

THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

November-December 2012

Leaving a Legacy: Long-term Commitments Secure Long-term Conservation and Education Initiatives

by Diane and Peter Hart
SCVAS Board Members

You may not know the names Albert Martel, Earl Menefee, Janet Fisher, Marianne Dieckmann, and Antoinette Koenen, but we owe all of them a great debt of gratitude for their recent bequests to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. To honor their generosity, the SCVAS Board of Directors is creating a Legacy Fund to receive these and future bequests to the organization. The intent of the Board, as expressed in the Statement of Purpose (at right), is to reserve these gifts for special conservation and education initiatives.



Shani Kleinhaus;
SCVAS' Environmental
Advocate since 2009

One such initiative was the decision by the Board three years ago to hire Shani Kleinhaus as our Environment Advocate. The Board chose to use a portion of these bequests, along with donations from other members, as seed funding for the new Environmental Advocate position. Since being hired, Shani has worked effectively to preserve burrowing owl habitats, protect Panoche Valley, and engage volunteers in far-reaching conservation activities. Her effectiveness led SCVAS to establish an annual Environmental Advocacy Campaign that has raised over \$250,000. This campaign now supports our very successful advocacy program, while at the same time freeing legacy funds for other initiatives.

(continued on page 11)

**The Annual Christmas
Bird Count Coming Soon;
sign up now!**

- see Page 8

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund Statement of Purpose

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund supports SCVAS in its efforts to foster public awareness of native birds and their ecosystems. The fund is dedicated to helping SCVAS meet future environmental challenges and undertake new educational and conservation initiatives in its fulfillment of this mission. Including the Legacy Fund in your estate planning is one of the best ways you can ensure that SCVAS remains a powerful advocate for birds and their habitats. Your bequest will create an enduring gift so that future generations are able to enjoy the natural beauty of the Santa Clara Valley area.

General Membership Meeting Cubberley Community Center, Rm H1

Palo Alto - Middlefield & Montrose Rds

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Wednesday, November 28th

****NOTE DATE CHANGE****

“The Sky Islands of Southeastern Arizona” with Bob Power and Bill Walker



Arizona Imagry:

A “big lens” image (left - Bill Walker) and a “digiscoped” image (right - Bob Power) of an Elegant Trogon

Join Bill and Bob as they take you through an overview of why every birder should make a pilgrimage to Southeastern Arizona. While covering the extraordinary bird life found in and around the Santa Maria, Huachuca, and Chiricahua mountain ranges, Bill and Bob will alternate digiscoped images and images captured using a 500mm lens and discuss the pros and cons of each.

☞ Thank You to our 2012 CNRP Monitors!
— Page 4

☞ Late Summer Rarities and Vagrants Delight!
— Field Notes, Page 6

☞ Start the Season Off Right - with our Annual
Holiday Open House!
— Page 9

LEFT: Additional information about the November Meeting - and all up-coming General Meetings - can be found on our website at www.scvas.org.

This includes a map and driving directions to the meeting location, as well as additional information about the speakers and program.

You can also call the SCVAS office for information at 408-252-3747.

Nov - Dec '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 Nov. 3, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. **Leader:** Rich Page; (408) 377-1092. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward the hills then left on Toyon Ave. then right on Penitencia Creek Rd. and continue on into the park. Drive under the bridge and meet at the far end of the parking lot. **Notes:** Possible entrance fee. **Difficulty Level:** Trip is a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk. **LO, RC**

Sunday Nov. 4, 9:00 AM

Charleston Slough

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

Wednesday Nov. 7, 12:00 PM

City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leaders:** Freddy Howell, Allen Royer and/or Elaine Gould. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz to attend; (408) 730-7545. **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 Nov. 10, 8:00 AM

Uvas Creek Park Preserve

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling; (408) 253-7527. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in Gilroy go west on Tenth Street about a mile where it turns right and becomes Uvas Prkwy. Turn left at Miller Ave., drive over Uvas Creek and turn left into Christmas Hill Park and park in the first isle to the right. **Difficulty Level:** Trip is a fairly easy but long walk. **Notes:** Low water conditions in the creek may require an alternate birding destination in the Gilroy area. **LO, RC**

Important Contact Information Change:

As of Oct 20th, ALL residents of Santa Clara County will need to dial a "1" to call a 408 phone number (1 + 408 + 7-digit phone number). This includes residents within the 408 area code itself. We'll continue to remind our members of this change in the coming months, but please remember to follow this procedure when contacting any of the field trip leaders listed.

