

THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

September-October 2010

Environmental Coalition Fights for Extraordinary Valley

by Bob Power
SCVAS Executive Director

On June 28th, 2010, San Benito County released an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the plan to build a landscape scale solar “farm” in Panoche Valley. 30 miles east of Hollister, the Panoche Valley is a throwback to wide open spaces, ecosystems, and wildlife that have disappeared throughout the west. The draft EIR for this project, reiterates what we knew all along – that the plan to cover nearly 5,000 acres of the valley with 3-4 million photovoltaic solar panels is likely to extinguish the endangered species in the valley, and to change forever its unspoiled viewsheds.

On July 21st, environmental groups, biologists, farmers, and children joined as one to let the San Benito County Planning Commission know that solar development is right, but wiping out a pristine valley and endangered species is inherently wrong. Of 28 speakers that night, 26 were opposed to development in Panoche Valley and 2 in favor. The coalition was first brought together in March for a workshop in Panoche Valley by Shani Kleinhaus, SCVAS Environmental Advocate. This coalition has grown to include California Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, Loma Prieta Sierra Club, Save Panoche Valley, Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, Monterey Audubon, Fresno Audubon and the San Benito County Conservation Alliance.

The threat to cover the valley with Solar Panels has galvanized environmental organizations and propelled them into action. Recent press releases by alliance members focus on the “unmitigable” impacts of the proposed “Panoche Valley Solar Farm” project.

**Don't Miss the
19th Annual Wildlife
Education Day -
October 23rd!**

**A fun day for kids (of ALL
ages) and families.**

- See Page 10 for details

General Membership Meetings



Palo Alto Arts Center**

Newell & Embarcadero Rds

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00



Wednesday, September 15th
**“Farallon Islands Natural
History”**
with Peter White

Twenty-seven miles west of the Golden Gate are the Farallon Islands. In season, these granite outcrops host the largest seabird breeding colony in the contiguous United States when 300,000 birds of twelve species gather on the islands to nest. In addition, the islands serve as a breeding or hauling out site for five species of pinniped. Join us as Pete, author of *The Farallon Islands, Sentinels at the Golden Gate*, discusses the islands’ human and natural history.

Photos Above:

*Left: A Tufted Puffin at the Farallon Islands,
©Peter White.*

*Right: A juvenile Burrowing Owl getting banded.
©Steve Simmons*

Wednesday, October 20th
**“Cavity Nesting Birds:
One Person Can Make a
Difference”**
with Steve Simmons

Taking an organized approach to the role of male and female relations, Bob will relate unique behavioral facts for many species, including wonderful personal experiences from his many years of watching nesting birds as a researcher and teacher. Come enjoy Bob Stewart’s fascinating show on behaviors of birds we think we know, but have lots more to learn about when it comes to their intimate lives.

**** PLEASE NOTE:** As of January 1st, Monthly General Meetings will be held at the Cubberly Community Center in Palo Alto.

Translation: there is no amount or type of action that will lower the harm to habitat and species to less than substantial. The project would consume habitat that is essential for the survival of critically endangered species and a unique bird community.

California Audubon emphasized that the Panoche Valley has been designated an Important Bird Area of Global Significance,

(continued on page 9)

- ❖ *Annual End-of-Season CNRP Meeting*
– Page 3
- ❖ *Special Workshop for Local Nest Box Monitors and Coordinators*
– Page 5
- ❖ *Late Spring Vagrants Bring Color to Birders*
– Field Notes, Page 6
- ❖ *Movie Matinee at the Tech Museum!*
– Page 9
- ❖ *In Memoriam: Bill Lane & Nancy Palmer*
– Page 11

Sept-Oct '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 Sept. 1, 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 Sept. 4, 8:00 AM

Arastradero Preserve

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west approx. 1/2 mile to Arastradero Rd. Turn right and meet at the parking lot located 1/2-mile on the right. Woodland and grassland species as well as a good assortment of raptors are possible. Trip involves two plus miles of moderately strenuous walking. **RC**

Sunday Sept. 5, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Jim Johnson (408) 996-3506. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward the hills then left on Toyon Ave. then right on Penitencia Creek Rd and continue on into the park. Drive under the bridge and meet at the far end of the parking lot. Possible entrance fee, trip is a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk. **LO, RC**

Saturday Sept. 11, 8:00 AM

Almaden Lake Park and Alamos Creek

Half day. Leader: Janna Pauser (408) 569-9264. Meet at the bathrooms (blue building) near the east entrance to Almaden Lake Park (note: parking is free on Winfield Blvd). From Highway 85 take Almaden Expressway south, turn left on Coleman Road and then right on Winfield Blvd. Expect about 3 miles of easy walking. We will bird the lake and the trail upstream looking for waterfowl, raptors, and a wide variety of riparian birds. Hoped for species include Western Tanager and Yellow Warbler with possible Willow Flycatcher and Nutmeg Mannikin. **LO, RC**

Sunday Sept. 12, 8:00 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill

take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right towards the Model Airplane Park (street is unnamed). Follow the road for 1/4 mile and park in the gravel lot at the first bend in road (meet at the gate if the entrance is locked). **RC**

Wednesday Sept. 15, 8:30 AM

Moss Landing & Elkhorn Slough

Half day. Leader: Todd Newberry. ((831) 426-8741. Meet at Jetty Rd. and Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Highlights: gulls, terns, ducks, shorebirds, raptors. Bring snacks, water. Note: this is the THIRD Wednesday in September.

