

THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

March-April 2012

The Peregrine Falcons of Summit Rock

by Shani Kleinhaus

SCVAS Environmental Advocate

Three pairs of Peregrine Falcons are known to nest in Santa Clara County. The most famous of our peregrines are Clara and Esteban Colbert of San Jose's City Hall. A nest cam brought this nest close to the hearts of many in our County and beyond, and the efforts of Clara and her consecutive mates in rearing young, their successes, and occasional tragedies, have been shared by a community of thousands of members.

Less known are peregrines that nest in remote transmission towers in the south bay, and the peregrines of Sanborn County Park. In 2008, a peregrine falcon nest was discovered at Summit Rock: the only naturally occurring nest site in Santa Clara County. Park rangers have been monitoring the birds ever since. They found that the pair made a year-round home on Summit Rock, and uses the eyrie (raptor nest built in a high inaccessible place) to raise young, roost, eat their prey, and, well, ...hang out. That year, 2008, the birds raised a late clutch of eggs and tended to the young at the nest well into September. Three months later, in December, the pair again started nest-establishment behaviors.

Peregrines chose Summit Rock because of its unique morphology and the way it is situated in the landscape, providing protection, wide views and a bountiful territory. But the unique morphology of the rock also attracts climbers, who have been fond of climbing the rock for decades. Climbers, organized by the Access Fund, asked for permission to climb the rock during the period that the peregrines are not actually nesting.

In 2009, after a thoughtful evaluation, the Santa Clara County Parks Department determined that climbing the rock is not compatible with protection of the peregrines at the site. The primary reasons provided for the year-round closure of the site to climbing are:

- Summit Rock is the only known naturally occurring nest site in Santa Clara County
- Summit Rock is a unique site with ideal conditions
- Occupation of the site is year round
- The climbing routes are adjacent to the eyrie, and even go through it.
- Lack of buffering from public at a relatively small site may cause abandonment of the eyrie.

(continued on page 13)

☞ *Winter Rarities a Treat for Birders!*
— Field Notes, Page 6

☞ *Christmas Bird Count Results & Summaries*
— Beginning on Page 10

☞ *Wingding Family Fest: A Celebration of Birds and Spring!*
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☞ *10th Annual "Going Native Tour" with CNPS*
— Page 15

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General Membership Meetings Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1

Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Rds

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00



Wednesday, March 21st

"Bird Response to a Changing Landscape"

with Stephanie Ellis, SFBBO

How are birds being affected by climate change? How do grassland birds respond to fire? The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) has gathered 30 years of data specific to bird populations in the South Bay to answer these questions and more. Learn how bird banding data from the Coyote Creek Field Station has contributed to a recent ground-breaking study providing evidence that birds on the west coast are getting bigger due to climate change.



Stephanie Ellis
Outreach & Communications
Director
SFBBO

(Additional information and detailed directions available at www.scvas.org or by calling the SCVAS office)

Wednesday, April 18th

"Bringing the Dino-bird to Life" with Uwe Bergmann, SLAC

150 years ago, fossils of 150-million-year-old strange creatures – sharing characteristics of both modern birds and long-extinct dinosaurs were found in Europe. The debate about the early evolution of birds is still in full swing. Do these fossils contain information about the original animals that cannot be seen by eye? Can we learn something about the soft tissues? These questions (and more) were recently addressed with a series of studies carried out at SLAC, using a technique called x-ray fluorescence imaging. Join us as we explore how scientists have attempted to bring the original dino-birds back to life!

Photo Above:
Detailed skull
image of
Archeopteryx

Mar - Apr '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

Saturday Mar. 3, 8:00 AM

Blue Oaks Ranch Reserve

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. We will meet at the Washburn trail entrance to Joseph D. Grant County Park. **Directions:** If coming from Alum Rock Ave. take Hwy 130, Mt Hamilton Rd., drive approx. 6.7 miles and look for two gates on your left, and an old decrepit barn off in a field nearby. Turn left into the second of the two gates, painted yellow with yellow fence and fence posts. If coming up Quimby Rd. turn left on Mt Hamilton Rd and drive approx. 0.8 miles to the two gates on your right. **Notes:** This trip will be *limited to 12 participants* in three cars and carpooling is required. Please call leader to reserve a space. **RC**

Sunday Mar. 4, 9:00 AM

Stanford Campus

Half day. **Leader:** Dick Stovel (650) 856-6105. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Palo Alto take University Ave exit west through downtown and into Stanford campus (University Ave. becomes Palm Dr.). Meet at the end of Palm Dr. at entrance to Main Quad. **Highlights:** Local breeding birds and early returning migrants should be active. **Difficulty Level:** This field trip is highly recommended for beginning birders. **RC**

Wednesday Mar. 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. **Directions:** Donald M. Somers Water Pollution Control Plant, junction of Borregas and Caribbean. Meet at Trailhead at north end. **Difficulty Level:** Birding geared toward beginners. **Notes:** Bring binoculars; loaners also available. **RC**

Saturday Mar. 10, 8:00 AM

Windy Hill OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. **Directions:** 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 Sequoias. Meet in the parking lot at Sausal Pond edge of the preserve. **RC**

Sunday Mar. 11, 8:00 AM

Almaden Lake Park and Alamos Creek

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey (408) 966-3860. **Directions:** From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south. The park is on the east (left) side of Almaden Expwy. Continue past the park to Coleman Rd. and return northbound on Almaden Expwy to the park entrance on the right. Meet in the west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. **Difficulty Level:** Expect about 3 miles of easy walking. **Highlights:** We will bird the lake and the trail upstream looking for waterfowl, raptors, and a wide variety of riparian birds. **Notes:** *Spring forward*, or be an hour late for this trip. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Mar. 14, 8:30 AM

Gilroy Water Treatment Facility

Half day. **Leader:** Dennis Porter, (408) 205-0535. **Directions:** We will carpool from McDonald's on Cochrane Rd. in Morgan Hill. Take 101 south; exit Cochran Rd.; turn right. Turn left at the first stop light and park by McDonald's. **Highlights:** We will drive levees and make other interesting stops to catch waterfowl, nesting Magpies, and search for Bald Eagles. **RC**

Saturday Mar. 24, 8:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Pat Kenny (408) 725-0468. **Directions:** From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south 2.1 miles (it becomes Stevens Canyon Rd) turn left into first park entrance and meet in first, Chestnut Picnic Area parking lot. **Highlights:** A top riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. **Notes:** Entrance fee required. **LO, RC**

Sunday Mar. 25, 8:00 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** 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 Air-

plane 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**

Saturday Mar. 31, 7:30 AM

Gilroy Hot Springs Rd

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** Parking space is limited in some places on this trip so we will meet at 7:30 AM behind McDonalds (near Kenneth Cole) on the right side of Leavesley Rd. (corner of Arroyo Circle) and will carpool from there. **Notes:** FRS radios tuned to channel 11 will be especially useful during the driving portion of this trip. **Highlights:** migrating and breeding birds of southern Santa Clara County. **RC**

Sunday Apr. 1, 8:00 AM

Grant Ranch County Park

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** 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). **Highlights:** Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds and possible Golden Eagle. **Notes:** A Park entrance fee will be required for the last half of the trip. **Difficulty Level:** Trip involves a moderately strenuous 2-mile walk. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Apr. 4, 12:00 PM

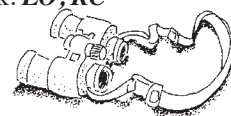
City of Sunnyvale Landfill

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

Saturday Apr. 7, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

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



Field Trips *continued*

Sunday Apr. 8, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Roxie Handler (408) 730-1745. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Mt. View take San Antonio Rd. north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at the entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. **Difficulty Level:** This trip is recommended for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. **Notes:** Bring your spotting scope and a friend.

Wednesday Apr. 11, 8:30 AM

Grant Ranch

Half day. **Leader:** Alan Thomas, (408) 265-9286. **Directions:** From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. and go approximately 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot on left, past main park entrance. **Difficulty Level:** Moderate 2 mile walk. **Highlights:** Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. **Notes:** Possible fee. **LO, RC**

Saturday Apr. 14, 8:30 AM

Lake Cunningham Park

Half day. **Leader:** Phyllis Swanson (408) 274-2349. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in San Jose go East on Tully to the entrance to Lake Cunningham Park, 0.3 miles past Capitol Expwy (Raging Waters). Turn left into the park and left again at the entrance booth. Meet in the Marina parking lot.