Sunday Nov. 11, 9:00 AM

Western San Francisco

Half day. **Leader:** Alan Hopkins; (415) 664-0983. **Directions:** From I-280 take 19th Ave. to Golden Gate Park. When you enter the park on 19th Ave. be in the left lane and take Crossover Dr. to 25th Ave. to Geary Blvd. then left on Geary. At 39th Ave., Geary becomes Point Lobos Ave.; continue west on Point Lobos past the light at 48th Ave. and turn right into the new Merrie Way parking lot. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Nov. 14, 8:30 AM

Los Capitancillos Ponds San Jose

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser; (408) 569-

9264. **Directions:** If coming from Hwy 85, exit at south Camden Ave. Proceed approx. 1 mile south on Camden. Turn left (east) onto Singletree Way near Beacon School. Park on street near PGE substation where transmission wires cross road. **Difficulty Level:** Easy 2-3 mile walk. **Notes:** We'll bird ponds for a variety of ducks and gulls. **RC, NF**

Saturday Nov. 17, 8:00 AM

Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility

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

Sunday Nov. 18, 8:00 AM

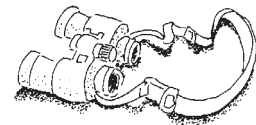
Oka Ponds

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson; (408) 996-3506. **Directions:** From Hwy 17 in Los Gatos take Lark Ave. exit west. Turn right on Oka Rd., left on Mozart Ave. and an immediate right on Oka Lane. Meet at gate. **RC**

Saturday Dec. 1, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Steve Tracey; (408) 966-3860. For directions see the Nov 4th write-up.



Special Thanksgiving Weekend Trip:

Sacramento Valley Wildlife Refuges, Gray Lodge, Sutter Buttes

Friday – Saturday, Nov. 23 – 24

(beginning at 9:00AM on Friday, Nov 23)

Full day and a half. **Leader:** Mike Mammoser; (408) 578-2429. **Directions:** Meet at Sacramento NWR headquarters (entrance fee) on I-5 approx. 20 miles north of Williams. (It's recommended that people meet and carpool from McDonald's 2nd parking lot in Williams as carpooling and use of FRS radios, set to Ch 11, will allow for best viewing possibilities on this trip). Take Road 68 exit east (towards Princeton) from I-5, then immediately north on frontage road to Refuge. **Notes:** Trip limited to fifteen people; call leader to reserve a space. Bring spotting scope, full tank of gas. Allow for a three-hour drive from the South Bay. **Highlights:** Include ducks, geese, swans, cranes, and raptors. **Difficulty Level:** Trip is highly recommended for beginning birders.

Field Trips *continued*

Sunday Dec. 2, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. **Leader:** Jim Johnson; (408) 996-3506. For directions see the write-up for Nov. 3rd. **Notes:** Possible entrance fee. **Difficulty Level:** Trip is a moderately strenuous 3-4 mile walk. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Dec. 5, 8:30 AM

Lake Cunningham Park and Thompson Creek San Jose

Half day. **Leader:** Janna Pauser; (408) 569-9264. **Directions:** From Hwy 101 in San Jose exit Tully Rd. Go east on Tully to the park entrance located on left just past Capitol Expy. Turn left into park and left again at entrance booth. Park in the Marina parking lot. **Notes:** We'll bird various locations in the park and Thompson Creek. Entrance fee of \$6 (or \$2 for seniors). This is the first Wednesday in Dec. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Dec. 5, 12:00 PM

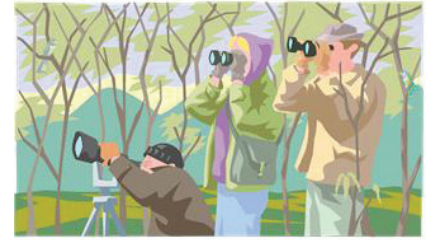
City of Sunnyvale Landfill

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

Sunday Jan. 5, 7:30 AM

County Chase

Half day. **Leader:** Bob Reiling; (408) 253-7527. Get a head start on your 2013 County Year List with some vagrant chasing. **Notes:** Bring a full tank of gas, lunch, and field guides as we attempt to track down some of the unusual birds seen on the Christmas Bird Counts in Santa Clara County. **Directions:** Meet near the entrance to the Alviso Marina parking lot. From Hwy 237 in San Jose take Gold St. north to the end, bear left on Elizabeth St. and then right on Hope St. to the Marina parking lot. Be prepared to carpool as parking may be limited at some sites. **RC**



Sunday Jan. 6, 8:00 AM

Panoche Valley

Full day. **Leader:** Clay Kempf; (831) 761-8260. **Directions:** Meet at Paicines Store on Hwy 25 approx. 11 miles south of Hollister. **Highlights:** This is one of our better "out of the county" field trips traversing oak woodland and open grassland via back roads into a unique habitat. Targeted species include Phainopepla, Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle; other possibilities include Mountain Plover, Bald Eagle, Vesper Sparrow, Greater Roadrunner and Chukar. **Notes:** Bring lunch and a full tank of gas; carpooling is strongly recommended due to limited parking on the narrow roads. **IMPORTANT:** Do not expect to use the restrooms at the Paicines Store, as their use is limited to paying customers (we encourage patronage of local businesses).

SCVAS Events Calendar:

Tues. 11/6

ELECTION DAY

Don't Forget to VOTE!



