



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

July-August 2010

Birdathon Soars to New Record

by Bob Power
Executive Director

Mere mortals cannot comprehend the power of the unleashed masses. We were quietly adding up birdathon donations at the end of April, fairly certain that we would be about 10% short of last year's outstanding Birdathon effort. And then the donations just kept rolling in. From everywhere, and everyone. When the dust settled, 7 months of planning by a dedicated committee, 22 phenomenal team leaders, 125 gung-ho participants, and 767 donors raised over \$64,000 for the chapter education and conservation programs.

Most donations raised by an individual had 53 fundraisers bringing in over \$200 each. The champion of this group was Bob Hirt, personally raising over \$12,000. Bob related that there were over 400 e-mails involved in his effort.

The team with the highest fundraising effort was no surprise, with Bob Hirt's Rock Wrens also coming in at over \$12,000.

Best Bird this year went to the Counting Crows under Ryan



The Birding Generation:
Megan & Melanie O'Brien completely dominated the bird quizzes at the Birdathon Dinner. We suspect they'll be the "Quiz Masters" for many years to come...

Summer is the time for exploring and discovery with Young Audubon Nature Adventures!

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Phillips' leadership. Their gem was a group of Purple Martins at Loma Prieta.

In the stiffest competition in years, Mike Roger's Varied Twitchers remain the 24-hour "most species identified" champions at 158 species. But this year the Rock Wrens were in hot pursuit with 156, the DeDucktions with 154, and the Bob-o-links at 151 (go 'links!). oops, shameless plug.

The Rushing Thrushes took the 4-hour "most species identified" honors with 98.

Golden Eagle sponsors provided extraordinary prizes as fund-raising incentives, from the fantastic Trinidad/Tobago trip donated by Cheesemans Ecology Safaris to the hand-crafted Knit-to-Fit Birder's Mitts by Mary Wisnewski. These prizes were awarded at a wonderful dinner on June 8th coordinated by Deb and Bob Hirt, where birdathon participants closed out the Birdathon season sipping Merigan Family Vineyards Chardonnay donated by board member Tom Merigan. Could next year possibly be any better.....?



Birders Know How to Party!
The Annual Birdathon Dinner is always a fun way to enjoy each others' accomplishments. Everyone comes away with a big smile.

- ❖ *Used Book Sale Blow-Out at the Nature Shop* — Page 2
- ❖ *Audubon Field Seminars Pull Out All the Stops* — Page 3
- ❖ *Stand-out "Volunteers of the Year" Honored* — Page 4
- ❖ *New Conservation Corner: Updates from the Environmental Advocate* — Page 5
- ❖ *A Prothonotary Warbler Highlighted the Spring* — Field Notes, Page 6
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July - August '10 Field Trips

(Full details for all of our Field Trips are also available online at www.scvas.org)

Please carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing.

LO = Lunch optional; RC = Heavy rain cancels; NF = No facilities available

Wednesday July 7, 12:00 PM

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell, Allen Royer and/or Elaine Gould. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. Donald M. Somers Water Pollution Control Plant, junction of Borregas and Caribbean. Meet at Trailhead at north end. Birding geared toward beginners. Bring binoculars; loaners also available. **RC**

Saturday July 10, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408)

247-5499. Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. A good birding trip for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. A good trip to check out your spotting scope. Bring a friend.

Wednesday Aug. 4, 12:00 PM

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. Leaders: Freddy Howell, Allen Royer and/or Elaine Gould. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. See details from July 7th.

Saturday Aug. 7, 8:30 AM

Ano Nuevo State Reserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. The entrance is along Highway 1 about 30 miles south of Half Moon Bay or 20 miles north of Santa Cruz. Plan on a 3-4 mile walk (half of it in sand), fog, bright sun and wind. Bring a scope, lunch, liquids, and dress in layers. Possible birds include Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet and early returning shorebirds. There is a \$10 per car parking fee; meet at the far (south) end of the parking lot. **LO**

Sunday Aug. 15, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. For directions see write-up for May 9th.

SCVAS Events Calendar:

Sat. 7/17; 10AM-2PM

Young Audubon Summer Adventure: SCVAS "Bird Day"

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino
(see page 11 for details)

Sat. 7/17; 7:30AM-4:30PM

Birds of the Farallones Field Seminar

Emeryville Marina
(see next page for details)

Sat. 7/31; 8:00-10:00AM

Young Audubon Summer Adventure: Bird Banding with SFBBO

Coyote Creek Banding Station, Milpitas
(see page 11 for details)

Sat. 8/7; 10AM-2PM

Young Audubon Summer Adventure: SCVAS & MROSD "Nature Day"

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve, Hwy 35 and Page Mill Rd
(see page 11 for details)

Sun. 8/15; 7AM-4PM

Stevens Creek 50K/SCVAS Benefit Run

Runners and Volunteers are needed to participate in this fun event through the Santa Cruz Mountains. Runners are asked to donate a small registration fee, the proceeds of which go to benefit SCVAS' education and conservation programs. Go to the event website - www.stevenscreek.com/stevenscreek50k.html - for more details about the race, how to register as a runner, or how to help as an event volunteer.