Sunday Apr. 15, 8:00 AM

Ed Levin County Park (North)

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** Take Hwy. 237 east, crossing I-880 and I-680 (237 becomes Calaveras Rd.), turn left on Downing Rd. to the park entrance. Meet in parking lot on the far, northeast side of Sandy Wool Lake (near the dog park). **Highlights:** We will look for migrants and local breeding birds in Milpitas' prime birding hot spot. **Difficulty Level:** Be aware that the trail is steep in places. **Notes:** Entrance fee. **LO, RC**

Saturday Apr. 21, 8:00 AM

Arastradero OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. **Directions:** From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west (toward the Santa Cruz mountains) turn right on Arastradero Rd.

and meet in the parking lot about a half-mile on the right. **Difficulty Level:** Trip involves moderately strenuous hiking. **RC**

Sunday Apr. 22, 8:00 AM

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University

Half day. **Leader:** Sonny Mencher (650) 366-3571 or e-mail soccerquiz@yahoo.com. **Notes:** Trip is *limited to 16 people*; contact Sonny to reserve a space. There is a fee of \$5 per person for the Jasper Ridge Field Trip. **Directions:** Meet in the parking lot on the right side of Sand Hill Rd as you head west toward the Preserve (near the freeway at the intersection of Lawler Ranch Road and Sand Hill Rd.). Form a carpool at the parking lot, as *carpooling is now required* to minimize the number of cars on the Preserve. Caravan with leader from the parking area between 7:50 AM and 8:00 AM only, at which time the gate will then be open. (*Do not leave earlier, as parking outside the gate is not allowed - it poses an unacceptable traffic hazard!*). From the parking area, the main gate is on the left side of the road about 2 miles west (away from the freeway) on Sand Hill Rd. **Difficulty Level:** Trip involves 2-3 miles of moderately strenuous walking, and goes rain or shine.

Saturday Apr. 28, 8:30 AM

Ogier Ponds

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page (408) 377-1092. For directions see the write-up for Mar. 25th.

Sunday Apr. 29, 8:00 AM

Hidden Villa

Half day. **Leader:** Garth Harwood (650) 949-8643. **Highlights:** Bird the farm, gardens and wild land edges of this unique facility with Hidden Villa's Environmental Education Director. There will be special emphasis on learning to bird by ear. **Directions:** From I-280 in Los Altos take El Monte Rd. past Foothill College, turn left at Moody Rd. then after approx. 1.7 miles left into Hidden Villa. Meet at the first parking lot beside the entrance. **Notes:** A \$5 per car parking fee is required. **LO, RC**

Saturday May 5, 8:30 AM

Mines Rd., Del Puerto Cyn & vicinity

Full day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. We'll start this trip in Del Puerto



Photo by Bob Power

Canyon, working our way west to San Antonio Valley. **Directions:** From I-580 go east over Altamont Pass, to I-5, south on I-5, west at the Patterson exit (Diablo Grande Pkwy) and then right on Del Puerto Canyon Rd. Meet at the first pullout. **Highlights:** Hoped for highlights include possible Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch. **Notes:** Bring a full tank of gas, lunch and liquids.

Sunday May 6, 8:30 AM

Rancho Canada del Oro OSP

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser (408) 569-9264 or jannana@pacbell.net. **Directions:** From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy southeast to Harry Rd.; go right 1 block, then left on McKean. Take McKean 6+ miles, past Calero Reservoir, and turn right on Casa Loma Rd. Meet at parking lot at end of road, about 2 miles. **Highlights:** Hoped for species include Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Wood-Pewee, Purple Finch, possible Lazuli Bunting. **Notes:** Bring water. **LO**



Don't Forget:
The SCVAS Nature Shop has books and birding guides for all levels, interests and locales. Come for a visit and check us out!

Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

Panoche Valley Solar Farm

SCVAS' appeal of the court's decision to uphold the Environmental Review of the solar project in Panoche Valley is in progress. We are actively raising funds, and working closely with our attorney, Rose Zoia, to prepare documents and briefs for the appeal.

Cuesta Annex in Mountain View

Cuesta Park Annex is one of the last un-developed, un-manicured landscapes in the urban span of the valley. Two proposals for use of this 12-acre property created controversy in the City of Mountain View:

A Santa Clara Valley Water District plan to use 7 acres for a flood detention basin as a part of the Permanente Creek Flood Protection Project has recently been approved by Mountain View City Council. SCVAS did not oppose this plan. We believe the basin will ensure that the site remains open space into the future, and eliminate the proposed alternative that would construct a dam in the creek channel.

A Mountain View Historical Society plan to build a museum at the Annex was recently withdrawn. In October 2011, together with the Committee for Green Foothills, we asked City Council to encourage the Historical Society to build the museum elsewhere (see - <http://mountainview.patch.com/articles/opinion-preserve-cuesta-park-annex-put-historical-museum-elsewhere>)

Stevens Creek Bridges

Five new bridges are currently in planning for Stevens Creek:

Santa Clara County plans two massive concrete bridges on Stevens Creek Canyon road. These would be two-lane bridges with wide shoulders on a one-lane road, less than a mile before the road dead ends... We commented on environmental documents to point out that one-lane bridges suffice for a one-lane road. We advocate for narrower bridges that would impose fewer adverse environmental impacts on the creek and its ecosystem.

Three additional bridges are planned downstream, where Google proposes to build two vehicle bridges and one

pedestrian/bicycle bridge to connect the Bayshore area to the company's new campus development in Moffett Field. The bridge proposed on Crittenden lane would encroach on sensitive wetlands. We are commenting on Environmental Documents and advocating for fewer bridges and for appropriate buffers to protect endangered species and their habitat.

Mountain View: North Bayshore Precise Plan

Mountain View's vision for the area adjacent to Shoreline Park calls for dense, tall buildings in a mixed-use district, aiming to include housing, small and large businesses, and a hotel. SCVAS has been invited to participate in the North Bayshore Working Group for the plan. To best protect the birds of Shoreline, we have been advocating for:

- 1) **Minimal or no housing development (because homes bring cats),**
- 2) **Bird-safe design for all new structures and windows, and**
- 3) **Wide setbacks from Permanente and Stevens Creeks.**

For more information, and to advocate for birds and creeks, please register and post a comment at <http://www.northbayshorepreciseplan.org/>

Coyote Golf Drive Asphalt Stockpile

Sometimes our work is out of sight or doesn't engage the hearts and minds of the general population. But the work is still important. In late 2011, the interchange that serves the Coyote Creek Golf Club became the dumping ground for a huge stockpile of asphalt grinding. This underpass is a significant wildlife corridor connecting the Diablo Range with the Santa Cruz Mountains. Working with the Committee for Green Foothills, we exposed the fact that stockpiling in the cloverleaf did not undergo environmental review. Our tenacity in asking California Department of Transportation to show the permits for the operations paid off: the stockpile and fences are gone, and the site was cleaned up and restored.

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

Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg

Programs Coordinator

If the 2012 National Volunteer Week theme – “Celebrating People in Action” – doesn't capture our volunteers perfectly, I don't know what does! Anyone who has any interaction with SCVAS volunteers knows that they are a *very* busy bunch - always involved in their communities, and keeping themselves engaged in a myriad of projects (including, of course, all of the many SCVAS programs and projects).

So, to all of our volunteers – THANK YOU! Please stop in the office to say “hi” and let us show our appreciation, or join us for the special activities we have planned (more details to come shortly and/or available online).

Special Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Birdwalk at McClellan Ranch Park - Wednesday, May 2nd. We'll take advantage of the lengthening spring days, and the expertise of our Executive Director, to do some birding, some socializing, and some sharing of what we all love about volunteers. The birdwalk will begin at 4:30PM, with dinner at 6:30PM. Please RSVP no later than **Friday, April 27th** to (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org. We look forward to seeing you!

And, if you've been thinking about getting involved, now is a great time to explore our many opportunities and see what might be a good fit for you. Here's one that might whet your appetite (more available on our website under “Volunteer”):

Wetlands Discovery Program Docent: Share the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with 3rd through 6th graders throughout Santa Clara County. Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat, both in the classroom and in the field. This program is rewarding for both volunteers and the hundreds of South Bay children who participate (over 1400 in 2010/2011)! No experience is necessary - 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.



Adult Education Classes - Early Spring 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.

Audubon Field Workshop May 11 – 20, 2012 Southeastern Arizona with Bob Power and David Wimpfheimer

Fees (due upon sign-up): \$1950/person, double-occupancy, \$450 single supplement. 12 participant max.

Only A Few Spaces Left!

Bird Songs & Calls of Stevens Creek with Bob Power

Start your Fridays off right by brushing up on your bird song identification skills with Bob's guidance. Class will be entirely in the field, so dress warm and dry with comfortable walking shoes. We'll focus on bird calls and bird songs just as the local

breeding season gets into full swing.

Bring any field guide where the author describes specific bird sounds in the species accounts (Sibley, for example). Enrollment fee includes a copy of the Breeding Bird Atlas of Santa Clara Co.

Dates: Fri's - 3/23, 3/30, 4/6 & 4/13; 8-10AM. **Locations:** McClellan Ranch

Park, Cupertino (3/23). Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (3/30). Stevens Creek County Park (4/6 & 4/13 - requires a \$6/vehicle daily parking fee). Directions and details will be provided before first class. **Fee:** \$10/per class members; \$15/class non-members. 4-class discount: \$30 members; \$45 non-members. **Class size is limited to 11.**

Spring is in the Air with Lisa Myers

This is the perfect time of year for this class. We'll cover topics many birders are too shy to discuss. For example, exactly how do birds procreate? What exactly is sexual dimorphism? Some species pair up for life, while some males breed with many females and some females have many males. Who helps with the



Anna's Hummingbirds
© Tom Grey

raising of the chicks and who leaves town? Understanding the world behind avian communication, procreation, copulation and incubation can help you to become a better birder. Don't be shy; sign up and learn something new. This class includes two weekend field trips in order to observe birds in the midst of the breeding season.