Wed. 11/7 & 12/5, 7:30-9PM

The Bay Area Bird Photographers

Meeting - Lucy Evans Baylands

Interpretive Center - East Embarcadero

Rd., Palo Alto

Topics TBA; see www.scvas.org/babp

Tues. 11/8 & 12/13, 9:30AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group

- meets at the home of Pat Dubois,

17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos

(408) 395-4264

Topic 11/13: Juncos

Topic 12/11: Clark's Nutcracker

Mon. 11/12, 1-7PM

Fundraiser Mailing Party

McClellan Ranch Preserve

Call 408-252-3740 to help out.

Fri. 11/30, 6:30-8:30PM

Holiday Open House Preview Party

Music, art, light refreshments, and

maybe even a special feathered guest!

AND

Sat. 12/1, 10-2 PM

Holiday Open House

McClellan Ranch Preserve

See Page 9

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's)

Need your Help!!

Sun. 12/16

San Jose CBC

Mon. 12/17

Palo Alto CBC

Sat. 12/29

Calero-Morgan Hill

CBC

Wed. 1/2

Mt. Hamilton CBC

See page 8 or go to our website (www.scvas.org) for more details:



Give the gift of birding!

Come visit the SCVAS Nature Shop for ideas on what to give that bird-or-nature-lover in your life!

Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

SO many Projects are moving forward this fall! Here are a few updates on issues Shani and the Environmental Action Committee are working on, and a call for help for some of these projects:

Cupertino:

The EPA has determined that many rodent baits (such as D-Con) cause unreasonable risk of poisoning to children, pets and wildlife. Our youngest EAC member, Monte Vista High School student Alice Yin, is advocating for a "Don't take the Bait" ordinance in Cupertino. Hopefully, her campaign would result in a reduction in availability and use of rodent bait, and reduce risk of poisoning of raptors and other species that may prey on poisoned or dead rodents.

We are also following the proposed Parkside Trails development on Stevens Canyon Road.

Palo Alto:

We continue to follow the development of the Natural Environment Element of the General Plan, hoping to enhance Palo Alto's protection and enhancement of birds and their habitats in parks and open space as well as within the urban landscapes of the city.

We are looking for volunteers to campaign for: 1) Crow-proof trash bins in parks and schools in an effort to reduce availability of food to nuisance species. 2) Don't Take the Bait campaign to reduce secondary poisoning due to unsafe rodent bait. **Please contact Shani if you are a Palo Alto resident and interested in helping in these campaign efforts.**

We are also following the proposed Highway 101 trail crossing at Adobe Creek.

Mountain View:

SCVAS continues to work closely with Google staff, providing information and insights on building a bird-safe campus. **You can help** by providing Shani (shani@scvas.org) with bird observation (species, known nesting occurrences) data from the wetland along Fitness Trail, between Charleston Road and Sterlin Ct. - **Make this your weekly birding destination!!!**

Mountain View is also looking to expand its sustainability framework, and we are recommending an Integrated pest Management Program that would include a "Don't take the Bait" component, similar to the one Alice is working on in Cupertino.

With several other Environmental Organizations, we are advocating for the development of a robust Riparian Corridor ordinance to protect the city's aquatic and riparian habitats.

San Jose:

Seven years in planning, the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan is now considered by the County and participant Cities. In San Jose, the Mayor and several city council members are concerned that the plan may impede development. We are working to convince the City that the Plan would in fact streamline and facilitate development in less sensitive areas, and protect habitat for burrowing owls and endangered species

We continue to follow a proposed residential development in the flood plane of Penitencia Creek (Southeast corner of Mabury Road and Educational Park Drive.)

Please contact shani@scvas.org if you are interested in helping with any of these projects.

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Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg, Programs Coordinator

Volunteers come in all shapes, sizes and ages here at SCVAS - and do so many wonderful things - that it's hard to talk about them all as often as we'd like. For this issue, I would just like to send a little bit of praise and thanks to the many many volunteers who work so diligently with the Cavity Nesters Recovery Program (CNRP), now in its 16th year.

Participating in the CNRP monitoring program is definitely not one of the "easy" assignments! Volunteers are asked to record data by monitoring nest boxes throughout the breeding season (Feb-Aug). For some, this requires long hours of walking and carrying equipment, contending with "unfriendlies" (such as ticks, wasps, poison oak, thistles, and more), and sadly, dealing with the heartache of a nest that has been lovingly monitored all season only to experience full nestling mortality right before they were ready to fledge. Sometimes, it's just the frustration of diligently carrying out the weekly monitoring with no nesting attempts to show for the effort.

Despite these difficulties, however, our nest box volunteers are some of the most dedicated and cheerful volunteers you could ever hope to meet. When we meet at the end of the season, we always have stories to share, encouragement to provide, and helpful suggestions for the next season.

Not to let the hard times discourage us, it's always wonderful to be reminded of just how far the program has come! In spite of a tough year, monitors experienced many moments of wonder and joy as they watched "their" birds beat the odds and join the next generation. Some monitors recorded new species - like the Western Bluebird - for the very first time in their boxes this year. And we saw a successful fledge number of 1953 young cavity nesting birds (with more data still to be tabulated). As we're reminded often, those successes make the whole experience worth it!