Nature Shop Used Book Sale

Come and peruse our huge selection of donated books for a great summer reading experience.

Walk across America with Kenn Kaufmann

Visit East Africa with Terry Stevenson and John Fanshawe

Bargain prices through the summer months and beyond.

Priced to sell!



Adult Education Classes

The following classes are sponsored by the SCVAS Education Committee. To register please call the office at (408) 252-3740. All cancellations require 72-hour prior notification for refunds. Information about our upcoming classes is also available on our website at www.scvas.org.

Audubon Field Seminars:

Birds of the Farallones

A summer trip to the Farallones conjures up images of Great White Sharks and Humpback whales. While we hope to see the entire breadth of ocean life the islands have to offer, we'll be going for nesting seabirds. The islands are teeming with nesting birds in June and July. Join us for an unforgettable experience.

Guides:

Peter White – author of *The Farallon Islands: Sentinels of the Golden Gate*.

Bob Hirt – Leader of dozens of deepwater pelagic trips through Pterodroma Tours.

Matthew Dodder – Land and sea field trip leader and birding instructor for over 10 years.

David Wimpfheimer – has led scores of trips to the Farallones over the past two decades.

Bob Power – can yell louder than the others.

Date: Sat. 7/17; 7:30AM (Emeryville Marina departure) to approx. 4:00PM (Marina arrival).

Fee: \$100 members; \$120 non-members.



Common Murre
Father with Juvenile
by Pete LaTourrette

Swainson's Hawks with Bob Power

Swainson's Hawks congregate in the lower Sacramento Valley in late summer as they prepare to leave for Mexico and Argentina for the winter. They rest up and gorge themselves in preparation for the trip, taking advantage of the rich riparian and agricultural resources of Yolo County. This is a wonderful opportunity to see a wide variety of Swainson's Hawks, their multiple morphs and ages, and get to know them on a more intimate basis. Perhaps the most graceful Buteo, often the most beautiful, clearly the long-distance migration sweepstakes winner (Alberta to Argentina); you owe yourself a good visit with these magnificent raptors.



Swainson's Hawk
by Tom Grey

Date: Sun. 8/22; 7AM (South Bay departure) to approx. 5:30PM (South Bay arrival)

Location: Agricultural lands south of Davis. **Fee:** \$30 members; \$40 non-members.

Class size is limited to 15.

Important Note: You must be willing to carpool and share fuel expenses with a minimum of 3 other people to attend. We will have a maximum of 4, 4-person vehicles on this field trip.

Audubon-at-Home:

SCVAS' Bird Sanctuary Program: July and August in the California Native Plant Demonstration Garden

By Cheryl Turner, McClellan Ranch Native Plant Garden Coordinator

The April/May blooming season of our native plant garden has been spectacular. There are still several plants yet to come into bloom, including the *Aster chilensis*, California buckwheat, Milkweed (*Asclepias* species), and California Fuchsia.

In July and August, the Milkweed will bloom. Milkweed is both a host and a nectar plant for butterflies, and may attract a Monarch or a Queen butterfly to the garden. Hummingbirds will enjoy the California Fuchsia, and lizards will bask on the rocks around the birdbath. Gophers will seek out areas that we have watered and make a meal of the roots of their favorite watered plants.

August will bring male deer to the garden in search of a tree to use to rub the velvet off their antlers. It will be important to cage the *Ceanothus* and large Manazita this year to limit the damage.

The plants will require little water this year, perhaps only a gallon per plant, avoiding the crown, twice in August and once in September. Established plants should be able to survive until the fall rains. First-year plants need additional attention, as they easily succumb to overwatering or dry soil. Many of our plants were lost as this lesson was learned. As the summer progresses, the garden will require a bit of pruning, some deadheading, and some summer rest. Now the garden volunteers can turn our attention to summer fun and relaxation!



Butterfly on Milkweed
by Arvind Kumar

Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg
Programs Coordinator

Anon-profit organization is really only as strong as its members and its volunteers. It is their passion and energy that help to create and maintain any successful endeavor. And, as I've written many times (and which I will write many more), we here at SCVAS are truly blessed by the caliber of volunteers that are involved in this chapter. During our annual June potluck, I was delighted to be able to honor just some of those super-star volunteers:

Bob Reiling – Weekend Field Trip Coordinator.

Some jobs get all the glamour. The person who puts in all the hard work is immediately identifiable, seen on a regular basis, and easy to say “thank you” to often. And then there are the tasks that are time-consuming, frustrating, often unrecognized, possibly under-appreciated, and yet so very important. Bob's many years of coordinating weekend field trips for this chapter falls into this latter category. Because of his efforts in recruiting and scheduling top-notch field trip leaders, our chapter leads the way in consistently high-quality trips for members and friends.

