Blue-winged Teal	3	2	-	-
Cinnamon Teal	107	19	-	-
Northern Shoveler	6525	12898	-	18
Gadwall	507	210	-	116
Eurasian Wigeon	2	-	-	-
American Wigeon	3177	1577	12	12
Mallard	1632	1113	44	392
Northern Pintail	362	244	12	-
Green-winged Teal	1750	1717	-	8
<i>Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)</i>	-	1	-	-
Canvasback	239	2497	2	10
Redhead	207	2116	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	37	103	35	79
Greater Scaup	482	109	-	7
Lesser Scaup	5643	539	-	15
<i>scaup sp.</i>	4419	1531	-	-
Surf Scoter	-	3	-	-
Bufflehead	870	598	53	200
Common Goldeneye	580	171	-	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	6	-	-
Hooded Merganser	40	41	8	48
Common Merganser	172	2	3	54
Red-breasted Merganser	132	-	-	-
Ruddy Duck	15875	17606	148	228
<i>duck sp.</i>	1500	11015	-	-
California Quail	180	203	260	150
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	-	-	-
Wild Turkey	96	63	12	238
Pied-billed Grebe	356	109	14	83
Horned Grebe	16	3	-	2
Eared Grebe	2604	84	-	6
Western Grebe	127	26	-	87
Clark's Grebe	44	39	-	3
<i>aechmophorous sp.</i>	186	132	-	85
Rock Pigeon	1375	461	-	497
Band-tailed Pigeon	2	563	89	327
Eurasian Collared-Dove	35	34	28	104
Mourning Dove	335	99	4	263
White-throated Swift	218	60	-	36
Anna's Hummingbird	421	759	11	420
Ridgway's Rail	-	9	-	-
Virginia Rail	49	4	-	2
Sora	83	11	-	2
Common Gallinule	7	12	-	3
American Coot	8754	6536	266	853
Black-necked Stilt	919	296	-	7
American Avocet	1767	1803	-	-
Black Oystercatcher	-	1	-	-
Black-bellied Plover	125	376	-	-
Killdeer	179	19	24	77
Semipalmated Plover	63	163	-	-
Snowy Plover	49	18	-	-
Whimbrel	1	16	-	-
Long-billed Curlew	57	73	-	-
Marbled Godwit	50	1047	-	-
Ruddy Turnstone	-	3	-	-

Species	MOUNT HAMILTON			
	San Jose 12/15/19	Palo Alto 12/16/19	Mount Hamilton 1/2/20	Calero Morg-Hill 12/28/19
Sanderling	1	18	-	-
Dunlin	1184	2505	-	-
Least Sandpiper	1134	2459	-	4
Western Sandpiper	8491	5089	-	-
<i>peep sp.</i>	330	623	-	-
Short-billed Dowitcher	-	30	-	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	1118	48	-	-
<i>dowitcher sp.</i>	202	2025	-	-
Wilson's Snipe	36	2	4	10
Spotted Sandpiper	6	4	-	18
Lesser Yellowlegs	-	1	-	-
Willet	202	1220	-	-
Greater Yellowlegs	96	129	4	6
Bonaparte's Gull	8	374	-	-
Mew Gull	444	6	-	-
Ring-billed Gull	1306	171	-	41
Western Gull	21	12	-	-
California Gull	3681	384	-	2323
Herring Gull	4311	37	-	2307
Iceland Gull	56	2	-	26
Glaucous-winged Gull	788	13	-	40
<i>Western X Glaucous-winged Gull</i>	1	3	-	1
<i>Herring X Glaucous-winged Gull</i>	-	-	-	10
<i>gull sp.</i>	3900	342	-	374
Forster's Tern	70	53	-	-
Double-crested Cormorant	379	303	5	136
American White Pelican	199	86	-	27
Brown Pelican	-	6	-	-
Great Blue Heron	55	29	5	25
Great Egret	79	43	2	31
Snowy Egret	159	81	-	16
Green Heron	8	4	-	1
Black-crowned Night-Heron	195	132	-	4
Turkey Vulture	299	114	3	283
White-tailed Kite	32	44	-	15
Golden Eagle	17	4	10	21
Northern Harrier	35	26	-	13
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	7	1	10
Cooper's Hawk	19	16	5	23
<i>accipiter sp.</i>	-	3	1	-
Bald Eagle	26	7	4	13
Red-shouldered Hawk	19	44	-	47
Red-tailed Hawk	202	145	19	165
Ferruginous Hawk	2	-	2	11
<i>buteo sp.</i>	-	1	-	-
Barn Owl	1	3	-	7
Western Screech-Owl	8	5	3	5
Great Horned Owl	23	11	4	11
Northern Pygmy-Owl	-	-	1	1
Burrowing Owl	2	2	-	-
Short-eared Owl	-	2	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	1	-	-
Belted Kingfisher	11	9	5	14
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	97	-
Acorn Woodpecker	263	388	396	492
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	1	-	-
Red-breasted Sapsucker	20	7	8	9
Downy Woodpecker	10	11	-	9
Nuttall's Woodpecker	64	106	27	86
Hairy Woodpecker	6	48	9	17
Northern Flicker	100	147	47	138
<i>Northern Flicker (intergrade)</i>	-	-	-	3