Saturday Sept. 18, 9:00 AM

Point Reyes

Full day. Leader: Peter LaTourette (650) 961-2741. Our annual trip to the west coast's most active vagrant trap where birds and the weather are always exciting and unpredictable! From Hwy .1 in Marin Co. take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. west approx. 14 miles and turn left to Drakes Beach. Meet in the parking area. Bring lunch, liquids, a full tank of gas, and be ready for fog, wind, sun and lots of difficult to ID birds. Be prepared to carpool from Drakes Beach.

Sunday Sept. 19, 9:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. From Hwy.101 in Mt. View take San Antonio Rd. north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at the entrance nearest San Antonio Road. This trip recommended for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. Bring your spotting scope and a friend.

Saturday Sept. 25, 7:30 AM

Sunnyvale Baylands Park

Half Day. Leader: Pat Kenny (408) 725-0468. From Hwy 237 take the Lawrence Expwy./Caribbean Dr. exit toward Caribbean Dr. Turn right into the park at the first stoplight on Caribbean Dr. north of Hwy 237. Meet in the first parking lot to the right of the entrance kiosk (Note: a \$6.00 parking fee may be required). There will not be much walking in this field trip as we will instead concentrate on checking and re-checking the trees in a few spots in the park that can be productive for fall migrants. **RC**

Sunday Sept. 26, 8:30 AM

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. Take Hwy 84 (Dumbarton Bridge) east to Newark. Exit right at Thornton, then go left on overpass. As Thornton becomes Paseo Padre, turn left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd into park. Meet at far end of Quarry parking lot located on the left, 1/4 mile past park entrance. Entrance fee required. **LO, RC**

Saturday Oct. 2, 8:00 AM

Moss Landing & vicinity

Half day. Leader: Todd Newberry, Santa Cruz Bird Club (831) 426-8741. Meet in the parking lot north of the Elkhorn Slough Bridge just off Highway #1 in Moss Landing at the Sea Harvest Restaurant. Weather conditions can be highly variable so dress in layers, bring lunch and liquids. Highlights: Shorebirds, waterfowl and early migrants.

Sunday Oct. 3, 8:00 AM

Windy Hills OSP

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. Meet in the parking lot at Sausal Pond edge of the preserve. From I-280 in Portola Valley take Alpine Rd. south (toward hills) about 2.9 miles to the first stop sign, turn right on Portola Rd and go 0.8 miles to the parking lot on the left side of the road just past the entrance to The Sequoias. **RC**

Wednesday Oct. 6, 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 Sept 1st.

Saturday Oct. 9, 8:00 AM

Carmel River

Half day plus. Leader: Kathy Parker (408) 358-2832. Take Highway 1 south to Carmel, turn left at Rio Rd., and then immediately turn right into the Crossroads Shopping Center. Meet near the back, southwest corner of the shopping center near Safeway and the river. Bring lunch and liquids or buy food at the meeting place. Temperatures vary, so bring extra layers of clothing. Rubber boots optional as there may be puddles in the riverbed.

Sunday Oct. 10, 8:00 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. For directions see the write-up for Sept 12. **RC**

Saturday Oct. 16, 8:00 AM

Elkhorn Slough, Moss Landing, Moon Glow Dairy, Zmudowski State Beach & the Pajaro River Mouth

Half day plus. Leader: Rick Fournier – (831) 633-0572 or awarbler@aol.com. Meet in the parking lot just north of the Elkhorn Slough Bridge just off Highway #1 in Moss Landing at the Sea Harvest Restaurant. With fall at hand, we will bird the watershed looking for returning ducks, shorebirds, wintering land birds and reported vagrants. Plan on birding through lunch (stopping at Phil's Snack Shack) and finishing up in the early afternoon. Bring food and liquids. Dress in layers.

Sunday Oct. 17, 9:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. See write-up for Sept 19th.

Wednesday Oct. 20, 8:30 AM

Ogier Ponds & Coyote Valley

Half day. Leader: Janna Pauser. ((408)997-1727. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right towards Model Airplane Park (unofficially Tailspin Rd.) Follow road for 1/2 mile, park in gravel lot at first bend in road. We'll survey the ponds for ducks and migrants then look for hawks in Coyote Valley. Bring snacks, water. Note: this is the THIRD Wednesday in October.

Saturday Oct. 23, 7:30 AM

Local Hot Spots

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. We'll meet at the Alviso Marina. From Hwy 237 in San Jose take Gold St. north to the end of the street, bear left on Elizabeth St. and then right on Hope St. to the Marina parking lot. A chance to visit some of the local hot spots you hear about and, we hope, to see some "good" birds.

Saturday Oct. 23, 8:00-10:00 AM

"Early Bird" Shorebird Walk at Charleston Slough - RSVP REQUIRED.

As part of Wildlife Education Day (see page 10), we'll share the wonder of the wetlands with local families. Great for children and beginners. **RSVP at 408-252-3740.**

Sunday Oct. 24, 9:00 AM

Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands

Full day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 891-3187. **Note:** Please call Nick to confirm the meeting place due to uncertainty of scheduled work that will close the primary Hawk viewing site. If Hawk Hill is open to the public then go north on Hwy. 101,

after crossing the Golden Gate Bridge exit just past the Vista Point, cross under Hwy 101 and turn right just before entrance back onto Hwy. 101 south. Drive up hill to the highest point and park. Meet at the parking area or at the Hawk watch on top of the hill. Highlights: Migrating raptors including the possibility of seeing a rare Broadwing Hawk. Weather conditions can be highly variable, dress in layers, bring lunch and liquids. **NOTE:** This will be our only field trip to the Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands this fall. Heavy fog in the headlands will likely cancel the trip.

