

THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

July-August 2012

The Horse and the Burrowing Owl: Can the Majestic Horses of Cavalia Help Save the Magical Burrowing Owls?

by Shani Kleinhaus

SCVAS Environmental Advocate

With the hot winds of early summer, Cavalia trotted to the City of San Jose and pitched its magnificent white tent on Atmel Drive. Within its magical realm, the Cavalia show crafts a fairy tale atmosphere that celebrates man, nature and lore in a harmonious integration of equestrian and performing arts, multimedia and special effects. With the temporary home of Cavalia immediately adjacent to a family of Burrowing Owls, we thought that the show created an ideal setting to tell the story of burrowing owls of the South Bay, and how development past, current and future threatens to relegate the owls to history, legend and myth: “once upon a time, burrowing owls lived in harmony with humans in the landscapes of our province” – but can there be a good ending to this story?

Only a few areas in the South Bay still support burrowing owls: San Jose Airport, Moffett Field, Shoreline Park in Mountain View, and a few vacant land tracts in North San Jose and Alviso. In San Jose, the remaining burrowing owl habitat is rapidly being converted to expansive parking lots surrounding office buildings. Owls still nest not far from the Cavalia site, but their nesting areas and foraging habitats are also slated for development. In 2010, the City of San Jose passed a resolution that exempts developers from mitigating for the loss of burrowing owl habitat in North San Jose. With several other jurisdictions, the City of San Jose is participating in a Habitat Conservation Plan that includes strategies for burrowing owl conservation, but this plan has yet to be approved, and development moves forward prior to the enactment of protection or compensation for the loss of habitat.

So when SCVAS learned that Cavalia is coming to town, we asked the show’s creator Normand Latourelle: would you help us tell the story of the burrowing owls of San Jose and the South Bay? Naturally, a creator of a show that celebrates the magical connection between horses, people and nature, opened his heart to the plight of the owls, and our request was granted. Mr. Latourelle and his team



Burrowing Owls
© Tom Grey

offered to help promote burrowing owls and our conservation efforts by highlighting the plight of the owls at the beginning of each show with a brief burrowing owl conservation video clip.

We hope that you, your family and your friends go to the Cavalia show this summer (opening July 11th) – it promises to be magnificent. At the start of the show, you will see the video clip, using footage from SCVAS volunteer Greg Kerekes. When you purchase tickets online, patrons will have the opportunity to donate a dollar to burrowing owl conservation. Cavalia will match this donation, and the Helen and Tom Armer family will do the same.

The summer of 2012: When the majestic horses of Cavalia came to the aid of the magical burrowing owls of San Jose. See a clip of the show at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4pcsZoxv3U>. Extraordinary!



Riders and their horses in CAVALIA
Photo credit: Lynne Glazer

**Calling All Kids:
Fill your summer with
wonder and discovery
- join one of our Young
Audubon Summer
Nature Adventures!
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- ❖ Stand-out “Volunteers of the Year” Honored – Page 4
- ❖ Learn & Explore with Audubon Field Seminars – Page 5
- ❖ Rare Visitors Are a Treat This Spring – Field Notes, Page 6
- ❖ “THANK YOU!” to All Birdathon Participants – Beginning on Page 9

July - Aug '12 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 4, No trip - Enjoy the Independence Day holiday!

All are encouraged to attend but birding will be geared toward the beginning birder.

Saturday July 14, 8:00 AM
Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. **Directions:** Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. **Difficulty Level:**

Saturday August 4, 8:30 AM
Ano Nuevo State Reserve

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** The entrance is along Highway 1 about 30 miles south of Half Moon Bay or 20 miles north of Santa Cruz.

Meet at the far (south) end of the parking lot. **Difficulty Level:** Plan on a 3-4 mile walk (half of it in sand), fog, bright sun and wind. **Highlights:** Possible birds include Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet and early returning shorebirds. **Notes:** Bring a scope, lunch, liquids, and dress in layers. There is a \$10 per car parking fee. **LO**

Sunday August 12, 9:00 AM
Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. For directions see the write-up for July 14th.

SCVAS Events Calendar:

Young Audubon Summer Series
(see page 8 - or online - for more details):

Tues-Fri 7/24-27; 9:00AM-3:00PM
SCVAS/MROSD Present:
Summer "Nature Days" Day Camp
Fun days to get outside and explore! Locations vary as we enjoy some of our beautiful local open space areas.
For all children entering grades 2-6.

Sat. 8/11; 8:00-10:00AM
Bird Banding with SFBBO
Coyote Creek Banding Station, Milpitas

Sat. 8/25; 7:45PM
Birds in the Night Sky
- with the Santa Clara
County Open Space Authority
Rancho Cañada del Oro, Morgan Hill
Learn all about the "other" birds in sky - the constellations of Cygnus the Swan, Aquila the Eagle, and more. We'll learn how to identify these celestial creatures and hear stories of how these (and other) constellations got their names. Open to **all ages**, but be prepared for a late night. **RSVP to 408-252-3740 or programs@scvas.org to coordinate carpools.**



Looking Ahead:

Sat. 9/8; 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.