SCVAS Field Trip Leaders

It wasn't until I started making a list of all of the field trips offered over the past couple of years that I fully realized how amazingly fortunate SCVAS is! We have, I think I can safely say, some of the most experienced (and most fun!) field trip leaders in Northern California! And many of our field trip leaders either work full time or assist in other aspects of SCVAS' operations – making us that much more appreciative and grateful for the time they are so willing to share with fellow birders. Here's a list of all of these phenomenal folks that make SCVAS the pride of the Bay (with sincere apologies if anyone was accidentally omitted – as you can see, it's a long list!):

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Al Eisner | Freddy Howell | Pat Brennan |
| Alan Hopkins | Gail Cheeseman | Pat Kenny |
| Alan Thomas | Garth Harwood | Pete LaTourette |
| Allen Royer | Janna Pauser | Phyllis Swanson |
| Bob Hirt | Jean Myers | Rich Page |
| Bob Reiling | Jim Johnson | Rick Fournier |
| Clay Kempf | Jim Royer | Roxie Handler |
| Dave Cook | Kathy Parker | Steve Tracey |
| Dick Stovel | Kirsten Holmquist | Sue James |
| Don Starks | Marion & Kendric | Todd Newberry |
| Elaine Gould | Smith | Vicki Silvas-Young |
| Eleanor Bassler | Mike Mammoser | |
| Frank Vanslager | Nick Yatsko | |

Peter Vargas – Office and Nature Shop Assistant

For any organization, one of the challenges is trying to build a strong base of volunteers that will carry into the next generation. Sometimes, pearls like Peter almost fall into our lap, for which we can only say “Hooray!” Working with his mother in the nature shop, the office, and assisting wherever he is needed, this teen proves that our next generation IS capable, intelligent, caring, and actively involved in a good cause.

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Dave Cook – Environmental Action Committee (and Burrowing Owl Advocates) Chair

Given that 1/3 of our chapter's mission is dedicated to conservation, it's crucial that the chair of our conservation committee be someone with abundant enthusiasm, caring, and dedication. And it doesn't hurt if he or she is someone that is fun to be around, too. As anyone that knows him can tell you, Dave more than fits that bill. A former SCVAS Board Member, Dave immediately picked up the baton of chairmanship as soon as his schedule cleared – and he hasn't stopped running since. Working closely with SCVAS' Environmental Advocate, Shani Kleinhaus, and the other dedicated members of these committees, Dave has been, and continues to be, an important force in protecting our local natural resources.

Wetlands Discovery Program Docents

For 20 years, the Wetlands Discovery Program has been bringing birds and the natural world to elementary students in grades 3-6 throughout Santa Clara County. But SCVAS does it in a very special way – focusing on low-income and disadvantaged schools, our programs are not only offered free-of-charge, but schools are also often subsidized for their transportation costs. And the only way we could ever hope to consistently offer high quality programs without charging high fees is through an amazing group of passionate, experienced volunteer leaders. During the fall and spring, these dedicated volunteers provide eager students with a birding experience that they remember for years to come.

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Alan Weissberger | Gordon Barrett | Linda Johnson |
| Allen Royer | Janet Bertaina | Missi Hirt |
| Ashok Khosla | Jim Liskovec | Pam Price |
| Carolyn & Dan | Joan Loney | Sandy Calgher |
| Flanagan | John Callahan | Shana Shi |
| Cassie Ohms | Kristine | Sonya Terian-Vo |
| Connie | McNamara | Tricia Finnigan |
| Bowencamp | Lee French | Vicki Silvas-Young |
| Elaine Gould | | |



Wetlands Discovery Program Docent Cassie Ohms points out some of the fascinating birds at Shoreline Lake to a group of 4th graders. During their field trips, students learn to use binoculars and begin to explore the variety of habitats, birds, and other wildlife that are present in the San Francisco Bay wetlands.

If you're interested in joining the ranks of these outstanding volunteers, please contact me at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org. Full descriptions and details for all of our volunteer opportunities, including the ones mentioned above - Field Trip Leaders, Nature Shop and Office Assistants, Environmental Action Committee Members, and Wetlands Discovery Docents - are listed on our website at www.scvas.org - click on “Get Involved” in the left-hand column.