Dates: Classes: Thur's - 3/29, 4/5 & 4/12; 7:30-9PM. Field: Sat's - 3/31 & 4/7; 8:30AM-12PM. **Location:** Classes:

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino. Field: TBD. **Fee:** \$70 members; \$90 non-members. **Min: 8 students; Max: 20 students.**

Lisa (Let's Go Birding) has been teaching birding classes on her own and through SCVAS for over a decade, and enjoys focusing on the beginning to intermediate birdwatcher. She also leads a guided team, the Persistent Piciades for the SCVAS annual birdathon.

SCVAS Events

Calendar:

Sat. 3/3, 3/10 & 3/17

(Times & locations vary by date)

CNRP Nest Box Training Sessions

Come join us for hands-on experience on what it means to be a nest box monitor. We'll practice taking down hanging boxes, learn proper techniques for opening and examining the boxes, and practice identifying the different species by their nests. We may also learn how to clean out and repair nest boxes. Heavy rain will postpone to the next sunny weekend.

Full details, including times and locations and how to register, available on the SCVAS website - www.scvas.org, click on "Calendar"

Wed. 3/7 & 4/4; 7:30-9PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers

Lucy Evans Nature Center, Palo Alto

3/7: "Pelagic Birding" by Martijn Verdoes.

4/4: Topic TBA

See www.scvas.org/babp for details.

Wed. 3/7; 6:30PM

Birdathon Kick-Off Party

McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino

For anyone involved in a Birdathon Team - as a participant or a sponsor. Join us for laughs, food, friends, and tips to make your birdathon experience a great one! An entertaining slide show from last year's photography birdathon will be playing in our conference room throughout the evening. Please RSVP to 408-252-3747.

Tues. 3/13 & 4/10; 10AM

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

Topic 3/13: Belted Kingfisher

Topic 4/10: Sparrows

Sat. 3/17; 10AM-3PM

"Wingding Family Fest"

A celebration of spring and all things bird-y, in partnership with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

See page 14 for more details, or go to website - www.scvas.org and click on "Kids' Corner"

Sun. 4/22

EARTH DAY!

Go out and celebrate the beautiful planet we live on! There are lots of events happening around the area to do just that - go to www.scvas.org and click on "Calendar" for more information.

Wed. 5/2, 4:30PM (Dinner at 6:30PM)

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner & Birdwalk

McClellan Ranch Park.

See page 4 for details

Field Notes

(December 2011-January 2012)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Loons

Greater White-fronted Geese were found widely during the period, from the South County WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) Gilroy treatment ponds to the South Bay edge. The high count was 48 birds flying north over Morgan Hill on 27 Jan (SCR). An adult **Snow Goose** continued in Shoreline Park through 8 Dec (m.ob.) and an immature bird showed up there on 28 Jan (PDU) and remained through the period. Two adults were found in Coyote Valley and at the Calero Reservoir 30 Dec through at least 21 Jan (MJM, m.ob.). Two immatures were at the SCRWA treatment ponds 12-17 Jan (RWR, FV, JPa et al.). One-day observations elsewhere included up to nine birds (v.ob.). An adult and two immature **Ross's Geese** were seen in Coyote Valley and nearby Calero Reservoir from 30 Dec to at least 21 Jan (MJM, JAC, v.ob.). Eight birds were at the SCRWA treatment ponds 12-17 Jan (RWR, FV, JPa et al.). An immature Ross's photographed at Vasona CP on 16 Jan and the Oka percolation ponds on 18 Jan (JPa, LSp et al.) was probably the same bird. **Cackling Geese** were found widely during the period, but three birds of the '**Richardson's**' subspecies identified at Cottonwood Lake 27-29 Jan (MJM) may be the first records for Northern California (they normally winter east of the Rocky Mountains). Pond A14 in Alviso was the place to be for **Eurasian Wigeons** 18 Dec-15 Jan (v.ob.) with a high count of 6 males on 18 Dec (MMR, SCR). One to two birds were at the Sunnyvale WPCP 19 Dec and 6 Jan (MJM, DWe). Another male was at the Palo Alto Baylands 19 Dec and 20 Jan (MMR, WvD). One to two birds were seen in Pond A2W 19 Dec-1 Jan (WGB, v.ob.). Single males were at Crittenden Marsh on 3 Jan (WGB) and at the SCRWA ponds in Gilroy on 17 Jan (JPa et al.). As in recent winters the largest number of **Blue-winged Teal** were found at the SCRWA ponds in Gilroy 6 Dec-17 Jan (v.ob.), seven males and five females were seen there on 6 Dec (MJM). A male was in Pond A1 on 7 Dec (GZ). One to four or more blue-wings were in Artesian (Mallard) Slough in Alviso 18 Dec-31 Jan (SCT, fide KHO, m.ob.). One male was in Stevens Creek below Crittenden Lane on 19 Dec (WGB) and a pair was in the Mountain View Forebay on 25 Jan (RWR, FV). Remarkable numbers of **Redheads** were found on ponds along the Bay this winter. A count of 1085 on 18 Dec (MMR, SCR) set a new one-day record for the county. A male found inland on the SCRWA treatment ponds in Gilroy on 6 Dec (MJM) was unusual. A **Long-tailed Duck** seen on Pond A2W on 28 Dec (PKe, RKe) marks the third winter in a row

that we've found this rare coastal duck. A male **Barrow's Goldeneye** remained on Shoreline Lake throughout the period (m.ob.). A female was found on a closed refuge pond on 19 Dec (DMcI, DaS, MJM). It was a good winter for seeing loons locally. The juvenile **Red-throated Loon** at Shoreline Lake in November remained there until 1 Dec (MJM). Another juvenile was seen on the Los Gatos Creek CP percolation ponds 3-10 Dec (JPa et al., m.ob.). A juvenile was on a closed refuge pond on 6 Dec (MMR, MJM) and another was on Pond A2E on 1 Jan (DPe, MMR). The juvenile **Pacific Loon** seen in November continued at Shoreline Lake to 1 Dec (DWe, MJM), but was found dead the

Winter rarities included a Long-tailed Duck, two Stilt Sandpipers, a Wilson's Phalarope, and a Harris's Sparrow

next day (RW). Single juveniles were at the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds 3-5 Dec (LSu, JAC) and along the Guadalupe River on 10-11 Dec (AV et al.). The continuing **Common Loon** found at the Ogier Avenue ponds in November was only seen once more, on 10 Dec (RFu, DK). Another bird was on the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds on 3 Dec (JPa et al.).

Cormorants through Shorebirds

Very rare in the South Bay, a **Brandt's Cormorant** was seen on Pond A16 in Alviso on 2 Dec (JTh) and another bird, perhaps, was on a closed refuge pond on 6 Dec (MMR, MJM). The peak count of **Brown Pelicans** was 39 on the Alviso ponds on 18 Dec (MMR, SCR). Few birds linger into late January, so one over Pond A1 on 28 Jan (MMR, MJM) is of interest. Wintering **American Bitterns** included one at the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) ponds between 5 and 10 Dec (JPa, AV), two along the Alviso Slough Trail on 3 Jan (PDU), one at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 12 Jan (AV), and one in the entrance channel in Mountain View 24-28 Jan (FV, v.ob.). A 1st-winter **White-faced Ibis** was found along Thompson Creek above Tully Road on 4 Dec (JPa, PSw) and remained through the period (m.ob.) By 14 Jan it was starting to show some pink on its facial skin (MMR). An adult and a juvenile **Ferruginous Hawk** were seen in Coyote Valley throughout the period (m.ob.). At least two more adults were over nearby Tulare Hill on 30 Dec (RPh et al.). An adult along Marsh Road on 9 Dec (MO'B) was seen there at least through 18 Dec

(m.ob.). A juvenile was nearby on Felter Road on 31 Dec (DWe). On the Mt. Hamilton CBC on 2 Jan, two birds were seen in San Antonio Valley (WGB, RP et al.) and one adult in Isabel Valley (MMR, MJM, RGJ). Valley records of **Prairie Falcons** included one near Hellyer and Piercy roads on 16 Dec (BM), an exceptional three birds on 30 Dec (RPh et al) in the Coyote Valley, and a single bird there on 22 Jan (LMy et al.). The **Snowy Plover** roost in Chicago Marsh was last seen in October, no birds were reported in November. In a few winters we find snowies locally in single digits, but this year has been different. Birds were seen in the Alviso ponds 6 Dec-31 Jan (MMR, MJM, v.ob.), mostly on Pond A13. The high count was of 66 birds on 18 Dec (MMR, SCR). The next day, 11 more were seen in Crittenden Marsh (MJM) and these have continued to at least 18 Jan (v.ob.) with a high count of 22 on 3 Jan (WGB). Eleven **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found on the Alviso ponds on 6 Dec (MMR, MJM) and these numbers dwindled through the period with the last bird seen on 17 Jan (v.ob.). Elsewhere, singles were found on the SCRWA ponds in Gilroy on 9 Dec (MJM) and in the Sunnyvale WPCP on 11 Dec (MA). **Sanderlings** in the Alviso ponds were found from 6 Dec (MMR, MJM) to the end of the period. The high count was of 27 birds seen on 15 Jan (MMR, MJM) with all but one on Pond A13. A major surprise on the San Jose CBC was the discovery of two **Stilt Sandpipers** in Pond A12 on 18 Dec (MMR, SCR). Both birds were seen again on 15 Jan (MMR, MJM). These are our first winter records. The Palo Alto CBC responded by finding a basic **Ruff** on 19 Dec (MJM, MMR) that has remained through the period and pleased many. The last time we had a wintering bird was in 2006-07. Nearly as exciting as the Stilt Sandpipers was a single **Wilson's Phalarope** Pond A13 on both 18 Dec and 15 Jan (MMR, SCR, MJM). This adult is our second winter record.

