

# THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

July-August 2013

## California Parks Commission Decision Betrays Audubon Trust

by Shani Kleinhaus

SCVAS Environmental Advocate

Big Basin Redwood State Park is one of our most beloved regional parks, and SCVAS members frequent its trails and value its beauty and serenity. Ancient redwood groves in the park provide breeding habitat for the southernmost population of the marbled murrelet, a small, federally threatened seabird of the auk family. Murrelets and their nests have been detected most frequently in the Waddell Creek watershed, which is the most developed portion of the Park.

The population of marbled murrelets along the Pacific coast has declined steeply over the past decades. Experts believe that nest predation by corvids (jays, crows and ravens) is the primary reason for decline in California; and that reducing nest predation is the most effective means for improving population viability in the region. Experts also believe that high numbers of corvids in the Big Basin Redwood State Park persist due to food scavenged at campgrounds and other areas of human activity.

Last year, California State Parks released a new General Plan for improvements of Big Basin Redwood State Park that would allow more visitors to enjoy a wider network of trails, campgrounds, cabins and activities. The planning process for the General Plan could and should have been an opportunity to improve recreation facilities AND to increase the protection of the murrelet habitat. We had hoped that the new plan would address use patterns in some campgrounds and would dramatically improve trash and food scrap management, actions needed to reverse the decline of this species. Instead, the new plan paid little attention to the murrelets, with only vague and non-binding mitigation measures to address impacts of construction, recreation and intensification of activities in the old growth redwood groves where the murrelets nest. Comments from government agencies, conservation organizations and thousands of individuals had some effect, but the plan remained preferential to

development over conservation.

The California Park Commission met on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2013, three days past this year's International Endangered Species Day. Following a briefing by staff on the new General Plan, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative spoke to emphasize the importance of minimizing impacts of recreational activities in marbled murrelet habitat, and recommended the relocation and removal of recreational facilities to avoid marbled murrelet habitat. This statement was followed by public comments from SCVAS, Sequoia Audubon, Audubon California, and the Center for Biological Diversity. Environmental Advocate Shani Kleinhaus and SCVAS intern Brittany Shulter asked the commissioners to delay approval of the plan and to consider improvements that would protect the marbled murrelet. We asked the commissioners not to break our trust by utilizing a "statement of overriding consideration" (a legal statement that allows the agency to prioritize economic and recreational development while causing potential irreversible harm to natural resources). But the commissioners did just that; they approved the plan stating, *"the social, educational, and recreational considerations of the proposals contained in the Big Basin Redwoods SP General Plan and its implementation outweigh the potential adverse environmental effects they may cause... Approval of the [Plan] will result in a potentially significant environmental impact to the habitat of the marbled murrelet [sic] habitat that cannot be substantially lessened or avoided at this*

*continued on page 3*



*A Marbled Murrelet in breeding plumage  
© Peter LaTourrette*

- ❖ *Progress and Updates from our Environmental Advocate* — Page 3
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# July - Aug '13 Field Trips

(Full details for all of our Field Trips are also available online at [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org))

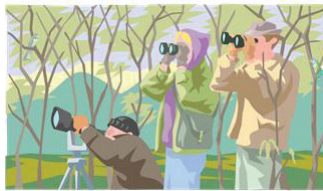
Please carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing.

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

## Wednesday July 3, 12:00 PM

### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leaders:** Freddy Howell and Allen Royer. 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 July 13, 8:00 AM

### Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. **Directions:** Meet at Terminal Way at the end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mountain View. **Difficulty Level:** All are encouraged to attend but birding will be geared toward the beginning birder.

## Wednesday Aug. 7, 12:00 PM

### City of Sunnyvale Landfill

One hour. **Leaders:** Freddy Howell and Allen Royer. Contact organizer Silviana Ruiz (408) 730-7545 to attend. **Directions:** See write-up for July 3rd.