Conservation Corner

by Shani Kleinhaus

Environmental Advocate

Here are some of the projects that the Environmental Advocate and Environmental Action Committee are working on:

Panoche Valley Solar Development: 4,717 Acres, 1,822,800 Solar Panels

In March 2010, SCVAS coordinated a site visit and workshop at Panoche Valley. The event was attended by representatives from CA Audubon, Monterey Audubon, Fresno Audubon, the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, Silicon Valley Toxic Coalition, California Native Plant Society, Defenders of Wildlife, the Center for Biodiversity, academic institutions and local organizations including the Friends of Panoche Valley and the San Benito County Conservation Alliance. In addition, the CA Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service were represented. The workshop motivated many of the participants to submit scoping letters for environmental review by San Benito County planners and the Environmental Impact Report team. SCVAS submitted comments independently as well as in alliance with other Audubon chapters, Defenders of Wildlife and the Center for Biodiversity. Comment letters focused on risks to the avian community and species of short grass prairie, endangered species, lifecycle analysis for solar panels, and the financial costs to San Benito County as associated with the implementation of the Solargen proposal. We now await the Draft EIR, scheduled to be released in June.

Burrowing Owls of Shoreline Park

Our campaign to save the burrowing owls of Shoreline at Mountain View is bearing fruit! Since September 2009, dozens of activists engaged in an effort to encourage the city of Mountain View to re-examine its policy regarding mitigation measures for burrowing owls, and to create a burrowing owl sanctuary at Shoreline. Our advocacy resulted in the city abandoning off-site mitigation plans, and instead starting to work on a new management plan for the owls with the goals of protecting and enhancing nesting and foraging habitat for Burrowing Owls at Shoreline Park, and of increasing the number of nesting pairs in the park. In May



Burrowing Owl Family
by Pete LaTourrette

2010, city staff presented a plan that will convert dry ponds on the golf course to burrowing owl foraging habitat. Mayor Bryant requested that the project title “GOLF COURSE NUISANCE BIRD STRATEGY AND SHORELINE BURROWING OWL MANAGEMENT” be changed to “GOLF COURSE NUISANCE BIRD STRATEGY AND **SHORELINE BURROWING OWL PRESERVATION**”!!!!!! We applaud Mayor Bryant, Vice-Mayor Siegel, city council and staff for their efforts, commitment and creativity and are looking forward to working with the city to create and enhance burrowing owls habitat at Shoreline.

A sample of other conservation issues: San Jose

- SCVAS and volunteers continue to follow PG&E’s plan to remove trees from under power lines in TJ Martin and Fontana Parks in San Jose, and to study the implications of PG&E tree management policy for riparian corridors in our county.
- Volunteers continue to monitor the Burrowing Owl population as well as the implementation of city code and mitigation measures
- Activists attended public meetings and commented on land use plan options for 2600 acres of the Water Pollution Control Plant. We focused on the enhancement of riparian habitat and burrowing owl habitat.

SCVAS Advocacy and Outreach

Please contact Shani (shani@scvas.org) to:

- Attend a meeting or join our Environmental Action Committee. The committee meets on the Fourth Wednesday of every month, 7:30PM at McClellan Ranch.
- Join our Armchair Activists list and be notified when you can help support our advocacy efforts in your community.
- Request our support when birds and wildlife are threatened in your community

Fall Education & Outreach Intern Needed

Each fall, we search for an outstanding Education & Outreach Intern to help us deliver the many programs we offer to local schools, community groups, and neighborhoods.

If you or someone you know is outgoing, enjoys working with children, wants to learn more about the world of environmental education, and wants to help us continue to offer high-quality programs, give us a call! We are looking for someone available during the day (and occasional weekends) for about 10-15 hours per week. The exact schedule will be flexible, but Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings will be required. Saturday, October 23rd will also be required. Some experience with environmental science, biology, education, or working with children is desirable, but we will train the right candidate.

Note: this is a *paid* internship.

More information is available online at www.scvas.org - click on “About Us” – or contact the Programs Coordinator, Toby, at 408-252-3740 or programs@scvas.org.

Field Notes

(April-May 2010)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Ibis

Few **Greater White-fronted Geese** linger into April, so four birds at Shoreline Park on 12 Apr (WGB) were of interest. More surprising were the two seen flying over the Coyote Valley on 7 May (RPh et al.) Other lingering geese included a **Snow Goose** at the San Pedro percolation ponds that was last seen on 8 Apr (MJM) and an adult **Ross's Goose** seen near the Palo Alto Baylands on 9 Apr (WGB) and on the Palo Alto Muni GC on 19 Apr (GHa). The last **Eurasian Wigeon** at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds was seen on 2 Apr (RCP). One to two males remained in Pond A16 in Alviso through 3 May 3 (AMcD, v.ob.), two being seen on 25 Apr (MMR, MJM, RGJ). **Blue-winged Teal** were found regularly in April in the vicinity of Adobe Creek, Pond A1, and the Mountain View Forebay (m.ob.). The peak count was of three males and two females in Pond A1 on 6 Apr (RCP) and the last observation was of a pair there on 24 Apr (RPh). Two males and a female were in Artesian Slough on 11 Apr (MJM et al.) and a pair were there on 24 Apr (MDo et al.). A male and sometimes a female have been seen in the SCRWA ponds through at least 21 May (RCP, SCR, NT, MJM, JAC). A male was at the edge of the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) oxidation ponds on 27 May (WGB). An alternate **Common Loon** was flying north over Monte Bello OSP on 18 Apr (BHi et al.) and another alternate bird was on the Stevens Creek Reservoir on 2 May (BHi). A basic bird was over closed refuge ponds in Alviso on 25 Apr (MMR, MJM, RGJ). **Brown Pelicans** were found through the period (v.ob.), as they were last spring. Perhaps this is the new pattern. An immature on Cottonwood Lake on 5 Apr (MJM) was the only one found inland. A surprising **American Bittern** was seen foraging at Vasona Reservoir on 29 Apr (GHa). A will-o-the-wisp in recent years, single **Cattle Egrets** were seen in the SCRWA ponds on 2 Apr (RCP) and at the Palo Alto Baylands on 30 May (TGr). The wintering immature **White-faced Ibis** continued in

