

General Information about the "In the Flyway" Bird/Nature walks with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society:



An In-the-Flyway/Audubon-by-Appointment is an approximately **2 hour Field Trip** to Charleston Slough in Mountain View. Field trips are scheduled *as available* for either Saturday mornings between 10AM-12PM, or Wednesday afternoons between 3-5PM.

Upon arrival to the field trip location, volunteer field trip leaders will first introduce the wetlands and use of binoculars to their groups, and will then take the students on a nature walk around the slough, pointing out the local wildlife and discussing a variety topics. The field trip leaders will touch on several topics appropriate to the In the Flyway badge program, such as diversity, bird identification, adaptation, migration, energy cycles, land use, storm drain conservation, and the practice of observations. The groups should return to the trailhead at approximately 11:45AM or 4:45PM, where leaders will collect binoculars, and do a brief wrap-up.

About 2-3 weeks before the scheduled field trip, troop leaders 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 9 below).

Before scheduling an "In the Flyway" bird/nature walk, please review the following information:

1) The minimum group size to schedule this program is 10 and the maximum for a single date is 30. Siblings are welcome to attend as well, and would be counted towards those max/min numbers. Parents can be counted towards the group size in order to reach the minimum attendance of 10 participants, but would not be counted towards the maximum of 30. For larger groups 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 similar ages (i.e. one group with brownies, one group with juniors). Depending on the availability of field trip leaders (please see note 1 below) and the numbers of participants (see note above) we may be able to schedule both for the same date.

3) Participants on the "In the Flyway" bird walks will be provided with the following during the activity:

- A) SCVAS binoculars to use during the walk (if over the age of 7) – field trip leaders may also bring a “spotting scope” to help children find particular birds of interest
 - a. Children under age 7 would do a more "sensory exploration" walk without binoculars – they are too small to be able to effectively use the adult-sized binoculars.
- 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.
- D) An Audubon or SCVAS logo pin (one per child).

“In the Flyway” Bird/Nature Walks

General Information & Scheduling Procedures (cont).



4) A minimum of 1 adult chaperone per 5 children is required to attend the field trip, and we do ask that all adult chaperones that plan on attending be willing to help with the field trip - such as helping to keep the groups together and to help the children focus on the leader, helping to hold checklists and other equipment, etc. As we've found, the less involved the adults are, the less involved/interested the children will be. And that affects the enjoyment of the group as a whole.

5) There is a \$15/girl scout fee - parents and siblings are free. Please note that a special group rate is available if there will be more than 10 girl 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.

6) We need a minimum of three weeks advance notice to schedule an "In the Flyway" field trip. The more advance notice, the more likely we'll be able to accommodate your request. (*Note that Wednesday afternoon field trips are not available during the summer as it is simply too hot at the field trip location.*).

7) 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.

8) Regardless of how far in advance a program is scheduled, our ability to offer any program is always dependent on the availability of our field trip leaders (most of whom are volunteers). We might not be able to confirm field trip leader availability until just before the scheduled activity. It is important to understand, therefore, that it is possible (though not very likely) that an activity may have to be cancelled if we are unable to schedule sufficient field trip leaders. We have fortunately never actually had to cancel an activity because of the lack of available leaders, but it is something to be aware of.

9) We are happy to provide advance curriculum to group leaders to make the activity more in-depth and meaningful, if desired. 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, if desired, to better prepare children for their nature experience.

10) Please be aware that "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 cancelled appointments.