## Saturday Aug. 10, 8:30 AM

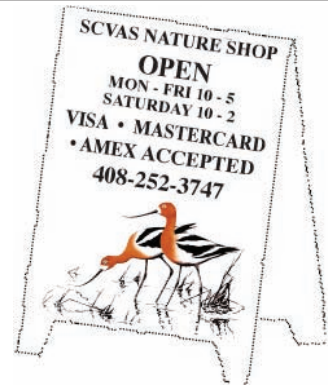
### Ano Nuevo State Reserve

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

## Sunday August 18, 8:00 AM

### Charleston Slough

Half day. **Leader:** Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. **Directions:** See the write-up for July 13th.



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

Support local artists and young entrepreneurs by shopping our collection of consignment items



Floy Zittin's beautiful watercolors (left) and Tuko Pamoja bags (right) are just some of the items available in the SCVAS Nature Shop

## SCVAS & Outside Events Calendar:

Wed. 7/10 & 8/14; 3-4:30PM

**Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws**

McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

Free workshops for all ages! No RSVP required, but please be on time. Go to our website,

[www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org), for more details.

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**Young Audubon Summer Series**  
(see pages 5 & 10 for more details):

Mon-Fri 7/22-26; 9:00AM-3:00PM  
SCVAS/MROSD Present:

**Summer "Nature Days" Day Camp**

Fun days to get outside and explore! Locations vary as we enjoy some of our beautiful local open space areas.

For all children entering grades 2-6.

Sat. 8/17; 8:00-10:00AM

**Bird Banding with SFBBO**

Coyote Creek Banding Station, Milpitas

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August 22-25

**Western Field Ornithologists Conference**

Olympia, WA

For full details and to register, go to [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org)

**Looking Ahead:**

September 12-15  
Featuring our very own  
**Bob Power!**  
MONTEREY BAY BIRDING FESTIVAL  
Designed for seasoned

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

Go to [www.montereybaybirding.org](http://www.montereybaybirding.org) for more details and how to register

Sat. 9/28; 7AM-4PM

**Stevens Creek 50K/SCVAS Benefit Run**

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

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# Conservation Corner

By Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

## SCVAS partners with Intuit to install nest boxes on campus

This spring, Intuit and SCVAS volunteer Dave Cook developed a nest box trail at Intuit's corporate headquarters in Mtn. View. Dave has committed a significant amount of time to the installation of the nest boxes on campus, training Intuit employees, monitoring and even redesigning boxes to exclude house sparrows. Two pairs of western bluebirds and a pair of Bewick's wrens used the boxes to raise young, to the delight of the participants at Intuit.

This program has great potential as a tool to involve employees of local corporations in hands-on bird conservation. We hope to learn more and thank Dave – and Intuit – for an encouraging start.

## SCVAS appeals San Jose's approval of a Dirt Stockpile Project by Alviso

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) recognizes that between the date a project is approved and the date a project is constructed, changes may occur. When the changes are minor, there is no need for a new public participation process. Where significant changes are involved, public participation is needed and a Supplemental Environmental Impact report is usually prepared.

In June 2013, SCVAS appealed to the City of San Jose the approval of a "stockpiling of dirt" west of N. 1<sup>st</sup> St. by Alviso. This approval relied on a 13-year-old Environmental Impact Report for a Cisco Systems campus. The campus was to be built on 150-acres along N. 1<sup>st</sup> St. between Hwy 237 and Alviso. However, Cisco abandoned the campus plans after the construction of only two buildings, and recently sold the land to developers. Several projects are now in the planning process for the property. One of these projects - stockpiling of dirt - was approved based on the stale environmental review and old mitigations of 2000.

In 2000, to mitigate "significant and unavoidable" loss of burrowing owl habitat (at the time, three nests and 16 to 22 individual owls were evicted from the 150-acre property), 21.7 acres of land were set aside for habitat preservation adjacent to Jubilee Christian church on Disc Drive. This type of mitigation, common at the time, was identified by a 2012 California Department of Fish and Wildlife report as one of the reasons for the decline of burrowing owls in the State. Moreover, the habitat preservation area has not been managed well, and failed to sustain burrowing owl nesting habitat.