April. Two were in Adobe Creek in the Palo Alto FCB on 1 Apr (GL), but after that only single birds were seen, either nearby or at the Palo Alto Baylands (v.ob.). The last of these birds was at the Baylands on 24 Apr (MMR et al.). In a normal year our best chance for ibis is when exploring alternate birds show up in May. Five of these were seen at the SCRWA ponds on 3 May (MJM, RWR, FV) and 14 were there on 12 May (MJM, JAC). Nine were seen flying over

Spring was highlighted with two Broad-winged Hawks, two Gray Flycatchers, and only the second county record of a Prothonotary Warbler

the model airplane park in Morgan Hill on 14 May (SCR) and four were southwest of Bailey Avenue on 30 May (MMR).

Bald Eagle through Black Skimmer

Nesting by the pair of **Bald Eagles** west of Calaveras Reservoir continued during the period (m.ob.). A nestling was first reported on 1 Apr (MJM), two nestlings were seen on 11 Apr (RCP et al.), and the two young bird were exercising their wings on 30 May (BHi). Adult birds have been seen at Coyote Reservoir during the period (MJM, RCP) and a nest was reported on 13 Apr (RCP). Elsewhere a sub-adult was seen along Coyote Ridge on 7 Apr (WGB), one to two adults and a 2nd-year bird have been found in the San Antonio Valley 23 Apr-13 May (LF, v.ob.), a 2nd-year bird was over a Morgan Hill yard on 9 May (SCR), an immature was over Twin Gates in Joseph Grant CP on 12 May (E&JR), and a sub-adult was along Pacheco Creek in Henry Coe SP on 19 May (WGB). It has been an exceptional spring for **Broad-winged Hawks** with two found. The first was at Ed Levin CP on a SCVAS trip on 18 Apr (RWR, STr et al.) and the second was near Rancho San Antonio OSP on 10 May (JMD). These are our 3rd and 4th records for spring (and 8th and 9th overall). In the last decade, we've been finding one or two **Swainson's Hawks** in most springs,

so an immature along Coyote Creek near Riverside Drive on 30 Apr (RPh) fit this pattern. A **Merlin** at the SCRWA ponds on 20 May (NT *fide* SCR) was very late, we have two prior records for May. A **Prairie Falcon** over San Jose on 22 May (ER) was surprising, we have few records away from the Diablo Range in spring. A female **Snowy Plover** was observed on a nest on closed refuge ponds on 25 Apr (MMR, MJM, RGJ), but a later survey found no birds there. A **Solitary Sandpiper** was seen near the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) waterbird pond on 21 Apr (WGB), we find one or two birds nearly every spring. The only **Lesser Yellowlegs** for the spring was one at the CCFS waterbird pond on 22 Apr (MJM). **Sanderling** were found near Pond A12 in Alviso with two there on 21 Apr (WGB), one nearby on 24 Apr (MDo et al.), and three on 25 Apr (MMR, MJM, RGJ). **Wilson's Phalarope** usually appear in late June, two at the SCRWA ponds on 20 May (SCR) were early. A 1st-winter **Glaucous Gull** was seen again on Pond A16 in Alviso on 3 Apr (KSc, AME, LW-R, RCP et al.). Another 1st-winter bird was at South Coyote Slough on 22 Apr (MJM). The wintering flock of **Black Skimmers** at Charleston Slough started to move about and break up in early April. The high count was 14 birds in nearby Pond A1 on 9 Apr (RFu).