Next Steps: A Summer at Del Tingo al Tango Science Camp

by Jasmine McBeath, 2011/2012 SCVAS Intern

Summer vacation is starting, and that means the Del Tingo al Tango science camp is right around the corner for the children of Alamos, Mexico. The name, Del Tingo al Tango, extends an invitation to students to travel "from here to there" observing, reflecting and having fun outdoors. The three week program capitalizes on the unique ecosystem where the Sonoran Desert and the Tropical Deciduous Forest meet, and plays upon the artistic and musical atmosphere of this colonial town, nominated a World Heritage Site.

Over 200 elementary age children participated in last year's program, founded and led by students from the University of Arizona. The program was comprised of classes and workshops in English, Geography, Art, and Music, all tied together by the theme of environmental awareness. These lessons provided summer enrichment activities for students who often only spend a few hours per day in school and lack proper educational supplies. Students attended birding workshops, experimented in science labs, and participated in nature hikes to better understand their responsibilities towards their "neighbors" (730 species of

tropical and desert wildlife). After learning about recycling, some students helped build their own recycling center from materials collected during a street cleaning activity; others made artwork out of the plastic bottles to decorate the Cultural Center. Students also created biome drawings and postcards to capture the beauty of birds and the mystery of pollination. A piano recital and art exhibit concluded the program.

This year's three-week program begins July 9th. The camp is entirely volunteer-run, endorsed by Pronatura Noroeste and partially funded by a grant from the Sonoran Joint Venture in Binational Bird Conservation. Interested in helping out? Contact campalamos@gmail.com or check out last year's website at http://alamosportfolio.com/PronaturaNoroeste/Del_Tingo_al_Tango.htm.

[Editor's note: Ms. McBeath just completed an internship with SCVAS, focusing on bilingual environmental education. Her contributions to both our Wetlands Discovery Program and community events were tremendous, and we wish her all the best in her next adventure!]



For the students at DTTSC, hands-on science lessons (like this squid dissection) are just one of the many reasons to participate

Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

Facebook is growing and the company plans to increase occupancy in its existing campus that borders Ravenswood Slough (East Campus) and the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, Facebook plans to develop new buildings and parking structures (West Campus).

Together with Sequoia Audubon Society, and in concert with several other local environmental organizations, SCVAS submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Project focusing on issues that could affect resident and migratory birds. The Final Environmental Impact Report, together with the Development Agreement, committed Facebook to many important actions. Among other commitments, Facebook will:

- Educate employees and visitors about the unique species in the wetlands and marshes and their habitat requirements.
- Engage in “wildlife-friendly” behavior, such as (a) adopting policies requiring the trapping and removal of feral cats (b) employing wildlife-safe rodent control measures, and (c) encouraging beneficial species (through, for example, the installation of bat houses).
- Minimize light pollution and minimize risks of bird collision with windows.

Google continues to plan this company’s growth in Mountain View and in Moffett Field. Google hopes to create a vibrant, round-the-clock community where people can live and work, walk, bike, dine and shop in North Bayshore. SCVAS has expressed

concerns for impacts on wildlife at Shoreline and within the North Bayshore area. We continue to work with the City of Mountain View and with Google with the goal of integrating nature and birds into a thriving community that values, preserves and enhances its natural habitats.

Apple is moving forward with plans for a new campus in Cupertino. Renderings on the City website show a transparent building surrounded by gardens and trees. SCVAS has alerted Apple to the risk of bird collisions with the glass buildings, and we continue discussing with Apple potential measures to reduce collision risks.

SCVAS comments on other projects (Mid Peninsula Open Space District development of Mt. Umunhum and the District’s Weed Management Plan; Plans for a replacement of sewer trunk at Shoreline Park, Mountain View; Newby Island Landfill in San Jose) resulted in the incorporation of additional mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts on birds and wildlife.

The Burrowing Owls of the South Bay now have a Facebook Page, for lovely photos of local owls and for news, please join <http://www.facebook.com/BurrowingOwlsOfTheSouthBay>.

Panoche Valley Following the ruling September 2011 that upheld the Environmental Review of the solar project in Panoche Valley, we filed an appeal of the court’s decision. We continue to raise funds for the appeal, and working closely with our attorney, Rose Zoia, to prepare the reply briefs.

Interns: Please welcome our Environmental Advocacy Interns Hillary Richardson and Adam Phillip.

For more information, or to volunteer for conservation and advocacy, please contact Shani (shani@scvas.org).

Cheesemans’ Ecology Safaris, our biggest supporters and favorite eco-tourism company on the planet, has made a very generous offer to support our chapter by sharing the proceeds from their upcoming Antarctica trip. Go to Antarctica, have a blast, have the trip of a lifetime AND support our work locally at the same time.