Saturday Oct. 30, 8:30 AM

Grant Ranch County Park

Half day. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on Hamilton Rd. and go approximately 9 miles to the park. Meet at Grant Lake (aka Hall's Valley Lake) parking lot, which is the first parking lot on the left side of the road (do not enter the Main Park Entrance on the right). Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds and possible Golden Eagle. A Park entrance fee will be required for the last half of the trip. This will be a moderate 2 mile walk. **LO, RC**

Sunday Oct. 31, 8:30 AM

Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (650) 961-1505. From Hwy 101 take Hwy. 237 east, exit North on Caribbean Dr., turn right on Borregas Ave. then left to the parking area. This is a great place to study ducks. Trip is fairly easy but a long walk is possible. Scopes are highly recommended. **RC**

Saturday Nov. 6, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Rich Page (408) 377-1092. For directions see the write-up for Sept. 5th. Expect a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk, looking for resident birds (possible Rufous-Crowned Sparrow, and American Dipper if we are lucky), migrants and early wintering birds. Possible entrance fee. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 7, 9:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Dick Stovel (650) 856-6105. Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. This is a trip that is geared toward the beginning birder but all are encouraged to attend. Bring a scope if you have one, friends and non-members are always welcome. **Note: Daylight Savings Time change for 2010 - fall back or be an hour early for this trip.**

SCVAS Events

Calendar:

Wed. 9/1 & 10/6, 7-9PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers Meeting

Lucy Evans Interpretive Cntr, Palo Alto

Topic: TBA - go to www.scvas.org/babp for details

Tues. 9/14 & 10/12, 9:30AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group

- meets at the home of Pat Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264

Topic 9/14: Sooty Shearwater

Topic 10/12: Black-capped Vireo

Thurs. 9/16, 7-9PM

Cavity Nesters Recovery Program

(CNRP) End-of-Season Meeting

McClellan Ranch Park

All monitors are invited to attend. We'll all introduce ourselves, talk about the season, get a chance to ask questions, look at the data that has been submitted and bring closure to the 2010 nest box season. Please remember to submit your data online before the 16th! Go to <http://www.eichlerrealtor.com/birds3/>

Sat. 10/9; 1:15-4:30PM

SCVAS Movie Matinee: "Reversing the Trend" and "Ghost Bird"

San Jose Tech Museum

See page 9 for details

Wed. 10/20, 2:30-4:30PM

California Bluebird Recovery

Program (CBRP) Workshop Series

McClellan Ranch Park

RSVP required at 408-252-3740

See page 5 for details

Sat. 10/23, 8-10AM

Wildlife Ed Day Celebration: Early

Bird Shorebird Walk

Charleston Slough, Mountain View

See page 10 for details

Sat. 10/23, 10AM-2PM

Wildlife Education Day

McClellan Ranch Park

See page 10 for details

Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg

SCVAS Programs Coordinator

Can you smell that? That wonderful scent of pencils, papers, crayons, textbooks and backpacks (and yes – laptops, too) that signals the start of the new school year! And as happens every year, teachers and families start thinking about new ways to make learning fun. One of the ways they [fortunately] accomplish that is by requesting programs through SCVAS – which keeps all of our volunteers very busy indeed!

If you're interested in education or working with children, this is definitely the perfect time to get involved. But, we have a lot of other opportunities – office assistance, committee participation, and more – that will fit any interest and any schedule. Here are just a few pressing needs, but these, and many more, are also listed on our website under "Get Involved."

Wildlife Education Day Support – As our largest annual event, Wildlife Education Day fields an abundance of ways in which you can volunteer. With wonderful interactive booths, environmental organizations, educational presentations, live animals, a poster contest, raffle, and much more, this fun-filled affair will require a lot of volunteer support weeks before the event as well as on the big day – Saturday, October 23 (see page 10 - or online at www.scvas.org/WildlifeFestival - for more details). Check out these many and varied ways YOU can help:

Prior to the Event:	Prep
Poster Contest Coordinator	Classroom Presenter (CA Wildlife, fully-scripted)
Publicity	
Mailing Support/ Handout	
Day of the Event:	Nest Box Building Station
Set Up	Event Photographer (camera can be provided)
Registration	Parking
Nature Arts & Crafts	Clean Up
High School Volunteer Coordinator	And so much more!

Wetlands Discovery Program Docent (Note: this one comes up a lot because we can always use more volunteers to help keep this program running smoothly. It's also one of our most FUN programs!) – This program, our flagship educational program, shares the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with third through sixth graders throughout Santa Clara County. In fact, SCVAS is well known for this well-designed and engaging program, and we often have more schools inquiring than we have room for! Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat both in the classroom and out in the field. This program is rewarding for both volunteers and the hundreds of South Bay children who participate (13 schools and 1151 students in 2009-2010!). **No previous birding or field trip experience is necessary**, as we will provide training for both field and class sessions. All a potential docent needs is a love of nature and a desire to share it with children.