Gulls through Phainopepla

Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen on closed refuge ponds on 18 Dec (DMcI, DaS), the first since the winter of 2007-08. First-winter **Glaucous Gulls** have shown up, the first was a bird seen on Pond A16 on 18 Dec (MMR, SCR) and again on 15 Jan (MMR, MJM). The second was near the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) waterbird pond on 19 and 27 Jan (JC). The third was on the Ogier Avenue ponds 28-29 Jan (SCR, DWe). Absent since August, four **Black Skimmers** showed up on 1 Jan in both Charleston Slough (GZ) and Pond A1 (MMR). A peak count was of 8-10 birds on 17 Jan (JDeB). A **Greater Roadrunner** was found northeast of Hellyer Avenue on 29 Dec (RFu) and seen again on 30 Dec (RFu, DK) and 28 Jan (MMR, MJM). A **Short-eared Owl** was seen along Laguna Avenue in Coyote Valley after sunset on 28 Dec (RFu) and another was

Field Notes *cont'd*

flushed along Coyote Slough near Pond A9 on 9 Jan (PDU). Presumably the same female **Costa's Hummingbird** that showed up at a Morgan Hill feeder in mid-September was seen again on 24 and 26 Dec, and 2 and 28 Jan after being absent for about five weeks (SCR). Mt. Hamilton CBC tallies of **Lewis's Woodpecker** on 2 Jan included 34 from the Isabel Valley (MMR, MJM, RGJ) and 23 from the San Antonio Valley (WGB, RP). An adult female **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** that is wintering in Menlo Park flew across to Santa Clara County on 2 Dec (WGB) and 11 Jan (RSTh, LB). A juvenile Yellow-bellied graced a persimmon tree in the Pichetti Ranch OSP on New Year's Day (TGr) and remained there to 8 Jan (v.ob.). A male **Red-naped Sapsucker** was at the Charleston Road marsh 18 Jan (WGB). It has been a good winter for flycatchers. A **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was found along Alamos Creek near Mt. Forest Drive on 14 Dec and was seen there at least through the end of the month (JPa). An **Eastern Phoebe** was found along the Guadalupe River at Hedding Street on 18 Dec (LCu, GK). Another bird was seen at Lake Cunningham on 20 Jan (PDU) and has remained there through at least 24 Jan (v.ob.). A **Warbling Vireo** at the Los Capitancillos percolation ponds on 6 Jan (JPa) is the third winter record for the county. A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was heard in Cupertino on 24 Dec (DJ) for the third winter. There is no irruptive movement this year, so perhaps it is a local bird. **House Wrens** attempting to overwinter included singles along Thompson Creek on 18 Dec (PDU, BTh), near Tulare Hill on 30 Dec (RPh et al.), and on Casa Loma Road on 25 Jan (JPa). Similarly, a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** in Santa Teresa CP on 16 Jan (GHa) was likely trying to overwinter. One to two **American Dippers** were found along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road 1-26 Jan (RFu, m.ob.). At least one other bird was seen farther up the creek beyond Redwood Gulch Road 10-14 Jan (RCP, JTa). Two birds were found along Los Gatos Creek above Main Street in Los Gatos on 18 Jan (KJ). A single bird was along Saratoga Creek above Toll Gate Road on 23 Jan (KJ). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** included two along the Skid Road Trail in Monte Bello OSP on 19 Dec (GHa), one or more along the John Nicholas Trail in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 5 and 29 Jan (JPa, AV), and one in Upper Stevens Creek CP on 17 Jan (WGB). An immature male **Mountain Bluebird** was a brief visitor to the Sierra Road summit on 18 Dec (MJM). This is our first record since the winter of 1999-2000. The **Red-throated Pipit** found in the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP drying ponds in late November was found again on 6 Dec (SCR), which is very late. A male **Phainopepla** was found at the end of

Marsh Road on 9 Dec (MO'B) and remained there through the period (m.ob.). Singles were also found near Bass Lake in Joseph Grant CP on 22 Dec (PDU) and a female was at the north end of the park on 16 Jan (MO'B, DRo).

Warblers through Goldfinches

Northern Water-thrushes continued to be found in the Charleston Road marsh with at least two birds recorded on 1 Jan (MMR), 21 Jan (MDo et al.), and 26 Jan (DWe). A **Black-and-White Warbler** was seen in Rancho San Antonio OSP on 5 Dec (MA) and was re-found the next day (PDU). A wintering **Nashville Warbler** was found creekside at Lake Cunningham on 26 Jan (WGB, JRy). A female-type **American Redstart** was found at Lake Cunningham on 20 Jan (PDU) and seen there through 24 Jan (m.ob.). We have about three prior winter records. The female **Blackburnian Warbler** continued along Fulton Street in Palo Alto through 9 Dec (m.ob.). Wintering **Black-throated Gray Warblers** included two along Stevens Creek below Homestead Road on 19 Dec (SP, JD et al.), one at Stanford on 4 Jan (RFu), and one at the Coyote Reservoir CP on 11 Jan (JPa et al.). **Hermit Warblers** included one along the Skid Road Trail at Monte Bello OSP on 19 Dec and a different bird at Monte Bello's Gate 5 the next day (both GHa). A few **Wilson's Warblers** manage to survive into December, but one found at the Ulistac Natural Area on 17 Jan (LBe) was less expected. Wintering **Chipping Sparrows** showed up once more in Jeffrey Fontana Park on 2 Dec, when six were tallied (JPa). Some have remained to at least 4 Jan (v.ob.). Wintering **Grasshopper Sparrows** may be more common than the numbers suggest, considering how secretive they are. A bird was found in Ed Levin CP on 18 Dec (RCP, SMCh, fide KHO) and another was seen in Santa Teresa CP on 30 Jan (JPa). The wintering **Swamp Sparrow** along the outfall channel at the Palo Alto Baylands was seen again on 19 Dec (MMR) and 21 Jan (WGB). One nearby in the Baylands on 23 Dec (RWR) may well be the same as the outfall channel bird. Another **Swamp Sparrow** was found creekside at Lake Cunningham 14 and 18 Jan (MMR, MJM). It has been a very good winter for **White-throated Sparrows** with about 21 records, only two of which were feeder birds. The Calero-Morgan Hill CBC found six birds, a new count record. An adult **Harris's Sparrow** came to a feeder in Cambell on 4 Dec (LMY) and has remained through the period. This is the first we've had since 2004. Wintering **Western Tanagers** included one along the Los Alamos



Wilson's Phalarope
by Tom Grey

Creek Trail on 14 Dec (JPa), one along Los Gatos Creek in San Jose on 18 Dec (RGJ), two near Stevens Creek and El Camino on 19 Dec (SP, DJ et al.), one in downtown Los Altos on 21 Dec (GHa), one on Fulton Street in Palo Alto on 22 Dec (PJM), one along Los Gatos Creek in Los Gatos on 13 Jan (PEL et al.), and two at Vasona CP on 16 Jan (JPa). Up to 17 **Great-tailed Grackles** have roosted at Lake Cunningham 3 Dec-20 Jan (PDU, MJM). One or more birds were near the Alviso ponds on 13 Dec (PDU). One to six birds

have visited their old haunts at the Coyote Creek GC 30 Dec-21 Jan (MJM, MMR, v.ob.). There have been reports of **Pine Siskins** at a couple of feeders and one at least was over Stevens Creek Canyon on 8 Jan (RFu). But the bigger news was of a sizeable flock attracted by alder seeds in lower Sanborn-Skyline CP. About 24 were counted on 7 Jan (JE, PaB) and good numbers were there at least through 18 Jan (m.ob.). A male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** at Monte Bello OSP on 29 Dec (CL) was the only one from the Santa Cruz Mountains. But in the Diablo Range, there was a record count of 386 Lawrence's on the Mt. Hamilton CBC on 2 Jan.

Observers: MaryAnn Allan (MA), Leonie Batkin (LB), Laurie Bechtler (LBe), Bill Bousman (WGB), Patty Brown (PaB), John Cant (JC), Jack Cole (JAC), Lori Cuesta (LCu), John DeBell (JDeB), Matthew Dodder (MDO), Pete Duntun (PDU), Judy Enos (JE), Rob Furrow (RFu), Tom Grey (TGr), Garth Harwood (GHa), Kirsten Holmquist (KHO), Debi Jamison (DJ), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Kent Johnson (KJ), Danny Karp (DK), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Greg Kerekes (GK), Caroline Lambert (CL), Paul E. Lehman (PEL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Breanna Martinico (BM), Steve McHenry (SMCh), David McIntyre (DMcI), Peter Metropoulos (PJM), Lisa Myers (LMY), Matt O'Brien (MO'B), Richard Page (RPa), Janna Pauser (JPa), Steve Patt (SP), Don Pendleton (DPe), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Dave Rocha (DRo), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Jennifer Rycenga (JRy), Larry Spivak (LSp), Dale Stahlecker (DaS), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Phyllis Swanson (PSw), Jane Tatchell (JTa), Jim Thomas (JTh), Brent Thordarson (BTh), Ron Thorn (RSTh), Steve Tracey (SCT), Win van Dam (WvD), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), Ron Wolf (RW), and Gena Zolotar (GZ).