Zodiac cruising alongside a Humpback Whale

Antarctic Peninsula In-depth Expedition to the White Continent

December 30, 2012 to January 17, 2013



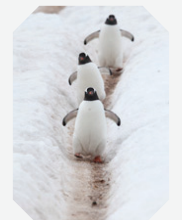
The expedition vessel, the Ortelius

Join us on a voyage of discovery to an awe-inspiring world devoted to nature, wildlife, science, and peace. Our expedition to the Antarctic Peninsula allows time for a vast breadth of landings beyond the realm normally traveled, unhurried and intimate with wildlife and landscapes, sites others are forced to omit or merely rush through. Board the safe and comfortable Ortelius for an unparalleled ten to eleven landing days along the Antarctic Peninsula. Enjoy extensive exploration of the remote and iceberg-filled Weddell Sea, the many wildlife-rich areas in the northern Peninsula and South Shetland Islands, and wonderful sites further south along the western Peninsula. Maximum time on shore will be available for photography, wildlife observation, and traversing the landscapes of the great Antarctic. Our priority is assuring the most in-depth wildlife experience in the Antarctic, an experience made possible by our comprehensive itinerary and committed expedition staff of Antarctic veterans.



Just one of many majestic iceberg views

For costs, more information or to reserve your space, go to www.cheesemans.com/antarctica_penin_dec12.html, email info@cheesemans.com, or call (800) 527-5330 (toll-free) or (408) 741-5330 (local).



Gentoo Penguin super highway

Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg, Programs Coordinator

Let me start this issue's column by first stating that I love my job! I love that I do something every day that makes a difference, I love the connections I have in the community, and I love who I get to work with. However, it definitely is a very busy job, one that keeps me constantly hopping. Which is why I stand a little in awe of all of the people that contribute their time to help with the many [many!] activities, events, meetings and so much more that this chapter is involved in - and still stay involved in many [many!] other commitments as well.

This, of course, is one of the reasons we select a few volunteers for special recognition each year. Here are the amazing volunteers we recognized at this year's annual June Potluck Dinner:

Ruth Troetschler – Environmental Action Committee and Burrowing Owl Conservation.

Ruth is one of those truly astounding volunteers that keep the mission of SCVAS alive and kicking. Her passionate voice for the protection and enhancement of habitat for native plants, bugs and birds has been heard throughout the county since the 1960s. She continually amazes us with her tireless dedication, spirited advocacy, and fierce support of SCVAS conservation programs.

Phil Higgins – Burrowing Owl Conservation.

If I thought I was busy, I only have to look at Phil's schedule to be completely humbled. Wearing many different hats, Phil has been a phenomenal resource in protecting burrowing owls and enhancing their habitat in Mountain View and in San Jose, and in garnering the energy of cohorts of college students in changing the landscape to improve burrowing owl habitat in Santa Clara County.

Charles Wade – Nest Box Building Coordinator

If you've ever gone for a walk at McClellan Ranch Preserve or any number of local parks and preserves, chances are, you've seen Chuck's handiwork. Chuck's tireless efforts of coordination and resource procurement have helped keep our nest box program (a.k.a. the Cavity Nesters Recovery Program) going strong for over a decade and a half. What's more, because of his generosity of time (and often, supplies), thousands of school children throughout the county have had the opportunity to feel pride in building their own nest box. Chuck is truly irreplaceable!

Lee Pauser - Cavity Nesters Recovery Program (CNRP)

When we ask people to consider becoming a CNRP monitor, we expect a once-a-week/breeding-season-only commitment with hopefully some data turned in at the end. But Lee goes so much farther! Always willing to advise on new nest box installations, his beautiful owl and kestrel boxes (among others) have been some of the most successful in the county. We - and the birds - are grateful for all his efforts!

Syd Hackworth - Office and Nature Shop Assistant

For the last year or so, Wednesday's have been a great day in the office - because that's when we know Syd will be here to

help us out. Her steady, reliable work in the nature shop has been a tremendous asset as we organize inventory and process our sales for the week. And her friendly, smiling demeanor is always guaranteed to make customers (and staff) feel welcome.

And a special thanks went to the following volunteers, who have recently stepped down:

Don Price - Financial Committee

Despite having officially "retired" from his financial responsibilities with SCVAS last year - after 31 years of service! - Don has continued to be a source of information, assistance and support whenever we need him.

Cynthia Berg - CBRP database

Cynthia took on the monumental task of helping to develop and maintain a workable online database for nest box programs throughout the state. Her database allowed us to sort, search, summarize and keep track of hundreds of trails and monitors - making the nest box program that much more robust!