In January 2013, the City of San Jose adopted the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan. This Plan emphasizes the precarious existence of burrowing owls in the county, and includes a Burrowing Owl Conservation Strategy that could be used by developers to reduce significant and unavoidable impacts – such as those identified in the 2000 Cisco EIR – to a less than significant level. We asked the City to require the preparation of a Supplemental EIR that would re-evaluate the loss of habitat and better mitigate the impact to burrowing owls.



Photo by Greg Kerekes, April 2013

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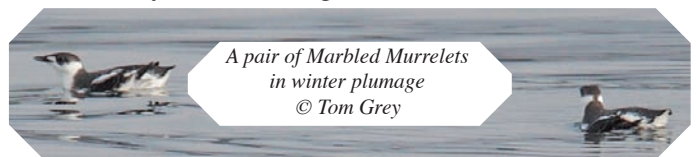
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## Parks Commission *cont'd from page 1*

*time; even with mitigation, impacts remain potentially significant and unavoidable."*

Old verses sing "Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, the other is gold." Throughout that meeting, and in every discussion of every agenda item, staff and commissioners expressed an interest in repairing the loss of public trust (due to recent investigations of financial decisions) and how they may

possibly "make new friends." We in the Audubon network have always been the most loyal, generous and forgiving friends to California Parks. Perhaps our trust was taken for granted; we were certainly not treated as gold.



## **SCVAS' Annual Summer WISH-LIST**

Thanks to the generosity of our members and friends, we are often able to fulfill our office needs through donations. This has been a tremendous support to our chapter, and we're always very grateful when needed items find their way to us.

This year, we're looking to obtain a new - or only slightly used - **Digital Data Projector** so we can continue to give all of those beautiful bird photographs at our General Meetings their due. We always try to provide the highest quality programs and presentations to our members as possible, but sometimes our equipment needs a little help...

Please contact us at 408-252-3747 or [scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org) for more information or to make a donation.  
All donations - including in-kind donations - are tax deductible.



# Volunteer Ventures

by Toby Goldberg, Programs Coordinator

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

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

## **Annette Herz** – Environmental Action Committee and Burrowing Owl Conservation

Annette Herz started advocating for burrowing owls and other birds only three years ago, and has already made her mark. Always positive and resourceful, Annette participates in a wide variety of volunteer events, from building and installing artificial burrows, to working with students to plant native vegetation and restore habitat, to organizing outreach and fundraising activities in support of Burrowing Owls. She has advocated for habitat protection and preservation countless times in front of the Mountain View City Council. We thank Annette for her tireless and proactive support of SCVAS conservation efforts.

## **Ulf Stauber** – Cavity Nesters Recovery Program Monitor

Some of our volunteers work quietly behind the scenes for many years, but their contributions are no less valued. Ulf has been faithfully monitoring nest boxes as part of our Cavity Nesters Recovery Program for many years, as well as helping to train new monitors. We - and the birds - are grateful for his efforts!

## **Laurie West-Roberts** - Events and Hospitality

Anytime SCVAS puts on a great party, you can be sure that Laurie was involved. With her endless creativity and patience when things change (and change again), her help during our fun - but sometimes hectic - events is irreplaceable! Laurie is also a super star when it comes to supporting our annual Birdathon - her team, the Snipe Hunters, consistently comes in as a top fundraising contender.

## **Colleen Cunningham** - Office and Nature Shop Assistant

When we last honored Colleen, her service to the Chapter had already become invaluable, and we were grateful that she had chosen to give up one Saturday every month to support our Nature Shop. Now, 12 years later, *we* are honored that she has continued to make volunteering with SCVAS an integral part of her regular routine.

## **Bob Hirt** - SCVAS Board

We were amazed to realize that this month marks Bob's 10th anniversary as a member of the SCVAS Board of Directors. And as anyone that has ever served on our board knows, we ask a lot of our board members! For ten years, Bob has dedicated his time, energy, networking abilities, creativity, and so much more to help-

ing build a strong chapter. Whether serving as Board President, Vice-President, Director-at-Large, Finance Committee member, or Event Support, Bob's many contributions to this chapter are invaluable, and we eagerly look forward to the next ten years!