Eurasian Collared-Dove through Phainopepla

Eurasian Collared-Doves reached a milestone of sorts this spring. One was seen carrying nest material into a tree along the Pajaro River on 4 May (DLSu) and another was seen building a nest along Zanker Road on 12 May (RCa) for our first county breeding records. A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen along Metcalf Road on 30 May (MMR) and again the next day (RWR, FV). A **Long-eared Owl** chose a day roost over the picnic table outside the Alviso EEC on 24 Apr and was discovered by school kids eating their lunch. Later their find was communicated to birders (*fide* CC, MMR). Three **Black Swifts** were over Monte Bello OSP on 28 May (WGB), a typical date for their spring passage. The first **Vaux's Swift** of the season was one over the Santa Clara Valley Water District ponds on 3 Apr (AV). Although resident birds have been found locally, few migrants

Field Notes *cont'd*

were seen this spring, probably fewer than 15 birds total (v.ob.). A female **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was seen along the Guadalupe River below Curtner on 18 Apr (MMR), as in years past. Two males were seen there on 7 May (DWe, MJM). A male **Calliope Hummingbird** was found in Ed Levin CP by the dog park on 7 Apr (AS) and multiple birds were enjoyed there by many through 18 Apr, one of the best shows we've had in the county. The most birds seen in one sitting were two males and a female, but it is likely the total number of passage birds was much higher. The **Rufous Hummingbird** migration continued in April with about 12 birds noted, the last at Ed Levin CP on 24 Apr (MDo et al.). **Lewis's Woodpeckers** have been found regularly in the San Antonio Valley, mostly south of the junction (m.ob.). The high count was of four on 7 May (WGB). A single bird was seen in San Martin on 30 Apr (LA). On a few occasions birds have wintered in this vicinity. After a false start, a pair of **Pileated Woodpeckers** was seen excavating a nest hole in Mt. Madonna CP on 9 Apr (DP). The pair apparently started incubating about 28 Apr (DP, MJM et al.). Other birds included one or more calling near Charcoal Road and Table Mountain 13 Apr-4 May (RWR, FV, WGB, JTh, RFr, SP), at Monte Bello OSP 18 Apr-28 May (BHi, MMR, GHa, WGB), and near the lower saddle of Loma Prieta on 25 Apr (RPh). About 13 **Hammond's Flycatchers** were found on their spring passage, the first in Alum Rock Park on 6 Apr (WGB) and the last along Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 on 18 May (MMR). They were found widely from Monte Bello OSP to the center of the Diablo Range (m.ob.). Two **Gray Flycatchers** this spring were the first since 2003. The first was seen in Henry Coe SP on 28 Apr (RGJ, MMR) and the second was in Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 6 May (JPa). Two **Say's Phoebes** were in an area where they have nested in the past. A single **Cassin's Kingbird** was found along the Pajaro River east of the Santa Cruz County line on 4 May (DLSu). A pair was found on San Felipe Road on 26 May (RWR, FV). A nest with an incubating bird was seen there on 30 May (MMR) for our first nesting since 2005. Three to five **Purple Martins** were seen northwest of

the lower saddle of Loma Prieta 25 Apr-13 May (RPh, WGB, RWR, FV) where they have nested in the past. Two birds were seen over Mt. Hamilton on 2 May (MH), they seldom are found in the Diablo Range anymore. One or more **Pygmy Nuthatches** were seen at Smith Creek on 24 Apr (MDo, KP et al.). Our coastal species is sedentary and does not occur in the Diablo Range as far as we know. The birds at Smith Creek are likely the Sierran subspecies moving back to the mountains following a winter movement. A **Canyon Wren** was found singing on the slopes above Pacheco Creek not far west of the Kaiser-Aetna Road on 26 Apr (AL) and has been heard in subsequent surveys on 3 and 19 May (WGB).

Winter Wrens are scarce on the east side of the Santa Cruz Mountains, so adults with fledged young on the Summit Rock Loop Trail in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 31 May (GHa) were a nice find. **American Dippers** were seen again at a nest site on Los Gatos Creek in April (v.ob.) and an adult was seen carrying food and removing fecal sacs on 30 Apr (DJ, SP). The birds nesting along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road were also seen during the period (m.ob.) and one was at a nest on 24 Apr (MDo et al.). A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was found in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 16 May (RCP et al.). A male **Phainopela** was seen flying along Pacheco Ridge in Henry Coe SP on 19 May (WGB).

Warblers through Goldfinches

As happens in most springs, **Nashville Warblers** came through quickly, with 15 birds reported 15 Apr-3 May (v.ob.). Birds were reported in the Diablo Range (7), the valley floor (4), and the Santa Cruz Mountains (4). A high count was of four birds at Smith Creek on 17 Apr and another nearby at Twin Gates (MMR, MJM). Probable resident **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were found at three locations along the Santa Cruz Mountain crest 20 Mar-31 May (v.ob.). Nine migrant **Hermit Warblers** were seen 16 Apr-3 May (v.ob.). Six were in the Diablo Range and three were in the Santa Cruz Mountains. One singing off the Summit Rock Loop Trail in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 31 May (GHa) was likely a breeding bird. The surprise for the spring