Phyllis Swanson - 2nd Wednesday Field Trip Coordinator

Definitely a behind-the-scenes activity, coordinating the monthly field trips takes patience, attention to detail, and a good organizational sense. All of which Phyllis has demonstrated in spades. We're grateful for the many years' worth of quality field trips that she helped to make happen!

If you've been inspired by these volunteers, please check out just a few of the many available opportunities to help out listed below, and contact the Programs Coordinator at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org. We'd love to help you find the right match for your time, talents, and interests! You may also view the most current (and most pressing) volunteer positions online at www.scvas.org.

Wetlands Discovery Program Docents (Fall 2012) – You see this one on our "Volunteer Opportunities" list a lot, because it is one of our most visible, vital and volunteer-intensive activities - but so worth it! This program shares the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with 3rd-6th graders throughout Santa Clara County. Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat both in the classroom and out in the field. This program is rewarding for our volunteers and for the hundreds of South Bay children who participate (almost 1300 this year!). No 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.

Stevens Creek 50K/SCVAS Benefit Run – Volunteers are needed on Saturday, September 8th to help with a fun event for local runners that also helps raise money for SCVAS' many educational and conservation programs. Volunteer tasks will include course marking, staffing First Aid stations, and more. Please go to <http://www.stevenscreek.com/stevenscreek50k/stevenscreek-50kvolunteer.html> for more details on how you can help. Register through the main "Stevens Creek 50K" race page to volunteer.

Adult Education Classes - Summer 2012

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.



Tufted Puffin
by Pete LaTourrette

Birds of the Farallones

Stay tuned as we plan another amazing pelagic trip this summer! Check the online calendar (www.scvas.org - click on "Calendar") for details as they become available.

Audubon Field Seminar: 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, often the most beautiful, clearly the long-distance migration sweepstakes winner (Alberta to Argentina); you owe yourself a good visit with these magnificent raptors.

Date: Sat. 8/4; 7:00AM (south bay departure)-5:30PM (south bay arrival).

Location: Yolo County.

Fee: \$30 members; \$40 non-members.

Min: 8 students; **Max:** 16 students.

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



Swainson's Hawk
© Peter LaTourrette

Sketching Birds in Flight with Floy Zittin

{In case you missed the class in June, here's another chance to hone your field sketching skills}

Sketching can be great fun and a way to improve observation skills.

A few sketching tricks can enhance field notes and journaling; slightly more refined studies make great greeting cards or gifts. This class will cover techniques for capturing characteristics and personality of a bird in pencil, pen & ink, and watercolor wash. It is designed for beginning nature artists.

Date: Sat. 8/11; 9:00AM-12:00PM.

Location: McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino.

Fee: \$30 members; \$40 non-members. There will also be a \$6 materials fee (collected at class)

Min: 8 students; **Max:** 12 students



Sketches by Floy Zittin



Enjoy your summer months reading books from the vast collection of new and used bird books at the SCVAS Nature Shop and Library.

Outside Events of Interest

Sat. 8/18, 6:00PM

Center for Animal Protection & Education (CAPE) of Santa Cruz

Presents: Award-winning wildlife photographer Suzi Eszterhas
Center for Spiritual Living at 1818 Felt Street in Santa Cruz; For details, go to photographbysuzi.eventbrite.com

Looking ahead:

September 13-16
2012 Theme - "The Big
MONTEREY BAY Year"
BIRDING FESTIVAL Designed for seasoned

and beginning birders, as well as outdoor lovers, the festival offers a unique opportunity to explore, learn and appreciate world class habitats.

Go to www.montereybaybirding.org for more details and how to register

September 26-20
Western Field Ornithologists Conference

Petaluma, CA

For full details and to register, go to www.westernfieldornithologists.org

Field Notes

(April-May 2012)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Ibis

A flock of 15 **Greater White-fronted Geese** at Byxbee Park on 1 Apr (SZ, JBo) were probably off-course migrants. A 1st-winter bird at the Morgan Hill Community Park since December, has remained through the end of May (SCR). A 1st-winter **Snow Goose** found at Lake Cunningham on 7 Apr (JTh, SP et al.) graced a number of birdathons through 22 Apr. The only **Eurasian Wigeon** in the period was one at ponded areas near Los Esteros and Grand in Alviso on 15 Apr (RCP et al.). A **Blue-winged Teal** was seen in Artesian (Mallard) Slough in Alviso on both 14 and 21 Apr (RCP et al.). The last one of the spring was a male at the South County Regional Waste-Water Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 26 Apr (MJM, LCr). Six lingering **Redhead** in Pond A2E were last seen on 2 Apr (LSp). The female **Barrow's Goldeneye** that showed up in Shoreline Lake in mid-March was last seen on 1 Apr (GLa, JTh et al.). Seldom found in spring, a juvenile **Red-throated Loon** was discovered on Lexington Reservoir on 14 Apr (RPh et al.) and remained there at least another week. A basic **Common Loon** was seen on Shoreline Lake on 7 Apr (RCP et al.) and surprise, surprise, there were two together there on 15 Apr (WGB et al.). Both birds were last seen on 22 Apr (DWe) and the single bird on 29 Apr (RFu). Another basic bird was found on Calero Reservoir on 27 May (MMR). An **American Bittern** was seen in the entrance channel to the Mountain View Forebay on 14 Apr (RPh et al.), it was last seen there in mid-February. A breeding plumaged **Cattle Egret** showed up along Zanker Road by the sewage plant on 29 Apr (RFu). On 6 May, there were two birds there (MJM, MMR et al.). The last was seen there on 8 May (DWe). Spring is a good time locally for **White-faced Ibis**. One showed up along Artesian (Mallard) Slough in Alviso on 30 Apr (PDU) and a flock of 14 dropped off into New Chicago Marsh on 19 May (MJM).