Of course, the wheels are always turning and churning out new ideas, and our monitors are always up to the challenge! We'll look forward to 2013 with more trails, more nest boxes, and more opportunities to share this important program with the public.

Thank you nest box monitors for all that you do!

If this - or any other volunteer opportunity - sounds like something you'd enjoy, please check out our website - www.scvas.org and click on "Volunteer" - or send me an email at programs@scvas.org.

Adult Education Classes - up-coming in 2012/2013

The following classes are sponsored by the SCVAS Education Committee. To register please call the office at (408) 252-3747 or 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.

Bird Photography in the Field with Ashok Khosla, Peter LaTourrette, and Bill Walker

If you love birds and want to capture those fleeting moments - join a team of experienced bird photographers and get the personalized coaching you need to take better pictures of your birding experiences. Curious about places to go for bird photography? Trying to decide what gear to buy? Perplexed and puzzled by picture processing? Then join us and learn how to improve the drama of your photos and bring home more keepers.



The class has three parts - an evening class to discuss bird photography techniques; a morning Saturday session in the field; and an afternoon session at SCVAS headquarters

learning how to post-process your digital images (we'll stop for lunch in between). All levels of photographic skills are welcome to join, as are digiscopers; please bring a computer to the Saturday afternoon session. To **sign up**, please contact the SCVAS office as listed above. For specific questions about the class, please contact Ashok at ashok@seeingbirds.com.

Dates: Intro Class: Thur. 11/8; 7-10PM. Field: Sat. 11/10; 7AM-10:30AM. Lunch: Sat. 11/10; 11:30AM-12:30PM. Post-Field Session: Sat. 11/10; 1-5PM.

Location: Intro Class: McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino. Field: TBD (most likely Shoreline Park in Mountain View or Radio Road Ponds in Redwood City). No-host Lunch: Mings Restaurant in Palo Alto (1700 Embarcadero Rd). Post-field Session: McClellan Ranch.

Fee: \$50 (members) or \$85 non-members.

Class size limited to 15.

Duck Identification Made Easy with Bob Power

See Sept-Oct Avocet or online for full details

Dates: Class: Tues. 12/04; 7-8:30PM. Field: Sun. 12/09; 7AM-5PM.

Location: Class: McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino. Field: Various

locations (driving required).

Fee: \$30 members; \$65 non-members.

Additional Information: Please do not sign up for this class unless you are willing to drive or ride in a 4-person carpool.

Class size limited to 15; only a few spaces remain.

Looking ahead to 2013:

(Additional Field Seminar details are available in the Sept-Oct Avocet, or online - or just contact Bob Power at bob@scvas.org)

Southeastern Arizona

May 10th-19th

with Bob Power and David Wimpfheimer

Cave Creek Canyon, the Huachuca and Chiricahua high country, Patagonia Roadside Rest area, and enough specialty birds to satisfy the most avid birders; in short, one of the top birding destinations in North America.

Only 5 spaces left!

Fees: \$2195/person, double-occupancy. \$450 single supplement. Deposit of \$300 required by 12/1.

Alaska: Denali National Park and Kenai Fjords National Park

June 21st – July 5th

with Bob Power and David Wimpfheimer

Two spectacular national parks mark the northern and southern bounds of this trip: Denali and Kenai Fjords. Denali, with the incomparable Alaska Range and around every corner a chance for Grizzly Bear, Moose, Caribou, or one of

Only 3 spaces left!

Alaska's other magnificent mammals. Nearby, the Denali Highway's extraordinary scenery harbors more mammals, along with Long-tailed Jaeger, Arctic Warbler, and other species at the limits of their range. Taking no back seat is Kenai Fjords, with its immense ice fields, breathtaking mountains rising from the ocean, and thousands of breeding seabirds. June marks the peak of breeding activity with all of our target species in their finest plumage. The birds we'll be seeking comprise a long list of highlights: White-winged Crossbill, Three-toed Woodpecker, Northern Hawk-owl, Long-tailed Jaeger, Horned Puffin, Arctic Tern, Kittlitz's Murrelet, Willow Ptarmigan, Gyrfalcon, and so many more. There are fabulous birding trips, amazing birding trips, wonderful birding trips... and then there's Alaska!

Fees: \$3950/person, double-occupancy; \$975 single supplement. Deposit of \$1000 due by 1/15/13 to hold reservation.



