



# "In the Flyway"

## Bird and Nature walks

with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society:



Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's "In the Flyway" Bird and Nature Walk is designed to introduce scouts to our local birds and wetland habitats through an immersive nature experience. This activity supports the requirements of the Girl Scouts "In the Flyway" badge program, as well as several other nature-based patch, badge and journey programs for both Boy-and-Girl Scouts.

An "In the Flyway" Bird and Nature Walk is an approximately **2 hour Field Trip** to Charleston Slough in Mountain View (at the north end of San Antonio Rd).

These field trips are scheduled *as available* for either Saturday mornings between 10AM-12PM, or Wednesday afternoons between 3-5PM.

*\*Note:* times and days may be able to be shifted/adjusted somewhat if needed and if the schedule permits. *During the summer*, however, *field trips are ONLY scheduled for morning times.*

*\*Go to [www.scvas.org/education](http://www.scvas.org/education) - scroll down to "Nature Walks for Scout Troops" - for our online calendar of currently available dates.*

Upon arrival to the field trip location, volunteer field trip leaders will spend a few minutes introducing themselves, the wetlands and the use of binoculars to their groups. They will then take the group on a nature walk around the slough, pointing out the local wildlife and plants, and discussing a variety topics, such as diversity, bird identification, adaptation, migration, energy cycles, land use, storm drain conservation, and the practice of observation. The groups should return to the trailhead approximately 90 minutes later, where leaders will collect binoculars, and do a brief wrap-up.

About 2-3 weeks before the scheduled field trip, the main contact for your troop will receive the following: A map with directions for any driver(s); A Chaperone letter (in both English and Spanish, if needed) with instructions and expectations for adult chaperones; name(s) and contact information for the SCVAS leaders; any "advance curriculum" requested (**see note 7 on the next page**).

**Before scheduling an "In the Flyway" Bird and Nature Walk, please review the important trip details and guidelines provided on the following pages.**



# “In the Flyway” Bird and Nature Walks

## Important Guidelines and Trip Details



*(Please read through before scheduling your trip with us)*

- 1) The minimum group size for this activity is 10, and the maximum for a *single date* is 30.** Siblings are welcome to attend as well, and would be counted towards those min/max numbers. Adult chaperones, however, would *not* be counted towards the maximum group size. For larger groups (i.e. greater than 30 children) we would need to schedule 2 separate field trip dates.
- 2) There is no age limit for this activity,** although we recommend splitting the group into smaller sub-groups of similar ages, up to the maximum of 30 children.
- 3) There is a \$15/scout fee** - parents and siblings are free. Please note that a special group rate is available if there will be more than 10 scouts. There are also scholarships available for families in need. Anyone interested in applying for a scholarship should contact the SCVAS office directly at 408-252-3740 for instructions.
- 4) Adult chaperones are required for this activity.** Troops should provide a minimum of 1 adult chaperone per every 8 children over the age of 7, or 1 adult per every 5 children under the age of 7.
  - 4a) All adults chaperones are expected to be active participants in the activity** - such as helping to keep the groups together, helping the children focus on the leader, helping to pass out and hold checklists and other equipment, etc. As we've found, the less involved the adults are, the less involved/interested the children will be – which effects the enjoyment of the group as a whole.

### 5) Scheduling and Cancellation Policies:

- 5a) There is a minimum of three weeks advance notice** required to schedule an "In the Flyway" field trip. The more advance notice, the more likely we'll be able to accommodate your request. (*Note: afternoon field trips are not available during the summer*). The BEST times of year for these bird/nature walks are Sept-Nov and March-April. Those also happen to be our busiest times of year as well. Advance scheduling will be particularly important for those months. Please select a few possible dates from those posted online on the [Online Calendar](#). Then, use the [Registration Form](#) to sign-up.
- 5b) Scheduling is dependent on field trip leader availability.** You will be notified at least 72 hours in advance if we have to cancel because of insufficient field trip leader availability. *See further cancellation information below.*
- 5c) "In the Flyway" walks WILL be cancelled in the event of rain (anything heavier than a very light mist) or excessive heat.** Neither condition is good for the equipment, the birds, or the children. There is no charge for weather-related cancellations.
- 5d) We require at least 2-days notice for all other cancellations** so we have sufficient time to notify our field trip leaders. Field trips cancelled less than 2 days in advance will be charged a \$35 service fee.



## **“In the Flyway” Bird and Nature Walks** ***Important Guidelines and Trip Details (cont.)***



### **6) Participants in the "In the Flyway" activity will be provided with the following:**

- A) SCVAS binoculars to use during the walk – field trip leaders may also bring a “spotting scope” to help find particular birds of interest. All participants (including adults) will be offered binoculars to use.
- B) “Quick Reference” field guides (several per group) of the common wetlands birds to use during the walk.
- C) A checklist of common birds to mark during the walk and then to take home for discussion/review.
- D) An Audubon or SCVAS logo pin to take home (one per child).

### **7) We are happy to provide advance curriculum to group leaders to make the activity more in-depth and meaningful.** Options include a wetlands vocabulary list, a reading book about the founding of the Audubon Society entitled "She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head," a Wetlands Discovery slideshow (either in Powerpoint or Quicktime movie format), or Common Wetlands Birds flash cards (available as a printable PDF document). It is not required to use any of these items in advance of a bird/nature walk, but they are available to borrow to better prepare children for their nature experience.