Osprey through Shorebirds

An **Osprey** was seen on a nest in the Los Gatos Creek drainage in the same spot as in 2005-06 on 23 May (WGB). Of four known **Bald Eagle** nest sites, two were observed often in the period (m.ob.). Two young were first seen in the tower nest west of Calaveras Reservoir on 15 Apr (RCP) and are likely to fledge in June. Two young

Rare spring shorebirds included a Pacific Golden Plover and a Black Turnstone. Of the passerines an Eastern Kingbird and two Black-and-White Warblers led the charge.

were also produced in a nest off Hwy 152 northeast of Casa de Fruta. The nest was first discovered on 20 Apr (DLSu) and the first young were seen on 2 May (WGB). These are expected to fledge later in June. A nesting pair at Coyote Reservoir was building a nest in a new location on 14 Apr, and a bird was on a nest at Anderson Reservoir the same day (both RCP et al.). There are no subsequent details. At least one other mated pair has been observed north of Hwy 152, but there has been no evidence of nesting in that wild country (WGB et al.). We mostly find **Swainson's Hawks** during their spring and fall migrations. One was seen east of the Parkway Lakes on 15 Apr (LMy et al.), then three were found in the Coyote Valley 17-19 Apr (RPh et al., MJM). The last **Merlin** of the winter was one in Stevens Creek CP on 19 Apr (RFu). We seldom find **Prairie Falcons** away from the Diablo Range after February or March, so one along the Stevens Creek Reservoir on 22 Apr (BHi et al.) was a surprise. An alternate **Pacific Golden-Plover** seen in the New Chicago Marsh on 19-21 Mar (MJM, v.ob.) was apparently our third spring record. **Snowy Plovers** moved actively between the Alviso ponds and New Chicago Marsh during the period, with surveys providing counts of 27 on 29 Apr and 23 on 26 May (both MMR, MJM, RGJ). A male escorting two

precocial young was seen on Pond A13 on 26 May. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was seen at Shoreline Lake on 14 Apr (RPh et al.) and two were near Los Esteros and Grand in Alviso the next day (RFu). A **Black Turnstone** on Pond A15 in Alviso on 10 May (PDU) is only our second spring record. We don't find many **Red Knots** in spring, so four to five bird in various plumages using the shorebird habitat in Pond A12 in Alviso 23-26 May (PDU, v.ob.) were nice. A wintering basic **Sanderling** on Pond A13 in Alviso on 29 Apr (MMR, MJM, RGJ) was a bit late. **Wilson's Phalarope** is mostly a late summer and early fall migrant, but most years we have a smattering of records. The first this year were two in New Chicago Marsh on 11 May (PDU) and a high count of five the next day on Pond A12 (v.ob.). On the other hand, **Red-necked Phalaropes** exhibit a more obvious spring movement and this year was fairly typical, the peak count was 440 birds on Pond A15 in Alviso on 10 May (PDU).

Terns through Phainopepla

A breeding plumaged **Black Tern** over Pond A14 in Alviso on 8 May (PDU) was a treat. A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen on Bell Station Road almost at Hwy 152 on 23 Apr (KHo, RPa), and one was cooing on Route #8 in Henry Coe SP on 28 Apr (MMR). One or more **Long-eared Owls** were heard in Monte Bello OSP 15-29 Apr (RFu, WGB). Two **Black Swifts** were seen along Route #5 in Henry Coe SP on 5 May (RCP) and three more were in nearby Stanislaus County. Five were over Skyline Ridge OSP on 16 May (GHa), occupying both San Mateo and Santa Clara airspace. Six along Loma Prieta Avenue on 23 May (WGB) were shared by Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties. The first **Vaux's Swift** of the season was one over Hidden Villa on 4 Apr (GHa). The high count of the period was 40 over Almaden-Quicksilver CP on 26 Apr (JPa). It seemed like a poor **Rufous Hummingbird** migration, the last came through on Route #8 in Henry Coe SP on 28 Apr (MMR). **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were more or less regular in San Antonio Valley with at least six birds on 15 Apr (WGB et al.) and 5 May (MDo et al.). A pair of **Pileated Woodpeckers** have again nested in Mt. Madonna CP this spring, with the first young seen at the end of May