Educational Presenters – With the school year approaching, we will need more volunteers to fill requests for educational presentations in classrooms k-12 throughout Santa Clara County. You can use slideshows, stuffed birds, and real nests to teach youth about local birds and their habitat. These presentations are engaging and come fully scripted. No experience is necessary though teaching and birding experience are helpful. Time commitment is flexible, and scheduling is based on classroom and volunteer availability.

Family Field Trip Leaders – During the Spring and Fall, SCVAS receives many requests for after-school and weekend field trips for families. We need additional volunteers who are comfortable leading small groups (up to 15 people) for about 2 hours, focusing on birds, habitat, and community interactions, particularly around Charleston Slough in Mountain View. Experienced birders and/or field trip leaders are desired, but we will train anyone that is interested, and pair new leaders with "veterans" until they become comfortable leading trips on their own. Time commitment is flexible, and based upon seasonal requests and volunteer availability.

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** is also 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.

Applications are due by Sept 10th.

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 Seminar The Shorebirds of San Francisco Bay with Bob Power

From instantly identifiable to perpetually perplexing, we'll look at the common and not so common shorebirds of the San Francisco Bay, and the many surprises of Hayward Reg. Shoreline. The field trip will be a leisurely and flat stroll to Ora Loma Marsh where we'll be putting our identification skills to work. 3 miles roundtrip.

Date: Fri, 9/24; 9AM-2PM

Location: Hayward Regional Shoreline, Winton Avenue Staging Area. Fee: \$25 members; \$30 non-members.

Class size limited to 15. Carpooling is strongly encouraged.



Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers
©Tom Grey



Snow Geese in the Central Valley
©Tom Grey

A Look Ahead: Winter Birding California's Central Valley with Lisa Myers

Winter is a spectacular time of year to be a California birder and the Central Valley provides valuable habitat for the millions of birds that migrate here each fall. This class will focus on the many beautiful species that flock to California's Central Valley each winter - from swans, geese and ducks to the wintering cranes, raptors and passerines. Beginning birders are most welcome as well as any who wish to bone up on their wintering species.

Dates: Classes: Mon. 11/1, 11/8, 11/15; 6:30-8:30PM; Field Trips: Sat. 11/6; 8AM-12PM; Sat. 11/13, 7:30AM-4PM.

Locations: Classes: McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino. Field Trips: 11/6 - Local Hot Spots; 11/13 - Central Valley Hot Spot.

Fee: \$70 members; \$80 non-members.

Class size limited to 20.

California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) Workshop with Steve Simmons

Wednesday, October 20th

2:30-4:30PM

McClellan Ranch Park,
Cupertino

RSVP required at 408-252-3740



Photo: Barn Owls and Western Bluebirds share nest box locations in Merced.

Photo ©Steve Simmons

All monitors and coordinators are invited to attend. We'll be joined by Steve Simmons, 38 year veteran of bird banding and nest box monitoring in Merced County, as he shares his techniques, protocols, successes and lessons learned. He currently monitors 850 nest boxes for a wide variety of species.

Current CNRP Monitors:

The end of the breeding season is upon us, so don't forget to **submit your data!** Our end-of-the-season meeting, on Sept 16th, depends on having information to share, so please don't procrastinate!

The online database is the preferred method for receiving year-end data - go to <http://www.eichlerrealtor.com/birds3/>.

Contact us at programs@scvas.org with any questions.

Field Notes

(June-July 2010)

By Bill Bousman

Geese through Ibis

Cackling Geese are rare in summer, so one at Lake Cunningham on 15 Jun (JPa) and another at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 27 Jul (WGB) were of interest. A few **Blue-winged Teal** lingered into early summer. Two males were seen in the Sunnyvale WPCP oxidation ponds on 5 Jun (JTh) and a pair was in the Mountain View Forebay the same day (WGB). Another pair was found in Artesian Slough on 14 Jun (DWe). There were scattered sightings of **Lesser Scaup** over the summer period. A female with eight ducklings was found next to the Sunnyvale WPCP oxidation ponds on 14 Jul (WGB). They also nested there last year. Oversummering **Common Goldeneyes** were a surprise. An immature male was found on closed refuge ponds on 27 Jun (MJM, RGJ). A female was in Pond A2E on 13 and 18 Jul (WGB, MMR), another female was on a closed refuge pond on 25 Jul (MJM, RGJ), and two females were seen on Pond A11 in Alviso on 31 Jul (JTh). Although we have had a few goldeneyes lingering into early June in past years, we have no prior July records. The high count for summering **Eared Grebes** was a total of seven in three locations on 5 Jun (WGB, JTh). Surprisingly, an immature in 1st-fall plumage was seen at the SCRWA ponds on 27 Jul (WGB), its parents must have nested nearby. A **Clark's Grebe** was seen carrying nesting material on the south end of Coyote Reservoir on 3 Jun (JAC), but it does not appear that nesting was successful. Our only prior breeding records were from Calaveras Reservoir in the 1990s. **Brown Pelicans** were found at mostly typical locations with a high count of 11 on Pond A11 in Alviso on 21 Jul (WGB). Less expected was a juvenile inland at Calero Reservoir on 29 Jun (AV). A **Brandt's Cormorant** was seen in Pond A10 in Alviso on 27 Jun (MJM, RGJ), the second found this year. An adult **Cattle Egret** was on Pond A17 in Alviso on 31 Jul (WGB). Single **White-faced Ibis** lingered, following their spring influx. One was seen at the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 10 Jun (RWR, FV) and the other on Pond A16 (DWe).