Additional Information: Fees do not include airfare. A portion of your fees represent a tax-deductible donation to Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, supporting our educational programs. **Trip limited to 10 participants.**

Top Left: Tufted Duck; Bottom Right: Long-tailed Jaeger
photos © Ashok Khosla - seeingbirds.com

Field Notes

(August-September 2012)

by Bill Bousman

Geese through Phalaropes

Another (?) second-year **Greater White-fronted Goose** appeared at Vasona CP on 10 Aug (JPa, KBU) and has remained at least through 12 Sep (v.ob.). An eclipse male **Blue-winged Teal** was seen along Adobe Creek on 14 Aug (WGB). Two female/immature birds were at Vasona CP on 20 Sep (KBU, JPa). Occasionally a few **Redheads** show up in late September, but the 109 found on Pond A9 on 28 Sep (MMR et al.) is an early high count. A single **Pelagic Cormorant** on Pond A10 the same day repeats a fall pattern of recent years for this location (MMR et al.). An **American Bittern** was seen at the Ogier Avenue ponds on 2 Sep (KHo et al.), this may be one of our rare residents or a very early wintering bird. A basic **Cattle Egret** was seen along Thompson Creek above Tully Road 30-31 Aug (JPa, KBU), but did not remain. Single **White-faced Ibis** were found at the Alviso EEC on 15 Aug (HS) and the Mountain View Forebay on 20 Sep (KKe, GZ, KDeM et al.). A juvenile **Swainson's Hawk** was over the Mountain View Forebay on 22 Sep (RFu) and a second bird was seen over Campbell later in the day (LMy). Flatland **Prairie Falcons** were found at the Alviso EEC on 15 Aug (HS) and Lake Cunningham on 21 Sep (JPa et al.). A bird along Marsh Road on 4 Sep (MO'B) may be resident. A juvenile **Sora** at the SCVWD ponds on 3 Aug (JPa) seemed early. The high count of **Snowy Plovers** was 31 on Pond A13 and New Chicago Marsh on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, LCr). By the end of the period, birds were using the salt flats east of the Alviso Marina CP for a night roost (v.ob.). A **Black Oystercatcher** was found on closed refuge ponds on 6 Sep (RT, CS *fide* MMR), only the third record for the county. It has been a poor passage for **Lesser Yellowlegs**, probably because of the poor condition of their preferred habitat. High counts were of two birds in the South County Regional WasteWater Authority (SCRWA) treatment ponds in Gilroy on 29 Aug (WGB) and two in New Chicago Marsh at the end of Gold Street on 29 Sep (MMR et al.). A juvenile **Ruddy Turnstone** was found in Pond A15

in Alviso on 21 Aug (PDU) and two adults were in closed refuge ponds on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, LCr). A **Black Turnstone** in Pond A15 on 5 Sep (PDU) and another in Pond A9 on 28 Sep (MMR et al.) were the second and third birds this year. It has been a good fall for **Red Knots** with small numbers seen over the period. High counts included 109 on closed refuge ponds on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, LCr) and 74 on Pond A9 on 28 Sep (MMR et al.). Seven **Sanderling**

Rarities included a Black Oystercatcher, Black Swifts, eight vagrant fall warblers, and a Baltimore Oriole.

were in New Chicago Marsh on 30 Aug (MJM) and singles were seen on Pond A12 on 11 Sep (PDU) and 16 Sep (MMR). Four **Baird's Sandpipers** were found in ponds along the Alviso Slough Trail on 19 Aug (PDU); later in the day at least eight birds were there (MMR, ARo). Lesser numbers were found through 22 Aug (v.ob.). Another Baird's inland at Almaden Lake on 22 Aug (JPa) was unusual as most of our fall passage birds are found near the Bay. The first **Pectoral Sandpiper** of the fall was on Pond A12 on 11 Sep (PDU). Small numbers were found in Alviso through the end of the period with at least six birds at State and Spreckles on 30 Sep (MJM et al.). **Dunlin** typically arrive in late September so one at Charleston Slough on 10 Aug (BM) and seven on closed refuge ponds on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, LCr) were unusual. A juvenile **Ruff** was found on Pond A12 on 17 Sep (PDU) and remained at least through the next day (v.ob.). A basic adult was at State and Spreckles on 23 Sep (SCT) and 29 Sep (MMR et al., v.ob.). As expected, the number of **Wilson's Phalaropes** decreased in August with a high of 125 in the Sunnyvale WPCP oxidation ponds on 18 Aug (AME). **Red-necked Phalarope** numbers peaked there with at least 2000 birds on 3 Sep (MJM, LCr). Few were found at all by the end of the period.

Terns through Nuthatches

Staging **Least Terns** did not show up until 25 Aug when three were found in Pond A2E and another two on a closed refuge pond (MMR, MJM, LCr). The peak count was of 15-20 birds on 31 Aug (MDO), the last birds were seen on 3 Sep (RWR, FV). A juvenile **Black Tern** was seen on a closed refuge pond on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, LCr) and may be the same bird found on Pond A2E on 2-3 Sep (v.ob.). An adult, mostly in breeding plumage was seen on Pond A2E on 31 Aug (DPe, DWe) and remained there through 2 Sep (v.ob.). A second-year **Common Tern** was in Pond A2E on 27 Aug (WGB). Two juvenile Common Terns were seen on a closed refuge pond on 7 Sep (MMR et al.) and possibly the same birds were scoped from the Alviso levee on 29 Sep (MMR et al.). The first **Elegant Tern** of the season was one on Pond A1 in Mountain View on 1 Aug (DN). Twenty-five or more birds were over Charleston Slough on 12 Aug (SCT et al.) and good numbers of Elegants were found in many ponds bordering the Bay through the end of the period (v.ob.). Life can be hard for juvenile **Common Murres** trapped in the South Bay. A juvenile upstream of Crittenden Lane on Stevens Creek was found on 4 Sep (BalS) and by dusk was hauled out on the mud, not far from a 2nd lifeless murre (MMR). Another juvenile was found on a closed refuge pond on 7 Sep (MMR et al.). A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen in The Villages in San Jose on 7 Aug (MF). Two were along Sweetwater Creek in San Antonio Valley on 7 Sep (WGB). One was northwest of Hellyer Avenue in grasslands on 28 Sep (BJ). Nine **Black Swifts** were seen over Monte Bello OSP on 17 Sep