Field Notes *cont'd*

(DPo). Particularly rare in spring, a **Willow Flycatcher** was seen along Artesian (Mallard) Slough in Alviso on 31 May (MJM). A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was found at Smith Creek on 7 Apr (MJM, MMR, LCr) and was the only one for the spring. A **Say's Phoebe** was seen along Coyote Creek north of Silicon Valley Boulevard on 27 May (MJM). Wintering birds are usually gone by mid-April, so this may be a bird trying to breed near Coyote Ridge. Two **Cassin's Kingbirds** were found along San Felipe Road on 9 Apr (RWR, FV). By 24 Apr they were constructing a nest at the top of a eucalyptus (WGB) and they have been seen there through the end of the period. Another pair, with one on a nest, was seen at the northeast end of Bloomfield Road on 29 Apr (SCR) and one was seen again on 19 May (MMR, RGJ). An **Eastern Kingbird** was found along the Pajaro River, crossing from Santa Cruz into Santa Clara County on 30 May (DLSu). This is our first spring record, the other six have occurred in late summer or fall. **Purple Martins** returned to an area northwest of the Loma Prieta lower saddle where they've nested before. Two males and two females were there on 18 May (RWR, FV) and similar numbers have been found through the end of the month (v.ob.). Nearby, a male was seen over Bald Mountain on 21 May (JPa, KBu). A female was seen off of Bailey Avenue in the Coyote Valley on 27 May (MMR). A pair of **American Dippers** in the Stevens Creek Canyon above Mt. Eden Road was seen through most of the period (m.ob.) and were seen nest building on 15 Apr (LMY et al.). A pair on Los Gatos Creek continued to be seen as well (m.ob.) and adults were carrying nest material on 14 Apr (RPh et al.). A single bird was singing on Swanson Creek in Uvas CP on 18 Apr (DPo) where they've not been reported for a few years. **Phainopepla** have continued to be found widely. At the Roop Road site, three females were seen on 8 Apr (MJM, MDo et al.). A single female was over Santa Teresa CP on 30 Apr (WGB). A male was found singing along Route #5 in Henry Coe SP on 5 May (RCP). On the next survey on 31 May (JY, AL), 13 birds were along that route, including five pairs and one pair building a nest. South of there on Route #7, a female was overhead on 8 May and a male was flying north with a

juvenile in tow on 29 May (both WGB).

Warblers through Goldfinches

The **Northern Waterthrush** wintering at Charleston Slough was last heard chipping on 1 Apr (RFu). Two **Black-and-White Warblers** were found along the Alamitos Creek Trail on 12 May (JPa et al.). Ten **Nashville Warblers** were found between 10 Apr and 1 May (v.ob.). Only one **MacGillivray's Warbler** was found this spring, a female at Smith Creek on 15 Apr (MMR, RGJ). The last of the winter **Yellow-rumped Warblers** was one near Chesbro Reservoir on 6 May (AV). A pair near Indian Rock in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 21 May (WGB) were in an area where a few breed. The **Hermit Warbler** passage continued with a male along Coyote Creek below Barber Lane on 8 Apr (JT), one to two birds singing at Monte Bello OSP on 14-15 Apr (RFu), one along Marsh Road on 26 Apr (RFu), four on Route #10 in Henry Coe SP on 28 Apr (RH), and a male on Route #5 in Coe Park on 5 May (RCP). A singing bird in Monte Bello OSP on 6 May (GHa) was likely a migrant, but two males near Indian Rock in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 21 May (WGB) were in an area where they sometimes nest. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was on Llagas Creek above Bloomfield Road on 26 Apr (MJM, LCr), a location where they may breed. Individual birds in a Campbell yard on 30 Apr (LMY) and at The Villages in San Jose on 9 May (MFu) were migrants. **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** are rare on the west side of the valley, so one at Stevens Creek CP on 8 and 19 Apr (RFu) was of note. Three **Black-chinned Sparrows** were heard on Route #8 in Henry Coe SP on 19 May (MMR). Multiple birds were found singing south of Summit Road in Santa Cruz County from 24 May to the end of the period, one was also to the northwest of the Loma Prieta lower saddle on 29 May (AR, RWR, FV). **Sage Sparrows** can occur in high numbers in the interior of the Diablo Range, 37 were counted on Route #8 in Henry Coe SP on both 28 Apr and 19 May (MMR). But they are quite rare in the Santa Cruz Mountains. One was found northwest of the Loma Prieta lower saddle on 23 May (WGB) and two were there from 27 May to the end of the period (GHa, v.ob.). About five **White-throated Sparrows** were found in April with four more at feeders. The last one was at Monte Bello OSP on 29 Apr