Species	San Jose 12/15/19	Palo Alto 12/16/19	Mount Hamilton 1/2/20	Calero Morg-Hill 12/28/19
Pileated Woodpecker	-	1	-	-
<i>woodpecker sp.</i>	1	-	-	-
American Kestrel	50	23	7	80
Merlin	14	11	1	12
Peregrine Falcon	10	11	-	4
<i>falcon sp.</i>	-	2	-	-
<i>Tropical/Couch's Kingbird</i>	-	-	-	1
Black Phoebe	337	339	20	261
Say's Phoebe	35	33	10	67
Loggerhead Shrike	4	1	-	3
Hutton's Vireo	7	51	2	24
Plumbeous Vireo	-	1	-	-
Steller's Jay	82	226	12	179
California Scrub-Jay	307	341	242	558
Yellow-billed Magpie	103	-	71	154
American Crow	608	1331	56	684
Common Raven	114	227	99	170
Horned Lark	20	-	-	79
Tree Swallow	1	45	-	2
Violet-green Swallow	26	-	-	3
Barn Swallow	1	-	-	1
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	173	713	3	262
Oak Titmouse	222	318	181	341
Bushtit	481	912	48	666
Red-breasted Nuthatch	10	29	-	3
White-breasted Nuthatch	77	166	81	161
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	60	-	-
Brown Creeper	13	56	2	14
Rock Wren	9	-	-	9
Canyon Wren	1	-	-	-
House Wren	2	5	1	-
Pacific Wren	-	11	-	-
Marsh Wren	134	15	-	5
Bewick's Wren	91	299	14	81
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	-	-	-	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	10	8	15
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	153	472	55	378
Wrentit	16	139	50	73
Western Bluebird	175	297	187	245
Hermit Thrush	85	181	25	63
American Robin	375	1187	16	638
Varied Thrush	21	60	3	17
California Thrasher	9	19	32	25
Northern Mockingbird	74	37	-	53
European Starling	2100	890	571	1360
Cedar Waxwing	-	489	2	366
Phainopepla	-	-	3	1
House Sparrow	103	22	8	48
American Pipit	40	170	-	202
Evening Grosbeak	-	8	-	-
House Finch	1429	701	75	634
Purple Finch	2	63	31	92
Red Crossbill	-	13	-	-
Pine Siskin	13	175	83	33
Lesser Goldfinch	213	418	186	464
Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	-	187	-
American Goldfinch	15	36	-	75
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	1	-	-
Lark Sparrow	136	-	20	72
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	1
Fox Sparrow	13	61	18	3
Dark-eyed Junco	160	831	470	353

Species	San Jose 12/15/19	Palo Alto 12/16/19	Mount Hamilton 1/2/20	Calero Morg-Hill 12/28/19
White-crowned Sparrow	1318	1181	107	1152
Golden-crowned Sparrow	703	783	321	647
White-throated Sparrow	-	1	1	3
<i>zonotrichia sp.</i>	-	-	-	52
Bell's Sparrow	-	-	4	-
Savannah Sparrow	200	109	52	54
Song Sparrow	306	193	2	77
Lincoln's Sparrow	47	39	3	31
Swamp Sparrow	3	1	-	-
California Towhee	284	270	50	220
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	4	-	-	8
Spotted Towhee	60	220	52	105
<i>sparrow sp.</i>	65	158	68	-
Western Meadowlark	396	323	112	269
Red-winged Blackbird	858	207	135	762
Tricolored Blackbird	96	-	4	22
Brown-headed Cowbird	102	9	77	18
Brewer's Blackbird	454	138	166	1364
<i>blackbird sp.</i>	31	35	-	386
Great-tailed Grackle	72	2	-	7
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	4	-	2
Common Yellowthroat	65	46	-	6
Palm Warbler	-	1	-	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1002	1125	3	668
<i>Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)</i>	-	550	1	64
<i>Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)</i>	-	64	1	49
Black-throated Gray Warbler	1	-	-	-
Townsend's Warbler	31	131	-	38
Hermit Warbler	-	1	-	-
Western Tanager	-	3	-	1
<b>Total Species</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>Total individual birds</b>	<b>108,574</b>	<b>102,865</b>	<b>5,764</b>	<b>27,211</b>

### Key

*bird names in italic:* subspecies, hybrids and indeterminate species  
*sp.:* species

*San Jose* compiled by Mike Azevedo

*Palo Alto* compiled by Al Eisner

*Mount Hamilton* compiled by Bob Hirt

*Calero-Morgan Hill* compiled by Rick Herder

Data entry and chart format by Barry Langdon-Lassagne.