On a different note, we're sad to be saying goodbye to **Lee French** and **Gordon Barrett**, both of whom have been actively involved in this Chapter for many years. They will be sorely missed, but we wish them all the best - and lots of great birding! - in their new locations.

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

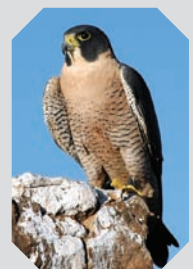
Wetlands Discovery Program Docents (Fall 2013) – You see this one on our “Volunteer Opportunities” list a lot, because it is one of our most visible, vital and volunteer-intensive activities - but so worth it! This program shares the wonder and importance of wetland habitats with 3rd-6th graders throughout Santa Clara County. Volunteers guide students in exploring wetland wildlife and habitat both in the classroom and out in the field. This program is rewarding for our volunteers and for the hundreds of South Bay children who participate (almost 1800 this year!). No experience is necessary, as we will provide training for both field and class sessions. All a potential docent needs is a love of nature and a desire to share it with children.

Stevens Creek 50K/SCVAS Benefit Run – Volunteers are needed on Saturday, September 28th to help with a fun event for local runners that also helps raise money for SCVAS' many educational and conservation programs. Volunteer tasks will include course marking, staffing First Aid stations, and more. Please go to <http://www.stevenscreek.com/stevenscreek50k/stevenscreek-50kvolunteer.html> for more details on how you can help. Register through the main “Stevens Creek 50K” race page to volunteer.

## Peregrine Protectors Needed! Support the Falcon Research and Observation Group

Sanborn County Park in Saratoga is looking for volunteers to help protect the Peregrine Falcons of Summit Rock during peak trail use - Saturday and Sundays, from 10:00am-4:00pm - and to educate the public about this special area.

If this sounds like something you'd like to be a part of, please contact Senior Ranger Flint Glines at (408) 867-9959



Peregrine Falcon  
©Tom Grey

# Adult Education Classes - Summer 2013

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](http://www.scvas.org).

## Birds of the Farallones with Al Jaramillo, Matthew Dodder, and Bob Power

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

For more details about this trip, see: <http://alvarosadventures.com/farallon-islands/>. Please note, however, that you should register for this particular trip through SCVAS.

**Date:** Sun. 8/11; 7:00AM (Half Moon Bay - Princeton Harbor - departure) to approximately 5:00PM (Half Moon Bay arrival).

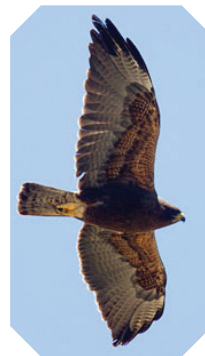
**Fee:** \$130 members; \$150 non-members.



Tufted Puffin  
by Pete LaTourrette

## Audubon Field Seminar: Swainson's Hawks with Bob Power

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



Swainson's Hawk  
© Peter LaTourrette

**Date:** Fri. 8/16; 7:00AM (south bay departure) to approximately 5:30PM (south bay arrival). **Fee:** \$30 members; \$40 non-members.

**Min:** 8 students; **Max:** 16 students. **NOTE:** You must be willing to carpool and share fuel expenses with a minimum of 3 other people to attend this field trip. We will have a maximum of 4, 4-person vehicles on this field trip.

## 2013 Summer Nature Days Outdoor Day Camp for Children in Grades 2-6

July 22nd-26th, 9:00am-3:00pm

(in partnership with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Shoreline at Mountain View)

Come explore with us at McClellan Ranch Preserve, Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve, Shoreline Lake, and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve. Each day explores a different location with a different theme - for a week bursting with wonder!