Eastern Kingbird
© Peter LaTourrette

(RFu). The adult **Harris's Sparrow** in a Campbell yard was last seen on 22 Apr (LMY). A male **Blue Grosbeak** was found at Ed Levin CP on 21 Apr (DWe), another was along Holsclaw Road and Llagas Creek the next day (PDU). A male near the end of Marsh Road was observed 24-28 Apr (GR, m.ob.). The last of the spring was a singing male near Monterey Road north of the Llagas Creek crossing in Morgan Hill (SCR). This spring seemed to be the breakthrough moment for **Great-tailed Grackles**. They were found in 13 sites from Casa de Fruta to the Geng Road pond. At Lake Cunningham at least 6 pairs nested and some successfully fledged young. The spigot for **Lawrence's Goldfinches** finally turned on in mid-April and they were found in many locations in the Diablo Range, on the valley floor, and in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Nesting was observed along San Felipe Road on 26 Apr (MJM, LCr), in Ed Levin CP on 28 Apr (BH et al., MJM), and on Route #1 in Henry Coe SP on 17 May (SCR).

Observers: Jane Borchers (JBo), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KBu), Lea Crisp (LCr), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), Mary Fullerton (MFu), Rob Furrow (RFu), Beth Hamel (BH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Rick Herder (RH), Bob Hirt (BHi), Kirsten Holmquist (KH), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Garrett Lau (GLa), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Lisa Myers (LMY), Richard Page (RPa), Steve Patt (SP), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Dennis Porter (DPo), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Geary Ridings (GR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Larry Spivak (LSp), David Suddjian (DLSu), Jim Thomas (JTh), Jerry Ting (JT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), Jim Yurchenco (JY), and Steve Zamek (SZ)

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

Young Audubon Summer Adventures: The fun continues!

SCVAS & MROSD Summer Nature Days

Bugs, Birds, Plants, Creeks, and more! Join SCVAS and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) as we explore the wonderful world around us. A great chance to be outdoors and get dirty!

Session 1:

“Explorations”

Tues, July 24th; 9AM-3PM
Picchetti Ranch OSP,
Cupertino

Let's get outside and explore!

Session 2:

“All About Birds”

Wed, July 25th; 9AM-3PM
McClellan Ranch Preserve,
Cupertino

Bird watching, bird walks, bird
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more!

Session 3:

“Bugs and the Creek”

Thur, July 26th; 9AM-3PM
McClellan Ranch Preserve,
Cupertino

Come and learn what makes
these creepy critters cool!

Session 4:

“Spaces & Species”

Fri, July 27th; 9AM-3PM
Skyline Ridge
Open Space Preserve*

We'll discover the wonders of
this amazing preserve!

**Transportation provided*

**For all children
entering grades
2 through 6**

Come explore with us for one, two or all four days!

Cost: \$60/child for SCVAS Members; \$65/child for non-members.
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Note: there is also a multi-child discount for families.

**Registration
closes 7/9, but
don't wait - space
is limited!**

Family scholarships for both activities available!

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with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

“Conservation in Action!”

Join us for 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 activity will allow participants to view a wild bird up close (maybe even hear the heartbeat!), and tour an important area of active habitat restoration.

**For all ages
7** and up!**

Date: Saturday, August 11th; 8-10AM
Location: Coyote Creek Field Station (near McCarthy Ranch), Milpitas
Cost: \$25/family (or \$8/child and \$10/adult)

**Registration
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** Children MUST be accompanied by a parent or guardian

- Space is limited, so don't forget to sign up early!
- Priority for bird banding will be given to groups with Children.

To register or to apply for a scholarship, call (408) 252-3740

Birdathon Sets New Record: \$79,000 Raised for Education and Conservation

by Bob Power, Executive Director

Birders of the south bay came together in April to count, count, count those birds in order to raise pledges on behalf of the SCVAS education programs and conservation work. And raise pledges they did! Over \$79,000 was raised breaking last year's \$76,000 record and provoking chants of "Next year 100k! Next year 100k!" at June's Birdathon Awards Dinner.

Highlights were many:

Dotty Calabrese single-handedly raised over \$6,400.

The Rock Wrens, led by Board VP Bob Hirt, raised over \$10,500 as a team.

The Varied Titchers, with team leader Mike Rogers, broke their own record by identifying 170 species in a 24-hour period. Bob Power's Hi-Speed Rails tracked down 108 species in 4-hours to take top honors in that category. Another record toppled as the Data-Sets, led by Stephanie Ellis, broke the Big Sit record with 65 species identified in a 4-hour period from within a 17-ft. diameter circle!