The Avocet 6

Bald Eagles through Black Skimmers

Two nestling **Bald Eagles** at the Calaveras Reservoir nest were seen through 11 Jun (CVR, LVR, DWe) and likely fledged shortly thereafter. An adult seen near Coyote Reservoir on 6 Jun (JPa, AMcD) was likely one of the pair that nested there. Two juveniles seen nearby on 12 Jun (RCP, BM) suggest that the young from this nest have successfully fledged. Another juvenile was seen along Sierra Road on 18 Jun (RWR, FV) and may be one of the Calaveras young. An adult was found

Late spring vagrants included a Red-eyed Vireo, an American Redstart, and an Indigo Bunting.

regularly at Calero Reservoir 23 Jun-6 Jul (JPa) and likely another adult was seen at Chesbro Reservoir on 21 Jul (JPa). This reservoir linkage was completed with one at Lexington Reservoir on 28 Jul (SS). A juvenile **Virginia Rail** was seen at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 14 Jul (WGB). First fall migrants usually arrive at the end of the month. Either this bird arrived early or was the result of local nesting. Up to nine **Snowy Plovers** returned to New Chicago Marsh 13 Jun-31 Jul (MJM, RGJ, v.ob.). At least one pair nested there with two young found on 24 Jul (MDo) and three noted the next day (MJM, RGJ). One to six birds were on Pond A12 3-25 Jul (JTh, WGB, MJM, RGJ). A single bird was seen in a closed refuge pond on 25 Jul (MJM, RGJ). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the



American Redstart
©Pete LaTourrette

SCRWA ponds in Gilroy on 29 Jun (MJM) was both early and at an inland location. The normal passage began slowly with three birds in New Chicago Marsh on 24 Jul (MDo) and one in Pond A16 on 31 Jul (WGB). We hit the turnstone jackpot on 25 Jul with an alternate **Ruddy Turnstone** on the Pond A13/A15 levee (MJM, RGJ) and a juvenile **Black Turnstone** in Pond A16 (WGB). The Ruddy was seen again the next day (v.ob.), but the Black did not remain. An adult **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was seen in New Chicago Marsh on 17 Jul (WGB). Searching the same spot the next day turned up another adult (AME, RWR, FV, DWe, MMR) which remained through 19 Jul (MJM). July normally brings **Wilson's Phalaropes** in the hundreds or thousands. Seventeen birds on Pond A16 on 13 Jun (AMcD) were the first arrivals, but the phalarope spigot shut down. The high count for July was just the three seen in New Chicago Marsh on 4 Jul (DWe), otherwise birds just came in ones and twos. The **Red-necked Phalarope** passage is a little later. The first arrivals were the 19 counted on Pond A16 on 21 Jun (FV). The high count was 605 birds on Pond A12 on 21 Jul (WGB). No **Least Terns** were found staging in the county last year, so it was nice that this year they once again were staging on Pond A2E, from 5 Jul to the end of the period (DWe, v.ob.). The peak count was 89 on 18 Jul (MMR). Two foraging birds were also seen over Pond A10 on 25 Jul (MJM, RGJ) and an adult and two immatures were over Pond A16 on 31 Jul (WGB). Up to four **Black Skimmers** were seen in areas where they have nested in past years, but no breeding evidence was observed (v.ob.).

Swifts through Phainopepla

There were a scattering of reports of **Vaux's Swifts** from areas where they are assumed to nest. Again this year, a family of swifts used a chimney in the Almaden Valley. A swift was seen entering the chimney 16 Jul and young were heard. An apparent family group of seven birds was seen over the area on 21 Jul (both JPAs). A male **Costa's Hummingbird** was heard giving its courtship display in a burn area of Henry Coe SP on 23 Jun (MMR). It is a rare breeder in the eastern Diablo Range. The pair of **Pileated Woodpeckers** nesting in Mt. Madonna CP raised one youngster that fledged a day or two after 12 Jun (DP).

Field Notes *cont'd*

Other birds during the period were found at Monte Bello OSP and Sanborn-Skyline CP (v.ob.). Spring migrant **Willow Flycatchers** are found in about one year in two, so one seen in Monte Bello OSP on 10 Jun (GHa) was a good find. The nesting **Cassin's Kingbirds** on San Felipe Road raised two young, which fledged about 3 Jul (RCP, v.ob.). Another Cassin's was seen near the IBM Almaden Research Center on 17 Jun (JPa). A singing **Red-eyed Vireo** was found on the Stanford campus on 8 Jun (RFu) and through quick communication was seen by many before sunset. This is our fourth record for the county and the first in spring. A male and female **Purple Martin** were seen along a burn survey route in Henry Coe SP on 13 Jun (SCR). Martins have not nested in the Diablo Range for many years, but they are attracted to burn areas. Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported at a feeder in Mountain View near Springer and El Monte on 15 Jun (*fide* CJC), they have been more or less present since February. Otherwise, these nuthatches were found only in the coniferous forests along the Santa Cruz Mountain crest where they nest. A **Canyon Wren** was singing along a burn survey route in Henry Coe SP on 23 Jun (MMR). Late **Cedar Waxwings** included five on Geng Road in Palo Alto and five more at the Palo Alto WQCP on 5 Jun (both MMR), one on a burn survey route in Henry Coe SP on 12 Jun (RCP), and one at the Palo Alto Baylands on 15 Jun (v.ob.). A male **Phainopepla** was found on a burn survey route in Henry Coe SP on 12 Jun (RCP).