**Explore the world of plants, bugs, birds, mud, tracks, and so much more!**

**Cost:** \$270/child for members; \$295/child for non-members.

*There is a multi-child discount for families.*

**Registration has been extended, but don't wait - only a few spaces left!**

*Full details - scholarship information, locations and registration information - available online  
(go to [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org) - click on "Kids' Corner")*

# Field Notes

(April-May 2013)

by Bill Bousman

## Geese through Falcons

Late **Greater White-fronted Geese** included three at the Coyote Creek GC on 6 Apr (SCR), one on Thompson Creek on 7 Apr (MMR, RGJ), and another at the Morgan Hill Community Park on 27 Apr (MMR, SCR). At least one male **Eurasian Wigeon** remained on the unnamed pond near Moffett Field through 7 Apr (v.ob.). A male Eurasian was on newly filled Pond A16 on 25-27 Apr (MJM, LCr) and another was seen on Pond A2E on 27 Apr (MMR, SCR). A pair of **Blue-winged Teal** was found in Artesian Slough in Alviso (and perhaps moved to New Chicago Marsh on occasions) through 27 Apr (MJM, m.ob.). Single males were in the Lockheed Martin ponds on 19 Apr (RFu et al.) and at the South County Regional WasteWater Authority treatment ponds in Gilroy on 3 and 15 May (AME, GZ). **Redheads** in unusual triple digit numbers in March dropped to double digits by 3 Apr with 50 in Pond A3W on 3 Apr (RFu et al.) and single digits by the end of the month on 27 Apr with just two birds in the triangular pond north of Moffett Field (MMR, SCR) and two in Pond A16 in Alviso (MJM). The 1st-winter **Red-throated Loon** found at Shoreline Lake in late March remained through 1 Apr (JAC). **Common Loons** during the period included one at Lexington Reservoir on 14 Apr (RCP et al.) and two flying over the Pajaro River on 6 May (DLSu). A **Red-necked Grebe** was rediscovered on Pond A4 in Sunnyvale on 17 Apr (BM, MAA) and was seen through 22 Apr (v.ob.). This is likely the same bird seen on A2E in late February. **Western Grebes** were discovered nesting on Coyote Reservoir again on 11 Apr (JAC) and **Clark's Grebes** as well on 13 Apr (TGr). The water levels soon dropped and all of the nests were abandoned by 10 May (BH). The Mountain View Forebay **American Bittern** was last seen on 13 Apr (GL). The first **White-faced Ibis** of the spring was a bird in the New Chicago Marsh area on 24 Apr (HMCD, GZ). Sizeable spring ibis flocks included 23 over Pond A12 on 2 May (PDU) and about 25 over Hwy 101 and Masten Avenue on 20 May (DM). **Ospreys** have again nested in the Los Gatos Creek watershed and as of 25 May were raising three young (WGB). The nesting pair of **Bald Eagles** on the west side of Calaveras Reservoir hatched two chicks with both young seen on 7 Apr (MMR, RGJ). The pair at Coyote Reservoir hatched a single chick and it was nearly fledged by 10 May (BH). The nest tree/limb used by last year's pair near Casa de Fruta failed over the winter (DLSu). The big story of the spring period has been the number

of **Swainson's Hawks** coming through. In the 1920s, there were occasional sightings of up to 25 birds, but in the past 30 years we have been lucky to see one or two in any spring. The best spring we've had was 2004 when six birds were found in widely scattered locations in the county. This year has been remarkable in the number of passage birds, mostly in the Coyote Valley where they have fed on voles or other rodents in the alfalfa fields. The harbinger was

*There were numerous rarities this month, but they were overshadowed by the unprecedented spring migration of Swainson's Hawks.*

an adult on West Palm Avenue in Coyote Valley on 7 Apr (BH). At least five Swainson's were seen in the valley on 16 Apr (RPh), then six on 18 Apr (JPa, KBu). Nine were counted over the alfalfa fields on 4 May (SCR) and an amazing total of 14 in the valley on 20 May (RPh). Away from this metropolis, there have been at least six other birds seen during this passage, exceptional in its own right. A **Prairie Falcon** in Halls Valley on 23 Apr (MJM) was the only report and is likely a resident bird.