For the second year in a row, Barry Langdon-Lassagne took top photography honors for a 24-hour birdathon. This year as team photographer for the Varied Titchers, Barry snapped off an amazing 125 identifiable bird photos of the 170 species the Titchers reported as a team. Julio Mulero also repeated his achievement for the second year, taking top honors in the 4-hour photography category



Steve Patt's image - of a Western Meadowlark surrounded by a golden sea of wild mustard - took top artistic honors in the photography birdathon.

with 49 species photographed as team photographer for the Surf Scoters. Steve Patt's gorgeous photo of a Western Meadowlark took top honors in the Most Artistic Photo category.

Special recognition went to the Fledgelings, our youth Birdathon team led by Pati Rouzer. The Fledgelings raised an impressive team total of \$2,267 and spotted 65 species of birds on their adventure. Equally impressive were the team photographs and the team t-shirts.

Also recognized were the members of the Lean Mean Birding Machine, led by Rob Furrow, who identified 104 species during a 4-hour baylands blitz by bike.

Special acknowledgement goes out to the members of the Birdathon Committee: Julio Mulero, Renee Polizotto, Debbie Thompson, and Bob Hirt, who fret about rules and prizes and dinner menus for 7 months in order to make this a fun event. Deb Hirt, unofficial committee member, worked her tailfeathers off to provide a feast for the Birdathon dinner. And last but not least, Jessie Ruthruff and Susan Bell performed the daunting but necessary administrative tasks that ensure a birdathon runs smoothly.

Thank you to all our participants, team leaders, sponsors, and prize donors. We hope you had fun and are blocking off some calendar time for Birdathon Mania 2013!



Fledgelings team member, Maya Zolotar, proudly displays her hard-earned birdathon prize

Thanks To All Of Our Birdathon Teams And Their Many, Many Supporters For Another Very Successful Birdathon!

Almaden Eagles:

Kirsten Holmquist, Richard Page, Leon and Janna Pauser, Mike and Alma Rogers, Ann Verdi

Bob-O-Links:

Ashok Khosla and Susan Bodenlos, Teff Ayril, Dorsey and Katherine Bass, Galli Basson, Elyse Bloxham, Gail Bradley, Johnny and Karen Brown, Dotty Calabrese, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, David Speer and Tiffany Choy, Ann Davidson, Judith Dunham, Cynthia Enderlein, William and Stephanie Ferguson, Allen Fish, David and Ellen Fraser, Kathleen Gadway, Ellen and David Glathe, Thomas Grey and Barbara Babcock, Hawley, Peterson & Snyder Architects, Jan Hintermeister, Robert and Deb Hirt, George and Lisa Miller, Gordy Iwata, Julio Mulero and Renee Polizotto, David Kellert, Vivek and Leena Khanzode, Richard and Rebecca Kirchner, Michael and Carolyn Kulakofsky, JoAnne Lazar, Kathy Lee, Robert Lew, Cathy Loewen, Chandrashekhar Mahatme, Ed Martin, Bruce Mast, Michael Karpinko and Lois Moore, Bartshe Miller, Mary Lee Mueller, Melanie and Tom O'Brien, Edwin Ehmke and Mary Jane Parrine, Bob

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Birdathon Thanks

(cont'd from page 9)

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Craige Edgerton, Richard Kuehn, Ryan Millett, Bob Power, Ann Verdi, Riley and Virginia Willcox

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continued next page

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This recognition is for the following generous donors who have made a single donation of \$1,000 or more in the past year, have made cumulative donations totaling more than \$1,000 this past year, or who have raised over \$1,000 this past year. These donors have made an extraordinary commitment to protect our local birds, wildlife and habitats, and to educate our community on how to be better stewards of our environment.

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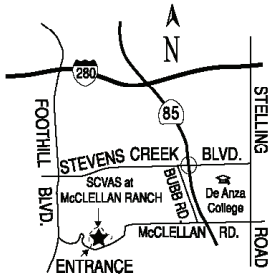
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SCVAS' Annual Summer WISH-LIST

Need to clean out your closets? Have collectables but no space to display them? Want to support youth environmental education? The Education Committee is looking for the following items and support to help us make our events and programs fabulous:

- ☞ Bird/wildlife **gifts or art** (in good condition)
- ☞ **Young Audubon Activities Family Sponsors**
- ☞ New or gently used [**washable**] hats with brims (e.g. baseball caps, bucket hats, etc.)
- ☞ **Wildlife Education Day Sponsors** (e.g. sponsor a live-shark presentation by the Marine Science Institute!)

Please contact us at 408-252-3740 or programs@scvas.org for more information or to make a donation.
 All donations - including in-kind donations - are tax deductible.

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday 10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday 10 AM - 2 PM

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

RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422

SCVAS is a private, non-profit corporation affiliated with the National Audubon Society

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2012 Volume 59, Number 4

Chapter Members in the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) receive the SCVAS newsletter, *The Avocet*.

- \$25 Song Sparrow (Student) \$35 American Avocet (Individual) \$60 California Quail (Family) \$100 Burrowing Owl
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