Warblers through Goldfinches

A 2nd-year male **American Redstart** was singing at the Palo Alto Baylands on 13 Jun (SG), but did not linger. A singing **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was seen on Pine Ridge above the Coe Ranch on 5 Jun (RH). No breeding evidence of this warbler in the Diablo Range was obtained during the atlas period, but there are historical records. More expected, a juvenile Yellow-rump along Skyline Boulevard on 5 Jul (WGB) is representative of the small Santa Cruz Mountain population. An adult female **MacGillivray's Warbler** was found in Monte Bello OSP on 7 Jul and again on 25 Jul (GHa). This bird rarely breeds in the county and it may have been a dispersant from areas west of the crest where they do nest. Singing **Yellow-breasted Chats** continued to be found along Llagas Creek near the SCRWA ponds with observations of two on 10 Jun (RWR, FV), one or two on 29 Jun (MJM), and one on 27 Jul (WGB). Less expected was a bird at the Alviso EEC on 21 Jun (DWe). A **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** was singing in an urban area near Tulare Hill on 24 Jun (MJM) and a second bird was seen carrying nest material. We have no prior records of this bird nesting away from wildlands. Single male **Blue Grosbeaks** were found along the Pajaro

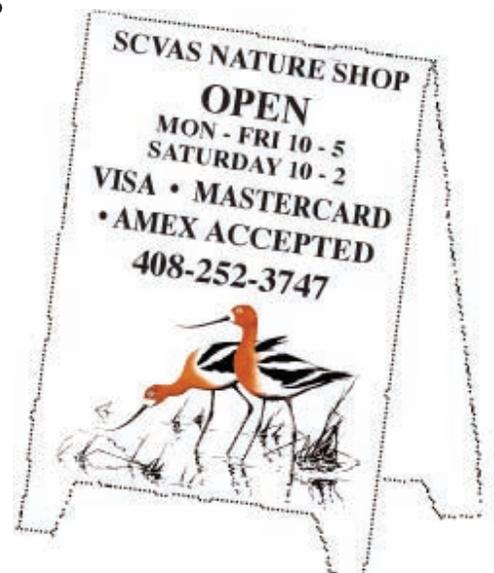
River below Hwy 101 on 10 Jun (RWR, FV) and 13 Jun (WGB) in separate locations. A male **Indigo Bunting** was found at Monte Bello OSP on 5 Jun (ViT et al.) and remained there at least through 9 Jun (v.ob.). Two males were seen there last summer. The only **Great-tailed Grackle** found during the period was a male flying along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 12 Jun (JTh). All of our summer records of **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were of birds found on or near burn survey routes in Henry Coe SP through 30 Jun (v.ob.). High counts included 10 on 12 Jun (BM), 9 on 30 Jun (MMR), and 7 on the same survey on 13 Jun (MMR). Nest building was observed on another survey route on 13 Jun (SCR).

Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), Jack Cole (JAC), Charles Coston (CJC), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Al Eisner (AME), Rob Furrow (RFu), Sandy Greenberg (SGr), Garth Harwood (GHa), Rick Herder (RH), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Bruce Mast (BM), Amy McDonald (AMcD), Janna Pauser (JPa), Dennis Porter (DP), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Steve Sefanik (SS), Jim Thomas (JTh), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Chuq Von Rospach (CVR), Laurie Von Rospach (LVR), and Dave Weber (DWe).

RARITIES: Please drop me a note:
Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way,
Menlo Park, CA 94025,
or: barlowi@earthlink.net

The SCVAS Board of Directors Welcomes New Board Member Julio Mulero

The balance is tipping toward the photographic crowd on the board, and we couldn't be happier! An active member of the chapter for the last 5 (or more) years, and a contributing member of the Bay Area Bird Photographers, Julio brings with him a passion for nature, diversity, and of course birds! We look forward to working with him and hope for great things to come.



Conservation Corner

by Shani Kleinhaus

SCVAS Environmental Advocate (EA)

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

Panoche Valley Solar Development (see article on page 1, also): Shani is working on comments for the Solargen Draft Environmental Impact Report, due at the end of August. You can help by posting comments on media stories such as: www.freelancenews.com/news/267462-three-groups-focus-on-environment-in-solargen-opposition.

Water Pollution Control Plant Master Plan (WPCP) Alternatives. In May 2010, after a three-year effort, the WPCP planning team revealed three land use alternatives for the Plant Master Plan. Many of our members felt that the alternatives were so similar, that they failed to provide an adequate range of alternatives for good planning. In addition, the alternatives funneled comments to a set of pre-determined criteria, all enabling the development of retail or industrial land uses.

In June, SCVAS led an alliance of environmental groups in submitting a position paper to the WPCP planning team. The Committee for Green Foothills, Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance, Save The Bay, Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition, Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and San Francisco Baykeeper all joined the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society in arguing that all three alternatives inherently provide the same option – significant development unrelated to the water treatment purpose of the plant, and significant development unrelated to the current and historical ecology of the Bay, the land and nature in the area.