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

The 2012 SCVAS Spring Birdathon Wants YOU!

Everyone, from beginner to expert birder, can participate in the 2012 SCVAS Spring Birdathon, a **major fundraising event** for SCVAS Conservation efforts and youth environmental education. **Your participation makes Audubon bird education and conservation in the south bay possible.**

- **Anyone can join a team** by self-donating or raising at least \$50.
- **Anyone can be a sponsor.** Check www.scvas.org/birdathon to pick a Birdathon team or individual to sponsor. Donate on-line at SCVAS.org/Birdathon, click on "Sponsor a team or member" in the left hand menu and follow the easy directions. Or, go old-school and Call the office at 408-252-3747 or send a check to SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, CA. Be sure to specify the team or the team member you'd like to sponsor
- **Anyone can win fabulous prizes**, from optics and birding trips to entertainment tickets, exotic resort getaways, excellent wines, and much more, by raising money and being a top fundraiser! Top fundraisers get their choice of prizes. This is a fun event folks.

Here are the basics of how to join in the Birdathon fun, raise money and compete for a prize:

1. **Check www.scvas.org/birdathon** for Birdathon rules, information, and prize list. Check back, as the prize list will be updated often.
2. Join a **Guided Team** led by one of our many experienced birders (see below or page 9) by registering on-line at www.scvas.org/birdathon (check www.scvas.org for a complete list of leaders and teams) or by calling Susan or Jessie at the SCVAS Office, (408) 252-3747
3. Talk to your birding friends and organize your own team. Pick your day from March 24th to April 22nd, inclusive, and **Register** yourself and your team. **Plan your birding day** with your teammates, Creating a 4-Hour or 24-hour Birdathon that fits your team. For example:
 - Spend four hours on a Saturday snacking in lounge chairs

on your patio counting species at your feeders;

- Or, design a route with multiple stops and habitats in four hours, competing against Bob Power to break that "100 species in 4 hours" barrier;
- Or, compete for the "most species" glory by racing around Santa Clara County from before dawn until after dark, birding in as many habitats and locations as humanly possible in a 24-hour period.

Your birdathon is only limited by your imagination. Kayakers, where are you?!

4. **Raise money - at least \$50 per team member.** It's so much easier than you think. Most people you know will be delighted to support your efforts for a good environmental education program with a small or large tax-deductible donation. Call, e-mail, or write all your friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, and acquaintances, to ask for pledges or donations. Sound too hard? It's not! Last year, 39 participants raised \$300 or more! You can, too! **We have a whole page of fundraising tips on our web-site.**
5. **Bird with your team** on your Birdathon Day and have fun!
6. **Collect your pledges, or have your sponsors send in their donations** and be sure to turn in the money you've raised, pledge sheets, and results form to the SCVAS office by Monday, **May 14th 5:00 p.m.**, to be eligible for prizes.
7. **Attend the free Birdathon Awards Dinner on Wednesday, June 6th.** Prizes are awarded to the top fundraisers and everyone can participate in bird contests and games and maybe win another prize. Share Birdathon stories with other participants over a relaxed, informal dinner. Feel great that you have helped fund SCVAS conservation efforts and youth environmental education, and had such a good time doing it.

Can't participate? **Anyone can be a sponsor.** Check www.scvas.org/birdathon to pick a Birdathon team or individual to sponsor.

The SCVAS Birdathon Committee hopes this is the year YOU will decide to join in the fun!



Photographer's Birdathon!

In its 2nd year, the Photographer's Birdathon invites and encourages camera-toting birders to join in the Birdathon fun.



Using the same time period, March 24th to April 22nd, photographers can form their own teams, team up with a birder friend, or join a 4-hour or 24-hour big day team to maximize their chances at photographing the most species. Photographers will compete with other birders for the fundraising prizes but will have their own recognition for best bird photograph, rarest bird, and most identifiable bird species. Photographers winning in each category will be memorialized on a plaque in the SCVAS office. Additionally, the winner of the best bird photograph (judged contest) and the rarest bird photograph, will have their photos featured on our web-site and framed and featured in our offices for one year. At the end of the year, the photo will be given to the photographer or donated to the following year's birdathon prizes.

Dust off your lenses and clear your calendars. Photographers, time to join in the fun!

New for 2012: Going after rarest bird? Bob Hirt (bobhirt@aol.com) or Bob Power (bob@scvas.org) will make themselves available to you as your personal bird guide and teammate.

Pick the bird, pick your time, let's go!

Youth Birdathon Adventure

The Fledglings with Pati Rouzer
Sat, March 31st; 7:30am to 12:00pm

Past President of SFBBO's Board of Directors, Pati is an avid birder and international trip leader. Team Fledglings will blitz Santa Clara County from the Palo Alto Baylands to Alviso to Ed Levin Park. Maximum team size is 10, ages 6 to 16 welcomed. The Team will be fun

and yet focused on finding cool birds. Participants must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.



"Go Guided" – Join one of our Prearranged Spring Birdathon Teams

We are looking for all levels of birders to join one of our prearranged Big-Sit, Biking, Boating, 4-hour, or 24-hour (any team going out longer than 4 hours and up to 24 hours) Guided Birdathon teams. All you have to do is raise the minimum requirement of \$50, grab your binoculars and go birding! Beginners can out-compete experts for great prizes by gathering more donations. Space on guided teams is limited. Register for and see complete descriptions of these teams at www.scvas.org/birdathon. Except where noted, teams are for adults over 17. *The registration deadline is one week before the trip date.*

Each leader will contact you with complete details prior to your Birdathon adventure!

Persistent Picidaes with Lisa Myers (*Let's Go Birding*) - **Sun, April 15th**

This is the perfect team regardless of your birding skill level - everyone is welcome, you'll bird all around the county, you'll have a great time, and team members are gracious and helpful for all who wish to participate. If you need a pair of binoculars, let us know when you sign up and they will be provided. Group size up to 20. 7:30 AM until dusk. 100+ species.

SAVvy Migrants with Bill Bousman - **Sun, April 15th**

An all-day birding adventure with Bill Bousman, author of the *Breeding Bird Atlas of Santa Clara County, CA*. Bill has been report-

24-hour Birdathon Teams

ing on his San Antonio Valley Transect for many years on South Bay Birds and now you get to live it for a day. An extraordinary opportunity to learn about the birds and habitats of the Diablo Range. Trip starts in San Antonio Valley and ends along the bay. Carpooling will be essential. Group size limited to 8. Two vehicles max. Dawn to dusk. 90+ species.

Bob-O-Links with Bob Power - **Sat, April 21st**

Join SCVAS's Executive Director whose leadership style will complement all birding levels. This is a perfect team if you haven't done a Birdathon before, but want

to experience a fast-paced big-day with a leader who can find all the birds! Wee hours of the AM to dusk. 140+ species.

DeDucktions with Matthew Dodder - **Sat, April 21st**

Matthew is a superb birder, very popular Birdathon team leader and accomplished birding instructor at Palo Alto Adult School. All levels of birders are encouraged to join this team and experience the thrill of a professionally led team that "gets the birds." Join this fast paced pre-dawn-to-dusk tour of the county. 140+ species.

Varied Twitchers with Mike Rogers - **Sat, April 21st**

This is a high intensity day with one of the Bay Area's premier birders. Start your big-day early with owling and continue until sunset. This team holds the record for winning all the 24-hour Most Species awards since 2003. 160+ species.

Rock Wrens with Bob Hirt - **Sun, April 22nd**

Join this long-time birder and SCVAS Board Member for an active day in the field. Start early for owls in the western foothills, zigzag to the Bay for shorebirds, and then climb up the eastern slope, ending after dusk. Bob is ready to help beginning birders join the excitement! 140+ species.

Mean Green Birding Machines with Rob Furrow - **Sun, April 1st**

This whirlwind bayside biking adventure starts at Sunnyvale Baylands, heads to Alviso and back again and finishes at Charleston Slough, time permitting. The adventure will be roughly 20 miles, at a moderate pace. High-performance road bikes are not recommended for these trails, but personal discretion is welcome. 80+ species expected.

Hi-Speed Rails with Bob Power - **Sun, April 8th**

Join Bob on his Stevens Creek blitz, searching for Dippers to

4-hour Birdathon Teams

Dowitchers. Carpool from San Antonio Rd. to Stevens Canyon and back again to visit a hefty mix of habitats. Expect a fast-pace while birding 8 AM to noon. 80+ species.

Surf Scoters with Susan Bell - **Sat, April 14th**

Bird the marshes of Alviso Slough from a unique vantage point – aboard the historic 44-foot tugboat the *Sea Dive*. Join firstmate Susan Bell and Captain Charles Bell to cruise the slough for a few hours then finish counting on shore.

Includes tour of historic south bay yacht club. Refreshments are included. Limit 6 team members. 30+ species.