Species order and names follow the ABA checklist version 8.0.6a (December 2019).

31 January 2020



# FIELD TRIPS

For full event descriptions and to RSVP, visit [scvas.org/FieldTrips](http://scvas.org/FieldTrips) or call (408) 579-9590.



Beginner Friendly



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Family-friendly, 14 yrs and older



**Photo Walk at Oka Ponds: Ducks & Gulls in Focus**  
Sun, Mar 1 at 8:30 AM, 3 hrs (BLU)



**Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant**  
Wed, Mar 4 at 12 PM, 1 hr (AR)



**Windy Hill OSP**  
Sat, Mar 7 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (KH)



**Neighborhood Birding at Oak Avenue Elementary School: Age 4+**  
Sun, Mar 8 at 8 AM, 1.5 hrs (AH)



**Guadalupe Oak Grove Park**  
Wed, Mar 11 at 8 AM, 3 hrs (DP)



**Backyard Birds for Beginners**  
Fri, Mar 13 at 10 AM, 1.5 hrs (DA)



**Coyote Creek Parkway & Parkway Lakes**  
Fri, Mar 13 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (DC)



**Drop-in: Coyote Valley OSP**  
Sat, Mar 14 at 9 AM, 2 hrs (CVR)  
Joint Event with SCVOSA



**Backyard Birds for Beginners**  
Sat, Mar 14 at 1:30 PM, 1.5 hrs (LC)  
Joint Event with the City of Cupertino



**Charleston Slough**  
Sun, Mar 15 at 9 AM, 2.5 hrs (AR)



**Drop-in: Charleston Slough**  
Sat, Mar 21 at 9:30 AM, 2 hrs (BMIII)



Lazuli Bunting  
Tom Grey

**Beginner's Bird & Plant ID Walk at Lake Cunningham Park**  
Session #1: First Day of Spring  
Sun, Mar 22 at 9 AM, 3 hrs (VSV)  
Joint Event with CNPS and SCVOSA



**Santa Teresa County Park**  
Sun, Mar 22 at 8:15 AM, 3.5 hrs (ST)



**Palo Alto Baylands**  
Sat, Mar 28 at 8 AM, 3 hrs (RB)



**Neighborhood Birding at Cuesta Park: Age 4+**  
Sat, Mar 28 at 8 AM, 2 hrs (AH)



**Birding Hike at Blair Ranch**  
Sun, Mar 29 at 8 AM, 3 hrs (MH)  
Joint Event with SCVOSA  
MEMBERS ONLY

**Stevens Creek County Park**  
Sun, Mar 29 at 8:30 AM, 3 hrs (DZ)

**Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant**  
Wed, Apr 1 at 12 PM, 1 hr (AR)



**Ed R. Levin County Park**  
Sun, Apr 5 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (CHJ)



**Slime Molds, Snails, & Salamanders: Age 4+**  
Tue, Apr 7 at 10 AM, 2 hrs (MV)



**Anderson Lake County Park Rosendin Park Area**  
Wed, Apr 8 at 8:30 AM, 3.5 hrs (EVM)



**Almaden Lake Park & Los Alamitos Creek Trail**  
Fri, Apr 10 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (WP)



**Joseph D. Grant County Park**  
Sat, Apr 11 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (RP)

**LEADERS** Mike Ambrose (MA), Jay Anderson (JA), Raminder Bajwa (RB), Dani Christensen (DC), Laura Coatney (LC), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Diane Hart (DH), Michael Hawk (MH), Ann Hepenstal (AH), Rick Herder (RH), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Jim Johnson (JJ), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Hugh McDevitt (HM), Eve Meier (EvM), Barbara Millin (BMill), Rich Page (RP), Janna Pauser (JP), Bill Pelletier (WP), Allen Royer (AR), Vicki Silvas-Young (VSY), Steve Tracey (ST), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), Merav Vonshak (MV), Nick Yatsko (NY), David Zittin (DZ)



### Backyard Birds for Beginners

Sat, Apr 11 at 9 AM, 1.5 hrs (LC)



### Monte Bello OSP

Sat, May 9 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (KH)



### Palo Alto Baylands

Sun, Apr 12 at 9 AM, 2.5 hrs (AR)



### Garin Regional Park, Hayward

Sun, May 10 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (MDo)