We urged planners to return to the drawing table and create a fourth alternative that would allow developed land uses solely for development addressing the water treatment purpose of the plant. All other land uses should be based on



Burrowing Owl family at Shoreline Park
Photo ©James Robenolt

the existing environment, view-sheds, ecology, connectivity, the historic Bay ecology and environment, and recreational uses consistent with the ecology and the nature of the land and its restoration. We asked that this fourth, “Environment, Ecology and Water Alternative”, be offered to the public for review.

A sample of other conservation issues: Burrowing Owls

- SCVAS volunteers were treated to two nights of **Owls and Fireworks** at Shoreline Park. The City of Mountain View and the staff of Shoreline invited us to guard Burrowing owl nests from the crowds that came to Shoreline to watch Fireworks July 3rd and 4th. Fourteen of us participated in the effort and enjoyed viewing a pair of owls take care of 6 chicks, and magnificent firework displays.
- Our EAC Volunteers continue to survey and monitor Burrowing Owl population throughout Santa Clara County
- SCVAS participated as a stakeholder in five years of planning for the Santa Clara County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Habitat Plan is now coming to a close and the Burrowing Owl conservation strategy is still up in the air. We are advocating with the City of San Jose, which owns lands that are critical to the plan, to provide assurances and dedicate sufficient land for Burrowing Owl conservation.



The “Owl Guardians” of 2010 get ready for the 4th of July.
Photo ©James Robenolt

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

- Join our Environmental Action Committee and get involved in our advocacy efforts. 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 biodiversity are threatened in your community.

Outside Events

Thurs. 9/23-Sun. 9/26

Sixth Annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival: “The California Coast – From Condors to Snowy Plovers”

Watsonville, CA

Designed for birders of all levels, as well as outdoor lovers, the festival offers a unique opportunity to explore, learn

about and appreciate world-class habitats such as the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Pinnacles National Monument. You’ll be able to go to outings in the mountains, shoreline, chaparral, sloughs and grasslands. All of our field trips are led by top quality, local, friendly leaders.

Other workshops and outings will focus on photography, Raptor identification, and seeing the world through an artist’s eyes. For more information or to register, go online to www.montereybaybirding.org.



Panoche Valley *(cont. from page 1)*

particularly for large wintering flocks of mountain plovers and a dozen other breeding or wintering sensitive bird species. The EIR states that Mountain Plovers (currently being considered for listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act) are “expected to be permanently displaced from the project site”. Defenders of Wildlife focused on five additional endangered species, including the San Joaquin Kit Fox, Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard and Giant Kangaroo Rat. The EIR found unmitigable impacts to these species, and Defenders emphasized that the Panoche Valley is one of only three core areas that is designated for the survival of the San Joaquin Kit Fox and many other species that were once common in the California’s Central Valley.

An alternative that was discussed, but dismissed by the EIR, is currently getting the support of the environmental community, including the Sierra Club: placing utility-sized solar projects on retired farmlands in the Westlands Water District in western Fresno and Kings Counties. In these areas, where the lands are tainted by high salinity and contamination of the soil, water for agriculture is in short supply and, unlike more natural areas, these lands attract little wildlife.

Thus, many of us told the San Benito County Planning Commissioners, “We understand that in a tough economy counties gravitate to projects that promise much-needed income, but at the

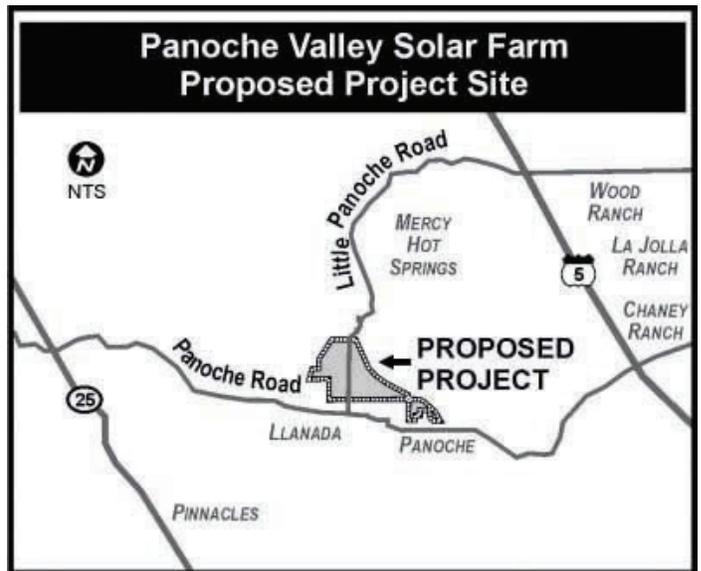


Image from: Hollister Free Lance News, July 22nd, 2010

same time, we can’t trade one extraordinary resource for another.” We made the case for solar development in urban areas and in retired farming areas with no habitat value, and we urged the county to explore the potential for ecotourism that is inherent to its unique landscapes and biological assets.

SCVAS Movie Matinee at the Tech!

Saturday October 9th, 1:15-4:30PM

San Jose Tech Museum: Large Group Greeting Room – max capacity 63

This is a free event.