Cupertino Creek Cruisers with Debi Jamison - **Sun, April 15 (rain date April 22)**.

Help with this annual survey of birds along the reaches of Stevens Creek from McClellan Raod to Stevens Creek Blvd. in Cupertino. The first part of the survey will be conducted as a 4-hour Birdathon. Then we will continue on for about three hours more to complete the

survey, including the Stockmeir property (next in line for creek restoration). You can participate in the Birdathon part only or the entire survey. This will be the 3rd year of surveying the newly restored and renovated Blackberry Farm and the 10th consecutive year of the survey in conjunction with the Birdathon!

Rushing Thrushes with Bob Power - **Sun, April 15th**

Bob's east-side blitz will start east of Milpitas and end in Alviso, exploring the unique habitats of the Diablo Foothills and the bay. Join this fast-pace chase 8 AM to noon. 80+ species.

Yellow-rumped Squatters with Lori Cuesta - **Sat, April 14th**

Join Lori's team at our headquarters in McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino (location TBC) from 8am-12pm to see how many species you can identify from a single spot using scopes. 40+ species.

Big-sit Challenge Birdathon Teams:

Multiple teams in multiple locations competing against each other on the same day!

Eagle Eyes with Bob Power - **Sat, April 14th**

Bob's Big-sit Challenge team will be counting from the north face of Coyote Lake at the dam. The Big-sit Birdathon is perfect for

those who don't want to spend a lot of time chasing around town. 40+ species.

DataSets with Stephanie Ellis (SFBBO) - **Sat, April 14th**

Continuing a great tradition of SFBBO-SCVAS support and collaboration, the DataSets will migrate over to Charleston Slough in Mountain View for a morning of shorebirds (and maybe even some owl-y surprises) perfectly situated between multiple habitats. 40+ species.

2011 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Species	SJ 12/18/11	PA 12/19/11	MtH 1/02/12	Cal-MH 12/30/11
Greater White-fronted Goose	2	15	-	-
Snow Goose	-	-	-	2
Ross's Goose	-	-	-	4
Cackling Goose	12	9	-	1
Canada Goose	1492	1142	1	908
Wood Duck	14	10	65	127
Gadwall	276	407	18	101
Eurasian Wigeon	6	4	-	-
Eurasian x American Wigeon	1	-	-	-
American Wigeon	1776	2853	202	9
Mallard	1695	1177	132	597
Blue-winged Teal	2	1	-	-
Cinnamon Teal	49	13	-	1
Northern Shoveler	12662	5089	-	29
Northern Pintail	1694	1389	-	1
Green-winged Teal	1667	618	4	29
Canvasback	2550	3063	-	6
Redhead	1292	16	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	16	72	52	93
Greater Scaup	801	29	-	4
Lesser Scaup	404	108	-	20
<i>aythya</i> , sp	479	11509	-	-
Surf Scoter	26	129	-	-
Bufflehead	725	151	109	152
Common Goldeneye	206	141	-	39
Barrow's Goldeneye	1	1	-	-
Hooded Merganser	14	63	-	35
Common Merganser	41	18	7	337
Red-breasted Merganser	53	1	-	-
Ruddy Duck	4656	9574	78	114
duck, sp	400	4	-	3
California Quail	90	220	706	525
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	3	-	-
Wild Turkey	191	9	83	560
Pied-billed Grebe	202	145	23	175
Horned Grebe	6	4	-	1
Eared Grebe	3390	85	3	103
Western Grebe	230	35	-	60
Clark's Grebe	68	21	-	8
<i>aechmophorus</i> , sp	129	84	-	-
Double-crested Cormorant	439	264	-	489
American White Pelican	212	27	-	2
Brown Pelican	47	50	-	-
American Bittern	1	-	-	-
Great Blue Heron	43	32	8	21
Great Egret	87	69	-	69
Snowy Egret	110	89	-	31
Green Heron	4	2	-	7
Black-crowned Night-Heron	377	153	4	12
White-faced Ibis	1	-	-	-
Turkey Vulture	327	76	5	221
Osprey	1	1	-	4
White-tailed Kite	47	38	-	52
Bald Eagle	2	-	5	4
Northern Harrier	45	24	2	28
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	4	7	11
Cooper's Hawk	15	13	13	26
<i>accipiter</i> , sp	2	3	2	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	36	65	3	80
Red-tailed Hawk	206	134	63	169
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	1	-	-	-

Species	SJ 12/18/11	PA 12/19/11	MtH 1/02/12	Cal-MH 12/30/11
Ferruginous Hawk	1	-	6	5
Golden Eagle	21	1	5	18
American Kestrel	65	28	14	76
Merlin	8	10	3	7
Peregrine Falcon	14	7	-	6
Prairie Falcon	3	-	2	3
<i>falco</i> , sp	2	-	-	1
Clapper Rail	-	5	-	-
Virginia Rail	48	14	1	3
Sora	68	10	4	3
Common Gallinule	9	6	-	12
American Coot	8626	8670	383	2582
Black-bellied Plover	158	8	-	-
Snowy Plover	48	11	-	-
Semipalmated Plover	32	173	-	-
Killdeer	488	102	13	219
Black-necked Stilt	1279	167	-	8
American Avocet	1287	2385	-	-
Spotted Sandpiper	4	2	-	11
Greater Yellowlegs	90	61	9	5
Willet	40	2152	-	-
Lesser Yellowlegs	8	2	-	-
Yellowleg sp	1	-	-	-
Long-billed Curlew	145	231	-	1
Marbled Godwit	21	2150	-	-
Ruddy Turnstone	-	1	-	-
Sanderling	12	-	-	-
Western Sandpiper	2983	2464	-	-
Least Sandpiper	2011	555	1	38
Dunlin	1412	2850	-	-
Stilt Sandpiper	2	-	-	-
peep sp	1880	39400	-	-
sandpiper sp	104	-	-	-
Ruff	-	1	-	-
Short-billed Dowitcher	6	228	-	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	139	112	-	1
dowitcher, sp	2650	1615	-	-
Wilson's Snipe	50	6	9	14
Wilson's Phalarope	1	-	-	-
Bonaparte's Gull	409	401	-	-
Mew Gull	450	10	-	3
Ring-billed Gull	527	880	-	81
Western Gull	44	36	-	2
California Gull	1938	1080	-	3124
Herring Gull	4212	676	-	681
Thayer's Gull	95	5	-	21
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	-	-	-
Glaucous-winged Gull	263	18	-	14
Western x Glaucous-w Gull	5	3	-	-
Glaucous Gull	1	-	-	-
Glaucous Gull x Glaucous-w Gull	1	-	-	-
gull sp	1091	891	-	3617
Forster's Tern	164	13	-	-
Rock Pigeon	1410	493	15	1418
Band-tailed Pigeon	90	56	136	285
Eurasian Collared-Dove	39	8	-	116
Mourning Dove	421	429	112	485
Greater Roadrunner	-	-	-	1
Barn Owl	-	4	1	10
Western Screech-Owl	1	9	13	9
Great Horned Owl	5	6	4	8

Species	SJ 12/18/11	PA 12/19/11	MtH 1/02/12	Cal-MH 12/30/11
Northern Pygmy-Owl	-	1	1	2
Burrowing Owl	18	4	-	3
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	CW
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	1	-	-
White-throated Swift	20	10	5	9
Anna's Hummingbird	337	441	29	180
Belted Kingfisher	16	5	6	36
Lewis's Woodpecker	-	-	87	-
Acorn Woodpecker	107	318	347	398
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	1	-	-
Red-breasted Sapsucker	10	4	28	9
Nuttall's Woodpecker	92	112	44	140
Downy Woodpecker	16	17	2	21
Hairy Woodpecker	-	21	13	16
Northern (Red-Shafted) Flicker	140	158	126	237
Northern (RedxYellow) Flicker	1	-	-	1
Northern (Yellow-Shafted) Flicker	1	-	-	1
(intergrade)	-	1	-	-
Unidentified form	-	-	2	-
Pileated Woodpecker	-	2	-	-
woodpecker sp	2	-	-	-
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	-	-	-	1
<i>Empidonax</i> , sp	1	1	-	-
Black Phoebe	386	252	36	268
Eastern Phoebe	1	-	-	-
Say's Phoebe	39	11	7	47
Loggerhead Shrike	16	5	2	8
Hutton's Vireo	3	60	2	16
Steller's Jay	145	292	47	234
Western Scrub-Jay	358	687	438	883
Yellow-billed Magpie	75	-	203	208
American Crow	1450	994	57	902
Common Raven	102	126	54	86
Horned Lark	67	-	-	63
Tree Swallow	91	5	2	-
Violet-green Swallow	19	-	-	-
Swallow sp	22	-	-	-
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	210	781	4	418
Oak Titmouse	79	314	309	423
Bushtit	832	1059	113	1042
White-breasted Nuthatch	43	42	119	122
Pygmy Nuthatch	-	8	-	-
Brown Creeper	-	43	4	12
Rock Wren	6	-	1	11
Bewick's Wren	71	205	55	302
House Wren	1	1	-	3
Pacific (Winter) Wren	-	5	-	-
Marsh Wren	75	20	4	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	2	3	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	203	280	65	329
Wrentit	19	93	55	86
Western Bluebird	245	174	298	242
Mountain Bluebird	1	-	-	-
Hermit Thrush	91	173	58	193
American Robin	657	1351	189	1806
Varied Thrush	7	43	18	81
Northern Mockingbird	95	46	1	86
California Thrasher	4	29	33	29
European Starling	2241	1304	218	2465
American Pipit	209	70	1	189
Cedar Waxwing	268	199	-	391