Black Oystercatcher
© Tom Grey

Field Notes *cont'd*

(GHa), two stayed to forage, but the others headed south along the ridge. We have no previous fall records. The fall passage of **Vaux's Swifts** seemed about normal. High counts included 32 birds over Vasona CP on 21 Aug (JPa et al.) and 20 near Alviso on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, LCr). Passage **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** took advantage of Morgan Hill feeders 4 Aug-23 Sep (SCR, MJM), with at least three on the latter date. A female/immature was reported from Lake Cunningham on 13 Sep (WGB). The only **Lewis's Woodpeckers** in San Antonio Valley were singles on 1 Aug (LMY) and 7 Sep (WGB). An adult female **Purple Martin** was over Monte Bello OSP on 6 Aug (GHa). A female-plumaged bird was seen at the Palo Alto Baylands on 10 Sep (MMR). It looks like a strong **Red-breasted Nuthatch** irruption, starting a month early. The first flatland bird was heard at the Sunnyvale Baylands on 6 Sep (RWR). Many birds are in the mountains as well as the lowlands: six were in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 7 Sep (JPa, KBu) and 10 were in yellow pines in Henry Coe SP on 19 Sep (WGB).

Warblers through Goldfinches

The first **Northern Waterthrush** of the season was along Stevens Creek above Crittenden Lane on 30 Aug (JM), and 6 Sep (BH et al.). Another bird was found in the Mountain View Forebay on 2 Sep (JM). One seen in Charleston Road marsh 15 Sep (DWe) and subsequently is likely wintering again and may be the same bird first seen along Stevens Creek. A **Black-and-White Warbler** was found along Stevens Creek above Crittenden Lane on 16 Sep (DWe). An adult **Tennessee Warbler** was seen at Blackberry Farm on 11 Sep (RCP), and was found again on 13 Sep (v.ob.). A bright hatch-year bird was found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park 24 Sep (PKe, RKe, WGB) and remained there through 28 Sep (m.ob.). A dull hatch-year bird was seen there on 30 Sep (RFu, PKe). The only **Nashville Warbler** during the period was a dull hatch-year bird at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 28 Sep (AB *vide* JT). One to four **MacGillivray's Warblers** were seen along the Guadalupe River between Tasman and Trimble 15 and 29 Sep (SCR). A bird found at the

Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 20 Sep (RWR) was also seen again on 23 Sep (DWe) and 26 Sep (AV). Two birds were found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 29 Sep (SCR). An adult male **American Redstart** was seen at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 24 Aug (PKe, RKe, AS). A **Northern Parula** was seen along the Guadalupe River below Montague on 15 Sep (SCR). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park 22 Sep (MJM, LCr, v.ob.) and enjoyed during an SCVAS field trip. **Blackpoll Warblers** included singles at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 22 Sep (GZ, PKe, RKe, v.ob.), along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 29 Sep (SCR), and near the Mountain View Forebay on 30 Sep (DN, JB). The only **Palm Warbler** so far this fall was one at Lake Cunningham on 21 Sep (SCR). Fall **Clay-colored Sparrows** have started out well with singles in the Palo Alto Baylands on 17 Sep (MDo), along the Guadalupe River Trail north of Blossom Hill Road 24-25 Sep (JPa, v.ob.), on Laguna Avenue in the Coyote Valley on 26 Sep (MJM, SMA), and at Monte Bello OSP on 27 Sep (GHa). An adult female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was found along Stevens Creek above Crittenden Lane on 18 Aug (MMR) and remained there until at least 14 Sep (m.ob.). An adult male was seen at Vasona CP on 20 Aug (MK, GZ, RFu, v.ob.) and again on 1 Sep (KS, HD, JPa). Apparently two different **Blue Grosbeaks** were along Stevens Creek above Crittenden Lane. A female was seen on 15 Sep (PLD) that was molting its secondaries and had worn tail feathers, whereas a possibly hatch-year bird found the next day (MMR) and seen through 18 Sep (v.ob.) showed little wear. An immature male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was seen at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 8 Aug (PDU) and 22 Aug (MMR, MJM, LCr). Two immature males were nearby on 7 Sep (PDU). Female-type birds were seen there 8-11 Sep (DWe, v.ob.). The **Great-tailed Grackles** apparently had a good nesting year at Lake Cunningham, 54 were counted there on 30 Aug (JPa, KBu). A male **Baltimore Oriole** was found at Vasona CP on 12 Aug (JPa, KBu) and remained at least through 25 Aug (m.ob.). This is the fifth county record. Single **Red Crossbills** were calling as they flew over Monte Bello OSP on 17 and 21 Sep (GHa). A **Pine Siskin** was in a Los Gatos yard on 28 Aug (KBu), and one or