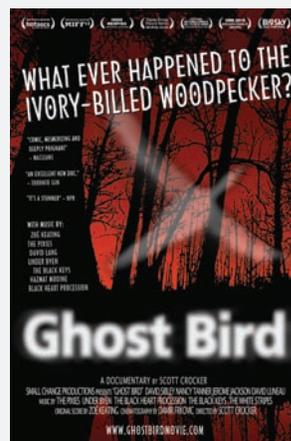
Doors open at 1:15PM., with a social mixer at 4:15PM



Burrowing Owls at Shoreline Park
©Tom Grey

1:45PM - Reversing the Trend: World Premiere of our own Burrowing Owl Documentary. Produced by SCVAS members/volunteers Caroline Armer & Jean Merrigan

2:15PM - Ghost Bird: “Ghost Bird” wades into a murky swamp of belief and obsession in this cautionary tale about birders, ornithologists and the citizens of Brinkley, Arkansas who are certain they keep seeing a giant woodpecker that’s been extinct for over half a century. A feature-length documentary by Scott Crocker (*go to www.ghostbirdmovie.com for more details*).



Praise for “Ghost Bird”

“This spellbinding documentary takes a small item from recent history...and turns it into a cosmic lament for the forest primeval and man’s search for environmental redemption.” New York Magazine

“Crocker has turned a bird-watching tale into a multilayered story that will fascinate practically everybody in ‘Ghost Bird,’ a witty, wistful documentary...” The New York Times

Birdhouse Building!



Join the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and local Nature and Environmental Organizations for

Environmental Groups from around the Bay Area!

Raffle Prizes!



Nature Arts and Crafts!

the 19th Annual Wildlife Education Day!

Saturday, October 23, 2010
10am-2pm

McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino



Environmental Presentations!



Live Animals - Birds of Prey, Snakes, Sharks, Insects - and more!



"Early Bird" Shorebird Walk
8:00 am @ Charleston Slough in Mountain View
RSVP Required for walk *only*

Annual Wildlife Poster Contest
Prizes and Awards announced @ 1:00 pm
Submission deadline 10/8



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General Parking @ Monta Vista High School w/ FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE,
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New Birdwatcher App for the iPhone to Benefit SCVAS

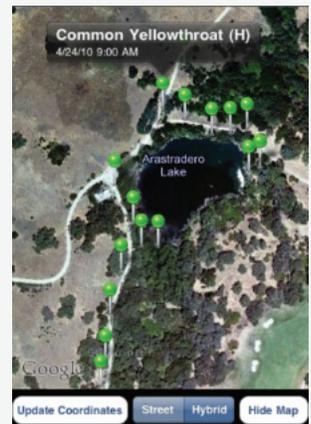
Longtime SCVAS members Steve Patt and Debi Jamison own a software development business called Stevens Creek Software. After twenty-two years of developing software for desktop computers and PalmOS handhelds, they now have turned their attention to iPhone applications. Their newest app is called Birdwatcher's Diary™ and they have announced that one-half of the proceeds (minus Apple's iTunes cut) from the sale of this app will go to SCVAS!



You can check out Birdwatcher's Diary at <www.stevenscreek.com> and at the iTunes store <<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/birdwatchers-diary/id372848006?mt=8>>. It has a lot of useful features that make time-consuming tasks with a paper and pencil list very easy and fast. It is especially helpful on Christmas bird counts, summer breeding counts, birdathons, and for anyone who likes to keep records of their bird sightings. Researchers and conservationists will find it very useful too for keeping records of specific species locations.

The program creates multiple lists including a life list, produces maps showing locations of sightings, shares files with your computer, uploads to eBird, and more.

If you decide to buy the software (\$9.99) and you like it, you can help increase sales and SCVAS's coffers by rating it and writing a review at the iTunes store. Steve and Debi are eager for feedback, and any marketing ideas you have to let other birders know about the software.



2010 Friends of SCVAS,
Gifts received between June 1st and July 31st, 2010

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Ann Rando in honor of Dotty Calabrese
Bob and Carol Taggart in memory of Joan Merigan

Organizational Support:

Johnson & Johnson Matching Gift Program, Yahoo Employee Foundation

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society lost two long time supporters in July and August. Our sympathies go out to their families and friends. They will be missed.

In Memoriam:

Bill Lane

Publisher, Founding Father, Ambassador, Naval Officer and Veteran, Philanthropist. There wasn't much that Bill Lane didn't accomplish in his long and active life. SCVAS will remember him for his long and dedicated support of our chapter.

Nancy Palmer

Bird lover, and long-time SCVAS member and donor, Nancy Palmer passed away on July 3rd surrounded by friends and family. She will be remembered for her enjoyment of learning and her steadfast support of SCVAS.

Take Action To Stop Cargill's Massive Salt Pond Development!

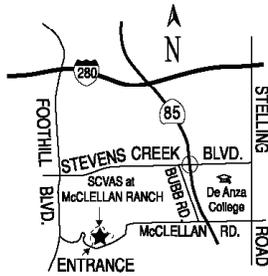
Cargill's development proposal in Redwood City would threaten San Francisco Bay and place up to 30,000 new residents in the path of rising seas. The entire 1,436 acres of salt ponds should be protected and restored to wetlands to benefit wildlife, water quality, residents and future generations. Go to www.DontPaveMyBay.org and urge the Redwood City council to immediately reject Cargill's destructive Bay fill proposal and promote full restoration of the site to protect the Bay Area's quality of life.



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GENERAL MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month except July, August and December and are open to the public.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (408) 252-3747 for times and directions.

RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422

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2010 Volume 57, Number 5

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Make all checks payable to SCVAS.

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