Species	SJ 12/18/11	PA 12/19/11	MtH 1/02/12	Cal-MH 12/30/11
Phainopepla	1	-	1	-
Orange-crowned Warbler	8	11	-	1
Common Yellowthroat	61	35	1	11
Yellow-rumped Warbler (form ?)	1170	458	12	779
(Audubon's)	419	593	-	110
(Myrtle)	34	12	1	28
Black-throated Gray Warbler	-	2	-	-
Townsend's Warbler	45	168	1	48
Hermit Warbler	-	1	-	-
Spotted Towhee	46	192	100	234
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	7	-	-	49
California Towhee	263	358	154	502
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	7
Lark Sparrow	69	-	33	88
Sage Sparrow	-	-	18	-
Savannah Sparrow	319	43	39	138
Grasshopper Sparrow	1	-	-	-
Fox Sparrow	49	40	-	50
Fox Sparrow (Sooty)	-	-	101	-
Fox Sparrow (Slate Colored)	-	-	9	-
Fox Sparrow (unidentified)	-	-	24	-
Song Sparrow	254	146	15	165
Lincoln's Sparrow	49	42	1	61
Swamp Sparrow	-	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	1	5	1	6
White-crowned Sparrow	1797	1080	834	1486
Golden-crowned Sparrow	632	763	773	821
sparrow sp	66	129	42	170
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	425	930	1517	1311
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	-	1	-	-
Unidentified form	-	-	71	-
Western Tanager	1	2	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	701	501	165	1644
Tricolored Blackbird	-	-	868	545
Western Meadowlark	261	241	177	573
Brewer's Blackbird	848	249	223	1698
Great-tailed Grackle	17	-	-	3
Brown-headed Cowbird	14	23	1	3
blackbird sp	239	1	269	412
Purple Finch	1	38	11	71
House Finch	1196	701	38	1482
Lesser Goldfinch	335	318	123	404
Lawrence's Goldfinch	-	-	394	-
American Goldfinch	142	63	2	101
goldfinch sp	-	15	-	-
House Sparrow	125	56	33	72
Nutmeg Mannikin	-	-	-	10
Total Species	173	168	107	148
Total	92,704	124,690	11,464	43,237

Key: sp = species undetermined
CW = Count Week

SJ = San Jose: compiled by Kirsten Holmquist
PA = Palo Alto: compiled by Al Eisner
MtH = Mount Hamilton: compiled by Bob Hirt
Cal-MH = Calero-Morgan Hill: compiled by Ann Verdi

Data entry and chart format by Bonnie Bedford-White.

2011 Christmas Bird Count Summaries

Palo Alto CBC

by Al Eisner, Compiler

The Palo Alto CBC was held December 19 in good weather; chilly early on (particularly at higher elevations) but warming up nicely. The total number of species was 168, one fewer than the previous year's. We missed six species which have been found on most recent counts, most surprisingly Black Skimmer. The other misses were Whimbrel and Sanderling (never numer-



Pacific-slope Flycatcher
by Tom Grey

ous), Red-breasted Nuthatch and Pine Siskin (irruptive species) and Tricolored Blackbird (also missed from 2004 through 2008).

The one new species for the count was the Ruff spotted in the distance at Crittenden Marsh, and confirmed by Mike Rogers, who was able to approach from the Moffett side. Many have since enjoyed this bird at closer range. Nearly as rare for the count was an Empidonax Flycatcher (most likely Pacific-slope); we have just one previous empid, a 1969 bird identified as what was then called Western Flycatcher. The female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker returned to Creek Drive in Menlo Park for its third winter (with only one count record prior to its visits). A House Wren found at a private area near Skyline Blvd. was only the seventh appearance of this species on the count, but the fourth in the past six years. Two Black-throated Gray Warblers along Stevens Creek near Homestead were also excellent finds.

Additional unusual species included an Osprey (Bedwell-Bayfront Park), Snowy Plovers (surprisingly, at Crittenden Marsh, the first on the count since 2004), Lesser Yellowlegs (2 at separate San Mateo Co. locations), Tree Swallow (5 at Felt Lake), a Hermit Warbler (Montebello OSP), Western Tanager (2 along El Camino near Stevens Creek), and a Swamp Sparrow (at the Palo Alto Baylands).

Numbers of many species were good, with high counts of Bewick's Wren and Townsend's Warbler, and Western Blue-

birds matching the previous high. The 11 Orange-crowned Warblers represented an impressive total. Raptor numbers were typical, with a good count of Red-tailed Hawks, and Red-shouldered Hawks hitting another new high; but the total for American Crow at least temporarily leveled off. For some really large numbers, check out the peeps in the accompanying tally! At the other extreme (a near miss): just a single Blue-winged Teal was found.

Thanks to Jack Cole for organizing the count, and to all the regional coordinators and the 121 participants for a great day.

San Jose CBC

by Kirsten Holmquist,
Coordinator and Compiler

The San Jose Christmas Bird Count went forward under clear and cool conditions. The season was extremely dry this year leading up to count day. By some accounts, this winter was the driest on record since the early 1900's. Likely as a result, the individual count was down from recent years. The final species count was an all time high for this count due to a large number of vagrants reported. We had a species total of 175. Participation was also at a high. 120 volunteers contributed their time to conduct the count. Thanks to all.

This year, we had several species new to the count. The first of these were two Stilt Sandpipers found in the northwest corner of A-12 (Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn). This same team located a number of other rarities: a) Eurasian Wigeons (6 on A-14), b) Wilson's Phalarope (1 on A-13), c) Lesser Yellowlegs (2 on A-12, 6 on A-15), and d) Glaucous Gull (1 juvenile on A-16). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was found on A-7 (David McIntyre, Dale Stahlecker). This team also encountered a Greater White-fronted Goose and a Barrow's Goldeneye. Tree Swallows were reported by all parties around the bay representing a minimum 88 individuals. Also reported by a few bay-side parties were Violet-Green Swallows (Bill Bousman and Jim Thomas, 15 along Coyote Creek) and (Charles Coston and Patty Ten Boom Burns, 4 west of the San Jose dump). Horned Grebes made a couple of appearances (Mike Rogers and Steve Rottenborn; 1 on A-11, 1 on A-12,

3 on A-14) and (Steve Tracey; 1 on A-16). Also reported along the shoreline area of the count were: Blue-Winged Teal (Steve Tracey, 2 in Mallard Slough in the vicinity of the EEC) and a perplexing Empidonax sp. (Pat Kenny and Roland Kenner, Sunnyvale Baylands Park).

The eastern side of the count came through with a major rarity of its own, an immature male Mountain Bluebird (Mike Mammoser, Sierra Road summit). Rob Colwell et al located the stakeout Phainopela hanging out along Marsh Road. Not to be outdone, Bob Power and Steve McHenry managed to flush a Grasshopper Sparrow in Ed Levin. A couple raptors rounded out the haul: an Osprey (Bob Power, Ed Levin) and Ferruginous Hawk (Rob Colwell et al, end of Marsh Road). Another Tree Swallow also reported in at the south end of Calaveras Reservoir (Rob Colwell et al).

Two species new to the count were found in the more urban areas of the count: Great-tailed Grackle (Mike Mammoser, 17 at Lake Cunningham Park) and White-faced Ibis (Pete Dunten et al, 1 along Thompson Creek). An Eastern Phoebe also made an appearance in the Lake Cunningham area (Greg Kerekes et al). Cackling Geese were found in two locations: 6 in Central Park (Melanie O'Brien et al) and 6 at Penitencia Creek Park (Ann Verdi and Rich Page). A Western Tanager was heard by Richard Jeffers along Los Gatos Creek. Finally, a White-Throated Sparrow was found at the old KTEH facility on Schollenberger (Ann Verdi and Rich Page).

Mt. Hamilton CBC

by Bob Hirt,
Coordinator and Compiler

On January 2, 2012 we held the Mount Hamilton CBC (CODE: CAMH). Noteworthy is the amazing record high count of Lawrence's Goldfinches. Lawrence's Goldfinches were all over with five teams reporting and the total was 394 (Isabel's team saw 101, 30 were seen at Arnold Ranch (first time), Mines Road had 85, San Antonio Valley Eco-Reserve had 6, and the Mule Trail saw an incredible 172 feeding on the chemise berries). This could be in contention for a **National High**. Weather was the best ever but conditions were dry

Count Summaries *cont'd*

and many small ponds had dried up.

New birds to the count were Common Yellowthroat (Isabel Ranch), and Eurasian Collared Dove (Hurner/Stoddard - Bill Bousman). Other unusual birds were White-throated Swift (5 over Arnold Ranch - Jeff Smith, Robert Shields, Calvin Lou, and me), Townsend's Warbler, White-throated Sparrow (Mines Road - Jimm Edgar), and Least Sandpiper (Del Puerto Canyon pond - Rob



Lawrence's Goldfinch
by Tom Grey

Furrow, Bill Walker, Mary Wisnewski and Mike Azevedo). Over 80 Wild Turkeys all in one flock and 550 Tricolored Blackbirds on the A to Z Ranch were record highs for this count. Lewis'

Woodpeckers, Sage Sparrows and "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrows are all treats up on the mountain but the 394 Lawrence's Goldfinches stole the show this year.