Juvenile
Broad-winged Hawk
by Pete LaTourrette

period was a male **Prothonotary Warbler** found near Las Palmas Park in Sunnyvale on 23 May (SA) for only the second county record (the first was in the fall of 1991 at the Palo Alto Baylands). The bird could not be refound. Eight **MacGillivray's Warblers** were found on their spring passage 24 Apr-28 May (v.ob.). Four were in the Diablo Range, one on the valley floor, and three in the Santa Cruz Mountains. **Yellow-breasted Chats** were first detected along Llagas Creek near the SCRWA ponds on 26 Apr (WGB, AL) and up to six birds have been heard or seen through 21 May (m.ob.). We find birds there most years and believe they nest, but have little evidence. Other birds found included one at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 30 Apr (SCR), one along the Pajaro River near the Santa Cruz County line on 4 May (DLSu), one along Coyote Creek near Coyote Ranch 4-12 May (RPh, MJM), and two at different spots in San Antonio Valley on 7 May (WGB). **Chipping Sparrows** are hard to sort out. The last of the wintering birds in Jeffrey Fontana Park in San Jose were seen on 19 Apr (JPa). Likely migrants were noted 18-27 Apr (RWR, JPa) whereas birds that may possibly breed were found 17 Apr-31 May (v.ob.). Of the latter group, two singing in Palo Alto's Foothill Park on 31 May (GHa) were in an area where I don't recall any nesting records in recent years. **Sage Sparrows** are hard to find near public

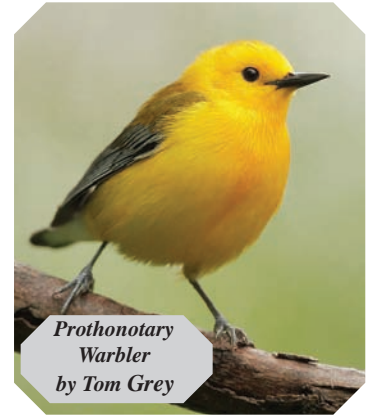
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Field Notes from page 7

roads, but can be almost common in burn areas in Henry Coe SP. Seventeen were tallied on a survey route on 28 Apr and 22 on 16 May (MMR). Ed Levin CP remains the metropolis of **Grasshopper Sparrows** over the period (m.ob.). Additional birds included one near Grant Lake on 17 Apr (MMR, MJM), at least four birds in the Santa Teresa Hills on 26 Apr (JPa), one at Monte Bello OSP 28-29 May (GHa, KHo et al.), three near the Metcalf Road summit on 30 May (MMR), one near Calero Reservoir on 30 May (MMR), and one near Sargent on 30 May (MMR). At least one **White-throated Sparrow** remained at Belgatos Park in Los Gatos through 19 Apr (JPa). Other individuals included one on the Los Alamitos Creek Trail on 2 Apr (JPa), one at McCellan Ranch in Cupertino on 18 Apr, one at the Ulistac Natural Area on 19 Apr (AP), and one at an Almaden Valley feeder on 23 Apr (JPa). A **Western Tanager** was found in Edenvale Garden Park on 8 Apr (JPa) and was likely a wintering bird. The first influx of migrants was on 17 Apr with birds at Smith Creek and Twin Gates (MMR, MJM) and along Gilroy Hot Springs Road (MDo et al.). A few **Blue Grosbeaks** have been found along the Pajaro River with a 1st-summer male on 3 May (MJM, RWR, FV), a female on

4 May (DLSu), and a 1st-summer male on 30 May (MMR). A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** turned up in New Chicago Marsh on 3 May (AMcD) and increasing numbers were seen there through the month (m.ob.) with at least 14 tallied on 19 May (MJM et al.). Nearby, single birds were seen along Pond A12 on 19 May (GHa) and on Disk Drive on 30 May (BHi). An immature male was found along the Kaiser-Aetna Road in Henry Coe SP on 14 May (WGB), a first record for the park. The only **Great-tailed Grackle** reported was a male at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 25 Apr (RPh et al.). A single **Pine Siskin** along Charcoal Road on 13 Apr (RWR, FV) is our only one this year. The first **Lawrence's Goldfinches** since early winter were a male and female at Twin Gates on 24 Apr (MDo et al.). Various Henry Coe SP burn surveys have found birds in ones and twos, but it is looking like another poor year for this species. Flatland birds included two along the Pajaro River on 4 May (DLSu) and one to four birds along San Felipe Road 28-31 May (v.ob.).