Baltimore Oriole
© Pete LaTourrette

two birds have been seen over Monte Bello OSP more or less regularly 11 Sep to the end of the period (GHa). The only reports of **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were of 14 along Colorado Creek near Mines Road and four at the Arnold Pond on Arroyo Bayo, both on 7 Sep (WGB), and one over Monte Bello OSP on 26 Sep (GHa).

Observers: John Blakelock (JB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Al Bruno (AB), Karen Burnson (KBu), Lea Crisp (LCr), Helen Daley (HD), Karen DeMello (KDeM), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PLD), Pete Dunten (PDU), Al Eisner (AME), Mary Fullerton (MF), Rob Furrow (RFu), Beth Hamel (BH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Kirsten Holmquist (KHo), Bob Juhl (BJ), Mary Kelly (MK), Kathy Kendrick (KK), Roland Kenner (RKe), Pat Kenny (PKe), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Steve Mammoser (SMA), Juliana Manoliu (JM), Brooke Miller (BM), Lisa Myers (LMY), David Nickerson (DN), Matt O'Brien (MO'B), Janna Pauser (JPa), Don Pendleton (DPe), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alma Rogers (ARo), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Bilal al Shahwany (BalS), Harjeet Singh (HS), Ashutosh Sinha (AS), Kendric Smith (KS), Cheryl Strong (CS), Rachel Tertes (RT), Jerry Ting (JT), Steve Tracey (SCT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AV), Dave Weber (DWe), and Gena Zolotar (GZ).

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

The Christmas Bird Counts are Almost Here!

Join us for another year of fun, adventure, and excitement as we help add to the body of bird research and knowledge throughout the country! Contact the compiler of the region you are interested in (see below). **BIG NEWS** - there is no longer a \$5 fee to participate!

SAN JOSE Region

Yes, it is almost that time of year again ... time to get down and dirty in service of the feathered folk. The San Jose Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Sunday, December 16th. Birders of all experience levels are welcome and needed. Bird identification skills are great but other skills are important too, such as:

1) spotter, able to point and say "Bird!"

and

2) tally-man, able to make small marks on increasingly grubby bits of paper.

We are blessed with habitats to suit anyone's fancy: shoreline, oak woodlands, lake-side, or riparian, we can accommodate you. So, come have fun and contribute to an important, on-going biological survey.

The countdown dinner will review all birds seen for the day. The Leininger Center in Kelley Park is the host location. Donations to help off-set the cost of a yummy pizza dinner are, of course, welcome. If you are interested in participating in the count, please contact Kirsten Holmquist before December 10 at 408.747.0988 or via email at kirsten.holmquist@comcast.net.

PALO ALTO Region

Monday, December 17, is the date you should set aside to join the Palo Alto Christmas Bird Count. It's FREE, it's fun, and whether you are a novice or an expert, you're sure to have a rewarding experience. This count, centered near Stanford, includes the trails, parks and preserves from the bay to and beyond Skyline Drive. Parts of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties are included. On a CBC, every sparrow, every gull and indeed, every bird is important, and there is always the thrill of finding something uncommon or rare.

For more information on how you can be part of this exciting day, contact Jack Cole at 408-996-0434 or Snoyowl@yahoo.com.

CALERO-MORGAN HILL Region

The Calero-Morgan Hill CBC will be held on Saturday, December 29. This inland count is centered in mid-south Santa Clara County and includes the Diablo Range foothills to the east and portions of the Santa Cruz Mountains in the west with valleys, parks, ranchlands, riparian corridors and reservoirs in between. Some areas of interest include a riparian stretch of Coyote Creek (including Ogier Ponds), Almaden Lake Park, Santa Clara County Water District Headquarters, Santa Teresa County

Park, Quicksilver County Park, Mount Umunhum, Edenvale Garden Park, Guadalupe Oak Grove Park, and inland reservoirs including Almaden, Calero, Chesbro, and a portion of Anderson Reservoir.

While the purpose of the CBC is to census our resident and wintering birds, some special birds seen on previous counts include Snow Goose, Glaucous Gull, American Bittern, Greater Roadrunner, Rufous Hummingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and American Redstart.

We welcome newcomers, and for those who are CBC "veterans", a bit of good news this year as we have been informed by National Audubon that we no longer need to collect a \$5 participant fee.

If you are interested in joining us on this annual citizen science adventure, please contact Ann Verdi at wodu10@aol.com or 408-266-5108.