The Mount Hamilton team leaders were Kirsten Holmquist, Elinor Gates (also our compilation dinner hostess), Mike Rogers, Bill Bousman, Bob Power, Charles Coston, Mike Azevedo, Sarah Estrella and Bob Hirt (also Compiler).

Participants: Calvin Lou, Lotus and Keith Baker, Mike Mammoser, Richard Jeffers, Rich Page, Jennifer Rycenga, Mary Wisnewski and Bill Walker, Rob Furrow, Bruce Mast, Hazel Donaldson, Robert Shields, Jeff Smith, Jimm Edgar, Jon Hirt, Peter and Diane Hart, Dan Burmester, Doris Williams, and Sandy Gant. Thanks especially to our Hostess, Elinor Gates.

Calero-Morgan Hill CBC
Ann Verdi

Coordinator and Compiler

The Calero-Morgan Hill CBC on Dec 30, 2011 came up with 148 species for the day. In spite of dry conditions in this count circle we had 17 duck species, including 337 Common Mergansers (an all-time high). Fourteen raptor species were seen, including 4 Bald Eagles, 5 Ferruginous Hawks, 6 Peregrine Falcons, and 3 Prairie Falcons. Eight shorebird species was good for this inland count, and included Long-billed Curlew, a relatively new species for this count circle seen in the fields of Coyote Valley. Thanks to five owling parties we tallied five owl species, including Burrowing Owls in Coyote Valley and Coyote Ridge, plus 10 Barn Owls (high number for this count). We also had one count week Short-eared Owl seen along Laguna Ave in Coyote Valley on Dec 29. As for passerines, we had several all-time high numbers especially sparrows, including both towhees, Fox Spar-

row, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and a surprising 6 White-throated Sparrows. Other birds counted in high numbers included 560 Wild Turkeys, 175 Pied-billed Grebes, 12



Short-eared Owl
by Tom Grey

Brown Creepers, 193 Hermit Thrush, 48 Townsend's Warblers, and 545 Tricolored Blackbirds. Special birds of note include the following: 2 Snow Geese, 3 Ross's Geese, and one Cackling Goose seen by several parties along the Coyote Creek riparian strip, eventually landing at Parkway Lakes to be counted - one other stake-out Ross's Goose seen at Anderson Reservoir - one Greater Roadrunner along Hellyer Ave in the Diablo foothills - one N. (Yellow-shafted) Flicker at Santa Teresa County Park - one stake-out Pacific-slope Flycatcher along Los Alamitos Creek Trail - seven Chipping Sparrows at Jeffrey Fontana Park in suburban Almaden - and three Great-tailed Grackles; one at Coyote Creek Golf Course and two at Ogier Ponds. Many thanks to the 100 participants who made this day a success - hope you can join us on the next count. Until then - good birding in 2012.

Peregrine Falcons (*cont'd from page 1*)

Rock climbers, organized by the Access Fund, have been protesting the closure since 2009 and advocating for partial closure, quoting examples from other peregrine nesting sites in the country such as Pinnacles National Monument, Yosemite National Park and more. Unlike nesting sites in the Pinnacles, Yosemite and other cliffs favored by both peregrines and climbers, Summit Rock's climbing routes are all within feet of the eyrie or above it - and there are no alternative cliffs in the territory for the peregrines to relocate to if disturbed. If disturbance due to climbing causes the birds to abandon the site, there is no alternative natural and undisturbed place for them to move to in the area. There are, on the other hand, alternative sites for climbers to practice their sport: climbing options are readily available in both Sanborn Park (Indian Rock) and Castle Rock State Park.

With a unique role in local conservation advocacy, we can sometimes find ourselves disagreeing with policies and decisions made by local land-use agencies. We are very happy to



Peregrine Falcon
by Tom Grey

support and applaud County Parks' decision to implement a year-round closure of Summit Rock and of any trails in its immediate vicinity. We researched available information, visited the site, talked to rangers, commissioners, Department of Fish and Game biologists, and US Fish and Wildlife experts. Our conclusions support the assessment by County Parks that encroachment on the eyrie of Summit Rock may cause the falcons to abandon the site. We strongly believe that we must protect naturally occurring nest sites in Santa Clara County.

Please visit the conservation page on our website for suggestions of how you can support our efforts to protect the peregrine falcons of Summit Rock: <http://www.scvas.org/index.php?page=text&id=conservation>.

Learn to geocache and explore the trails in search of bird-themed "treasures"!



Explore the hands-on science stations and discover what makes birds so fascinating!

Wingding Family Fest:

A celebration of birds and spring!



Go on a bird "chase" - for birders of all levels (including beginners)!

Make bird feeders for your **own** backyard feathered friends!



Join SCVAS and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District for a **FREE** event for all ages at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve*

Saturday, March 17th, 2012
10:00am-3:00pm

Play all day or just stay for awhile! No advance registration required (though some activities have limited space - available on a first-come-first-served basis)

**Directions, contact information & schedule of events available online at www.scvas.org - click on "Kids' Corner" (or just call the SCVAS office at 408-252-3740)*

Outside Events:

March 30th-April 1st
(San Juan Cruise April 1st-3rd)
Olympic BirdFest 2012
Sequim, WA

Visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Go to www.olympicbirdfest.org for more details and to register.

April 19th-25th
17th Annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival
Arcata, CA

Experience extraordinary birding opportunities and beautiful scenery! Register online at www.godwitdays.com.

Sun & Sat, April 21 & 22
10AM-4PM

Going Native Garden Tour
Various locations throughout Santa Clara County

SCVAS is pleased to once again support this fun event.
See flyer at right.

April 27th-30th
3rd Annual Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival.

Go online to the festival website - www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org - for details and information on how to register.

William Hadley Clark 1918-2011

The Audubon community is greatly saddened over the passing of William ("Bill") Hadley Clark on July 20th, 2011. Bill and his wife, Jean, have been active members in SCVAS for many years.

Birder, naturalist, teacher, friend - he will be missed.

Board of Directors Elections

The Nominating Committee of the SCVAS Board of Directors is calling for member petitions for new members of the Board of Directors pursuant to Section 6.02 of the Bylaws. Petitions must be delivered to the SCVAS office by March 31, 2012.

Voice vote elections will be held during our Annual Meeting and potluck on June 20, 2012 at our office in McClellan Ranch Park, Cupertino.

2011-2012 Friends of SCVAS

Gifts received between December 1st, 2011 and January 31st, 2012*

\$1,000-\$5,000

Dorsey and Katherine Bass, Sarah and Noel Fenton, Vivek and Leena Khanzode, Wayne Krill, Barry and Ginger Langdon-Lassagne, George and Lilo Miller, Elizabeth Rizzi, Joy Robinson, David Speer and Tiffany Choy, Bob and Carol Taggart, J. Holley Taylor

\$500-\$999

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\$100-\$249

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\$60-\$99

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*gifts represent donations to our year-end appeal, our Save Panoche Valley Legal Fund and our Environmental Advocate Fund.

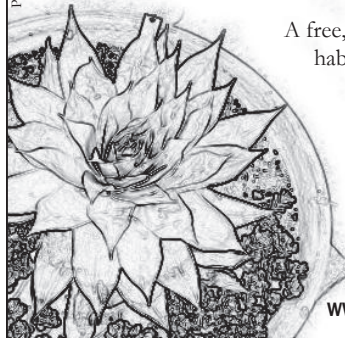
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Tenth Annual Going Native Garden Tour

Saturday, April 21 &
Sunday, April 22, 2012
10 am-4 pm
Locations throughout
Santa Clara Valley & Peninsula

Seeking
gardens &
volunteers

Photo: Agi Kebebe



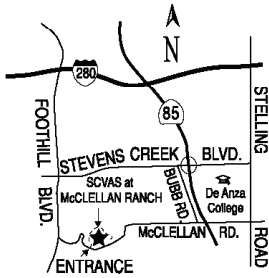
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2012 Summer Nature Days
 (with SCVAS and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District)

Day Camps for Grades 2-5: July 24th-27th, 2012

McClellan Ranch Park, Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve, and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Full details and registration information available online (go to www.scvas.org - click on "Kids' Corner") and in the May/June 2012 issue of the *Avocet*.

Summer will be here sooner than you think!

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

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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

Avocet Editor: Toby Goldberg
Avocet Line Drawings: Bonnie Bedford-White

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

<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Song Sparrow (Student)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35 American Avocet (Individual)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60 California Quail (Family)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Burrowing Owl
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250 White-tailed Kite	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Peregrine Falcon	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Golden Eagle	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

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*Come by the office to pick up your free copy of **Birding at the Bottom of the Bay**, and our **Breeding Bird Atlas** (if joining at the Burrowing Owl level or above).*

Send this information, and make all checks payable, to: SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino, CA 95014

Please note: As an organizational policy, SCVAS does not share member information with other organizations.