Observers: Linda Adams (LA), Steven Argue (SA), Bill Bousman (WGB), Robin Carle (RCa), Jack Cole (JAC), Ceal Craig (CC), Mike Danzenbaker (JMD), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Al Eisner (AME), Leslie Flint (LF), Ron Fredrick (RFR), Ron Fulks (RFu), Tom Grey (TGr),



Prothonotary Warbler
by Tom Grey

Garth Harwood (GHa), Bob Hirt (BHi), Marcel Holyoak (MH), Debi Jamison (DJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Garrett Lau (GL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Amy McDonald (AMcD), Steve Patt (SP), Janna Pauser (JPa), Andy Pedler (AP), Kenneth Petersen (KP), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Dennis Porter (DP), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Edward & Janice Rooks (E&JR), Eric Rosenberg (ER), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Ken Schneider (KSc), Ashutosh Sinha (AS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Jim Thomas (JTh), Nellie Thorngate (NT), Steve Tracey (STr), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), and Laurie West-Roberts (LW-R).

RARITIES: Please drop me a note:

Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way,
Menlo Park, CA 94025,
or: barlowi@earthlink.net

Success Measured in Smiles: Wetlands Discovery Program Reflections

By Toby Goldberg, SCVAS Programs Coordinator

At first impression, José* seemed like one of those students that most people would simply write off as a lost cause: he didn't want to work with his group, he didn't want to answer the questions on his worksheet, and he certainly didn't seem interested in learning about any of the topics (adaptation, migration, diversity, etc.) we had showed up at his school to discuss. To his own classmates, he was known as "the grumpy kid" who was never interested in participating. Then we took the class outside to practice using binoculars, and José's entire being transformed.



A hands-on, outdoor learning experience opens up a whole new world to many Santa Clara County students.

With a giant smile on his face, he eagerly participated in the discussion about how to find the birds with this new piece of equipment, and was one of the first people in the group to spot the feathered visitors nearby. The idea that

someone could identify a new animal by watching its behavior and looking at its field markings seemed like an amazing revelation to him, and he was clearly enthralled with the concept. In fact, at the end of the activity, it was "grumpy" José who seemed the most excited to attend the follow-up activity – the full-length field trip to Charleston Slough.

Just one of the thousands of children we introduce to the wetlands each year, José and the other students like him are the reason we come back year-after-year. Our program may not be the flashiest science program available, but it certainly is one of the most impactful. And for students like José – students who may be struggling with a language barrier, problems at home, learning disabilities, or any other issue that makes absorbing information in an increasingly crowded classroom setting a challenge – our program may just make learning fun again. And that can make all the difference in the world.

*Name has been changed

Thanks to all of our Birdathon Teams and their many, many supporters for another very successful Birdathon!

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Young Audubon Summer Adventures Continue!



McClellan Ranch Bird Day

Bird watching, Bird walks, bird crafts, and so much more!

LOCATION: McClellan Ranch, Cupertino; DATE: Sat, July 17th;

TIME: 10AM - 2PM; AGES: 5-7 and 8-10

COST: \$20/child for SCVAS Members; \$25/child for non-members

(There is a multiple-child discount)

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 7/9

If your children are fascinated by the natural life around them, then this day is one not to miss! We will explore our local bird life (and other wildlife) through: birds and birding arts and crafts; a feeder watch to catch a glimpse of some of the amazing species that come to our very door; a creek walk to explore the local flora and fauna; story and/or music time (bird-related, of course!); Barn Owl pellet dissections; and more!

Bird Banding

"Conservation in Action!" with SFBBO

LOCATION: McCarthy Ranch, Milpitas; DATE: Sat, July 31st;

TIME: 8AM-10:00AM; AGES: For all Bird Lovers, ages 7** and up!

COST: \$25/family; limit 3 children per adult

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 7/23



Come share in a special opportunity to witness live bird banding demonstrations by experts from the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO). An invaluable tool for conservation, restoration and mitigation research, this bird banding activity will allow participants to view a wild bird up close and personal, as well as tour an area of active habitat restoration.

** Children MUST be accompanied by a parent or guardian

SCVAS/MROSD Skyline Ridge Nature Day

Bugs, Birds, Plants, Rocks, and more!

LOCATION: Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve, Hwy 35 and Page Mill Rd;

DATE: Sat, Aug 7th; TIME: 10AM - 2PM; AGES: 5-7 and 8-10

COST: \$20/child for SCVAS Members; \$25/child for non-members

(There is a multiple-child discount)

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 7/30



Come spend the day with us as we explore our local wildlife and plant communities through fun activities including: birds and birding arts and crafts; a habitat walk to catch a glimpse of some of the amazing species that live all around us; a pond exploration to explore the aquatic invertebrates, and more!

To register for any of the above activities, call (408) 252-3740, or send an e-mail to programs@scvas.org. Additional details are also available on the SCVAS website - www.scvas.org.

Space is limited so sign up early!

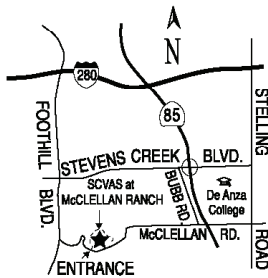
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2010 Volume 57, Number 4

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