## Shorebirds through Woodpeckers

**Snowy Plovers** finally showed up in New Chicago Marsh with two to five birds 16-27 Apr (RWR, FV, v.ob.). Subsequently, one to eight birds were found on Pond A12 nearby (BM, v.ob.) with the high count on 15 May (PDU). A single bird was on Pond A9 on 1 May (WGB). A family group of two adults and two young were on Pond A16 on 29 May (RWR, FV), our first sign of nesting. Three **Solitary Sandpipers** were found this spring. The first was seen along Thompson Creek above Tully Road 14-19 Apr (RCP et al., v.ob.). The second was at the Lockheed Martin ponds 19-28 Apr (RFu et al., v.ob.). The third was along the shore of Anderson Reservoir on 22 Apr (SCR). The **Lesser Yellowlegs** found at State and Spreckles in March was seen again on 1 Apr (BM). One was in Artesian Slough on 3 Apr (RFu et al.). The last was a bird in the impoundment north of Alviso Marina CP on 17 Apr (BM, MAA). We haven't had any spring **Ruddy Turnstones** in the last three years, so the assortment this spring was nice. Five birds were off the Palo

Alto Baylands on 3 May (BM). Two birds were on Pond A12 on 22 May and one was on Pond A9 on 30 May (both PDU). More surprising was our third spring record of a **Black Turnstone** in New Chicago Marsh on 17 Apr (BM, MAA). We have few records of **Red Knots** in the spring period. Singles this spring included one on Charleston Slough on 27 Apr (MMR, SCR) and another on Pond A12 on 22 May (PDU). The real surprise was 37 birds on Pond A9 at a high tide on 30 May (PDU). **Wilson's Phalaropes** don't show much of spring passage so a female in the impoundment north of the Alviso Marina CP on 17 Apr (BM, MAA), one on Pond A12 on 19 Apr (RWR), two on that pond on 4 May (PDU), and two farther out on Pond A15 (PDU) were a good showing. **Red-necked Phalaropes**, on the other hand, have a moderate passage and were found from 2 Apr to the end of the period (m.ob.). The highest count was of 660 birds on Pond A12 on 1 May (WGB). A spring passage **Black Tern** was found on Pond A17 on 21 May (PDU). Much less expected was a basic **Common Tern** on Pond A14 on 27 Apr (MJM), only our third or fourth spring record. A 'cooing' **Greater Roadrunner** deep in Henry Coe SP on the Bear Mountain Road on 27 May (MMR) was the only report this period. A single **Black Swift** over the Coyote Valley on 25 May (SCR) was more typical compared to the large numbers in 2012. The first **Vaux's Swift** arrived on 13 Apr in the Almaden Valley (JPa). There were few obvious migrant flocks during the period, the highest counts were four over Monte Bello OSP on 19 Apr (GHa) and four over Vasona CP on 17 May (GZ), the later a part of the summering population. A male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at Kelly Park on 19 Apr (PDU) and 22 Apr (SCT et al.) was a returning summer resident. A male along the Guadalupe River near Curtner on 28 Apr (WGB) and 21 May (MJM), and a female along Coyote Creek below Embedded Way on 19 May (JPa) were also summer residents. A female at Ed Levin Park on 27 Apr (MMR, SCR), a male there on 30 Apr (BM), and one along the Pajaro River above Hwy 129 on 6 May (DLSu) were likely migrants. We don't see **Calliope Hummingbirds** every spring so a male at Ed Levin on 27 Apr (MMR, SCR) and female there 30 Apr (BM) were nice. **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were found in the San Antonio Valley throughout the period (m.ob.), the high count was of 10 on 11 May (MDo et al.).

## Flycatchers through Sparrows

An early **Hammond's Flycatcher** was seen in Los Altos Hills on 1 Apr (PJM). Other Santa Cruz Mountain records included one at Monte Bello OSP on 20 Apr (MMR et al.) and second bird there on 1 May (GHa). Diablo Range records included two birds along Gilroy Hot Springs Road on 6 Apr (MDo et al.), a