MEMBERS ONLY

### Coyote Ridge

Fri, Apr 17 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (DC)  
Joint Event with SCVOSA



### Santa Teresa County Park

Wed, May 13 at 8:30 AM, 3 hrs (EvM)



### Jasper Ridge Birds & Wildflowers Serpentine Walk

Sat, Apr 18 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (DH)

MEMBERS ONLY



### After Dark at Coyote Valley OSP

Fri, May 15 at 7:30 PM, 2 hrs (DC)  
Joint Event with SCVOSA



### Calero Creek Trail Stile Ranch entrance

Sat, Apr 18 at 8:15 AM, 2.75 hrs (HM)



### Pearson-Arastradero Preserve

Sat, May 16 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (RP)

### Drop-in: Charleston Slough

Sat, Apr 18 at 10:30 AM, 2 hrs (BMIII)



### Drop-in: Charleston Slough

Sun, May 17 at 10 AM, 2 hrs (BMIII)



### Alum Rock Park

Sun, Apr 19 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (JJ)



### Backyard Birds for Beginners

Tue, May 19 at 9:30 AM, 1.5 hrs (JA)



### Neighborhood Birding at Cuesta Pk

Sun, Apr 19 at 9 AM, 1 hr (AH)



### Little Uvas Creek

Sat, May 23 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (RH)  
Joint Event with SCVOSA



### Charleston Slough

Sat, Apr 25 at 8 AM, 3 hrs (NY)

### Sycamore Grove, Livermore

Sun, May 24 at 8 AM, 4 hrs (MDo)

MEMBERS ONLY

### Sanborn County Park

Sun, Apr 26 at 8 AM, 3.75 hrs (DZ)



### Palo Alto Baylands

Sun, May 31 at 8 AM, 3 hrs (RB)



### Charleston Slough with Google Egret Rookery

Sat, May 2 at 9 AM, 2.5 hrs (AR)



### Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

Wed, Jun 3 at 12 PM, 1 hr (AR)



### Henry W. Coe State Park

Sun, May 3 at 8 AM, 5 hrs (MA)



### Rancho del Oso

Sat, Jun 6 at 8 AM, 6 hrs (RP)

MEMBERS ONLY

### Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

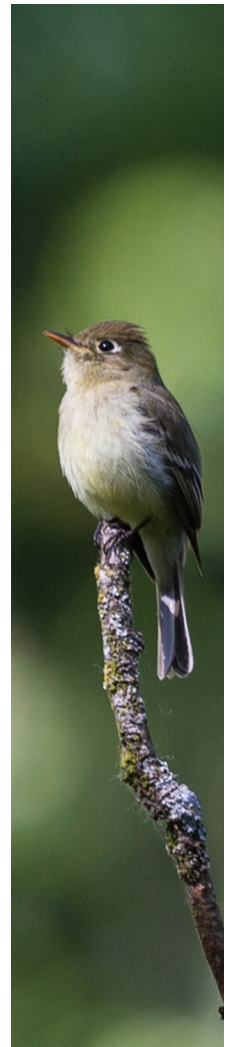
Wed, May 6 at 12 PM, 1 hr (AR)



Pacific-slope Flycatcher  
Meg Barron

## SIGN UP ONLINE

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## NEW MEMBERS Nov – Jan

*Continued from page 7*  
Christina Lew • Oletta S. Longo •  
Rocio Maldonado Lopez •  
Christine Louie • Lyon Asprey  
Family • Thomas Melton •  
Laurie Moody • Jim Moore •  
Haritha Muralidharan • Bruce  
Neill • Mary Nguyen • Michael  
Ogawa • Sandi Pensinger •  
Diane Petereit • Tracy Pham •  
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And thank you to  
those who renewed!

## Office

(408) 252-3747 Phone  
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scvas@scvas.org

## Nature Shop

Mon - Fri 10 AM to 4:30 PM  
Sat 10 AM to 2 PM

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Meetings are open to all members.  
Monthly: 2nd Wednesday at 7:30 PM  
Call the office to confirm.

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### Staff

**Executive Director**  
Matthew Dodder  
director@scvas.org  
(408) 252-3748

**Office Manager**  
April Austin  
scvas@scvas.org  
(408) 252-3747

**Education & Outreach Specialist**  
Carolyn Knight  
programs@scvas.org  
(408) 252-3740

**Environmental Advocate**  
Shani Kleinhaus  
shani@scvas.org  
(650) 868-2114

**Burrowing Owl Conservation**  
Sandra Menzel  
sandmenzel@gmail.com  
(831) 431-3301

*The Avocet* was designed & produced by  
Melissa L Lee • losmelin@gmail.com  
mlldesign.myportfolio.com