MT. HAMILTON Region

Mark your calendars for January 2nd! We hope to have a great count again through the Mt. Hamilton and San Antonio Valley area. Count leaders are especially needed. Contact Bob Hirt - 408-821-2732 (cell) - as soon as possible to participate.

Young Audubon Winter Adventures

Our annual excursion to see those strange and wonderful Elephant Seals at Año Nuevo State Park is almost here!

Space is limited, so be sure to sign-up early!

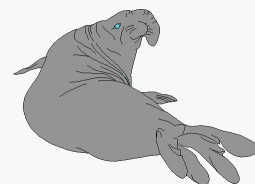
Elephant Seal Walks at Año Nuevo State Park
President's Day Weekend: Mon, February 18th
Times still TBD (check back after Dec 21st)

Ages: 7-years-old and up

Cost: \$7/person for members; \$9/person for non-members

More details will be available on our website, www.scvas.org, and in the Jan/Feb issue of the Avocet.

And stay tuned for our Day-of-Service event in January! Details coming soon!





Join us for our annual
Holiday Open House!

*Saturday, December 1st;
10:00 AM until 2:00 PM*

- *Enjoy Holiday refreshments and a special one day discount.*
- *Browse through our books, jewelry, ornaments, and other bird related gift items.*
- *Enjoy a special display of paintings and photography by local artists.*
- *Visit with Staff*
- *Live bird presentation!*
- *Pick up your special 2013 Calendar (see below)*

All proceeds go to our education and conservation programs

*For more details, please contact Susan at (408) 252-3747
at the SCVAS Office and Nature Shop
22221 McClellan Road • Cupertino, CA*

No RSVP is necessary - but we hope to see you there!



2013 California Wildlife Poster Contest Winners Calendar

Each year SCVAS sponsors a Wildlife Poster contest for students from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Through the experience of creating their posters, children learn about our precious native species and discover ways to become passionate about conservation.

Each submission must contain California wildlife in native habitat and this beautiful calendar celebrates our panel's top picks! Proceeds from the sale of this calendar go to our Education programs.

Makes a great gift for anyone who supports environmental education!



Pre-order this calendar by calling Susan at 408-252-3747, and pick up your calendar during one of our Open House events in December.

Two of the 1st Place winners highlighted in last year's 2012 Calendar. Photos taken by Ashok Khosla; poster images used by permission

The Avocet Circle

We are pleased to recognize the following generous donors who have donated or raised \$1,000 or more in the 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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Outside Events of Interest:

SCVAS always loves to support fun, educational and bird-related activities wherever they are! Here are a few that we've learned about, and that we think our members might enjoy:



Tundra Swan
 © Ashok Khosla

Swan Tours in Yuba County
CA Dept. Fish & Game
 Nov-Jan; 9:30AM & 1:00PM
 Go to www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/2/swantours/ for details and to register

16th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium
Thur-Sun, Nov 15-18
 Stockton Hilton Hotel, Stockton CA
 Join birders from around the state (and the world!) for engaging programs and bird-filled trips.
 Go to www.cvbs.org for details and to register



SCVAS' WINTER WISH-LIST

'Tis the season - when the SCVAS office starts thinking about the coming year, and what we might need to accomplish all of our goals. And thanks to the generosity of our members, our wish-lists often get fulfilled - for which we are extremely grateful!

As we approach 2013, we're starting to notice some gaps in our needs-vs-haves, and once again are turning to our membership first for help. So, if you have any of the following items, and might be interested in donating them to a very good cause, please let us know:

- **Med/Large Toaster Oven** in good condition
- **Bird gifts or art** (to be used for event raffles)



- **Apple computers with Intel Processors** (we know this is a big one - we're just starting our search here...)
- **Apple laptops** (OS 10.5 or higher)



Please contact us at 408-252-3747 or scvas@scvas.org for more information or to make a donation. In-kind donations are tax deductible.

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Gifts received between August 1st, 2012 and September 30th, 2012

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Founded in 1926, SCVAS has grown over 86 years into one of the largest National Audubon chapters in California. It has also become a highly respected conservation organization through its efforts to educate our diverse community about the benefits of preserving and enjoying nature as well as its support for strategies that protect native ecosystems, particularly those of birds. Bequests to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Legacy Fund are an investment in the vitality of our organization. Watch future issues of *The Avocet* for information on how you can leave your own bequest to the SCVAS Legacy Fund.

SCVAS Legacy Fund --

Recognizing all friends who have included SCVAS in their estate plans, past and present:*

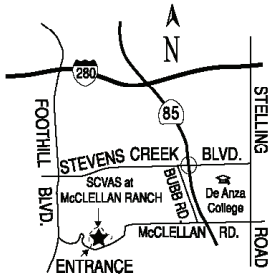
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*If you are not on this list and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is already included in your estate plans, please let us know. We would like to include you as a member of the Legacy Fund.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
 22221 McClellan Road
 Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: 408-252-3747
 Fax: 408-252-2850
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Saturday

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

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

2012 Volume 59, Number 6

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

\$250 White-tailed Kite \$500 Peregrine Falcon \$1000 Golden Eagle 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.