## Field Notes *cont'd*

single bird at Smith Creek on 11 Apr (MJM, LCr), and three more at the same location on 23 Apr (MJM). **Gray Flycatcher** is rarely found in the county so one along the Pajaro River above Hwy 129 on 6 May (DLSu) was a good find. **Say's Phoebe** nested for the third year northeast of Hellyer Avenue (WGB, BJ). **Cassin's Kingbirds** returned to their favored nesting area on San Felipe Road on 3 Apr (BM) and two to three birds were seen through the period. Six **Purple Martins** returned to an area northwest of the lower saddle on Loma Prieta Avenue where they have nested in the past on 7 Apr (AR, JG). They have remained there through the period with 10 birds seen on 26 Apr (RWR, FV). The **Red-breasted Nuthatch** irruption trailed off in April with the last bird seen at Ed Levin CP on 19 Apr (RFu et al.). A **Canyon Wren** was found singing at outcrop on the Grizzly Gulch Trail in Henry Coe SP on 26 Apr (WGB) and was found again on 28 Apr (PDU) and 4 May (MMR, ARo). At least one **American Dipper** was found repeatedly through the birdathon period in Stevens Creek Canyon (m.ob.). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were seen along the John Nicholas Trail with two on 5 Apr (KBU, JPa) and one on 11 Apr (BM). **Phainopepla** have seemed scarce in the San Antonio Valley in recent years so a female on 14 Apr (SEM) and a male on 4 May (RWR et al.) were welcome finds. But the 18 birds on the Coe Bird Study Route #8 on 27 May (MMR) almost matched the 21 found on Routes #4 and #5 last summer. Coe remains a bird terra incognita for us. Wintering **Northern Waterthrush** in the last decade have rarely remained into late April, although there is a 1 May record. With excellent coverage, the last bird this spring was found on 20 Apr (MMR et al.). But the real surprise came when a bird was seen along Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 on 30 May (MMR). Previously we have banded two birds at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) in early May but none have been found in late May or early June as occurs sometimes for birds migrating in the western United States. We had a nice passage of **Nashville Warblers** this spring with about 17 birds reported. The earliest was one at Stevens Creek CP on 7 Apr (DWe). About half were found in the Santa Cruz Mountains and the other half in the Diablo Range. **MacGillivray's Warblers** moved through quickly. The first was singing in Rancho San Antonio OSP on 26 Apr (MJM, LCr), one was banded at CCFS the next day (SFBBO), and the third was along the Pajaro River above Hwy 129 on 29 Apr (DLSu). A bird was along Llagas Creek beside Casa Loma Road on 1 May (AV) and a singing bird was heard along Hicks Road 2-5 May (JPa, v.ob.). A singing **Palm Warbler** was found at Lake Lagunita 20-24 Apr (RFu, v.ob.) for one of our few April records. The

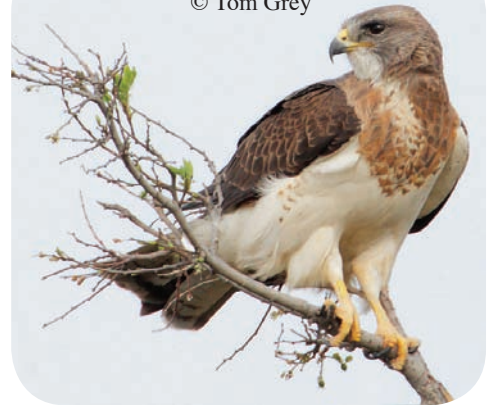
main passage of **Hermit Warblers** appears to have been from 19 Apr to 21 May (GHa, RFu, v.ob.) with at least 14 birds. Two males singing in Sanborn-Skyline CP southeast of Indian Rock on 21 May (WGB) were probably summer residents. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** at the SCRWA treatment ponds 26-29 Apr (MJM, v.ob.), one at Monte Bello OSP on 2 May (GHa), and one east of Sargent Creek on 6 May (DLSu) may all have been migrants. **Black-chinned Sparrows** have occupied burned chamise just over the county line off Summit Road again this spring (m.ob.). Nine singing birds were found on route #8 in Henry Coe SP on 29 May (MMR). One or two **Sage Sparrows** were found along Loma Prieta Avenue 18-21 May (JG, NLe, JPa, EBa). They are rare in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Late winter **White-throated Sparrows** included three continuing birds: one at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park through 19 Apr (RFu et al., v.ob.), Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 through 27 Apr (MMR, SCR, v.ob.), and one on the Alamitos Creek Trail through 22 Apr (JPa). New birds included singles at Coyote Lake CP on 12 Apr (BM) and Kelly Park on 17 Apr (PDU). Missed in February and March, the Oka percolation pond **Harris's Sparrow** was seen again on 6 Apr (RCP et al.). An adult was found at the edge of the Lockheed Marin marsh on 22 Apr (BM), possibly a spring migrant. The three Harris's this past winter is a remarkable number.

### Rose-breasted Grosbeak through Evening Grosbeaks

A singing male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was found at Almaden Lake on 21 May (JPa). A second-year male **Blue Grosbeak** was singing along the Pajaro River on 27 Apr (WGB). An adult male was there on 29 Apr (RWR, FV), at least three birds on 5 May (MMR). Farther down the river, one to three were seen 8-9 May (RWR, FV, BM). An **Indigo Bunting** was found on private land along Pescadero Creek above the Pajaro River on 11 May (AR, NLe). Four **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were seen at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 26 Apr (PDU). Five were there by the next day and a few lingered to 3 May (v.ob.). One to two birds were seen along the Pond A16 levee 5-11 May (PDU, WGB) and a female was near First Street in Alviso on 10 May (ES). **Great-tailed Grackles** have been found widely during the period, from the Ogier Avenue ponds to the Mountain View Forebay (m.ob.). At least 10 were seen along Thompson Creek on 15 Apr (MJM). A singing male **Baltimore Oriole** was found at Vasona CP on 15 May (KBU, JPa) and on various occasion moved nearby to University Avenue (SCR, v.ob.). It has provided pleasure for many observers through the end of May. **Red Crossbills** have been irregular at Monte Bello OSP where two were first found on 19 Apr (RFu et al.). A high count was of 32+ birds on 2 May (GHa). Two were

Light-morph Swainson's Hawk

© Tom Grey



over Stanford on 21 Apr (RFu) and at least one bird was on Skyline Boulevard on 7 May (JPa). Our amazing **Pine Siskin** flight tapered off in late April. Lingering birds in May included at least one at Monte Bello OSP on 2 May (GHa), one at the McClellan Ranch Preserve on 16 May (RCP), and three in Henry Coe SP on 26 May (MMR). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were found widely in the Diablo Range in April with a few on the valley floor. Small numbers appeared at various spots in the Santa Cruz Mountains by early May. The winter irruption of **Evening Grosbeaks** was almost exclusively in urban areas from Palo Alto to Sunnyvale. A few birds remained in Sunnyvale in April with one seen bathing in a yard on Mango Avenue as late as 27 Apr (CK). April also found a few birds in the mountains, perhaps birds moving from locations farther south. A single female was at Ed Levin CP on 13 Apr (DWe). Fourteen birds were in Stevens Creek CP on 14 Apr (RFu). A few birds were at Monte Bello OSP on both 20 Apr (MMR et al.) and 27 Apr (MMR, SCR).

Observers: Mary Ann Allan (MAA), Ellen Bateman (EBa), Bill Bousman (WGB), Karen Burnson (KBU), Jack Cole (JAC), Lea Crisp (LCr), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Pete Duntun (PDU), Al Eisner (AME), Rob Furrow (RFu), John Garrett (JG), Tom Grey (TGr), Beth Hamel (BH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Richard Jeffers (RGJ), Bob Juhl (BJ), Carla Kirschenbaum (CK), Nick Levandosky (NLe), Garrett Lau (GL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Hugh McDevitt (HMCD), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Brooke Miller (BM), Steve Miller (SEM), Dominik Mosur (DM), Janna Pauser (JPa), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Power (RCP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Alma Rogers (ARo), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO), Emilie Strauss (ES), David Suddjian (DLSu), 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,  
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# Birdathon Rolls On! Over \$75,000 raised for Education and Conservation

by Bob Power, Executive Director

One hundred and forty-three enthusiastic birders joined 30 teams in this year's Birdathon to raise funds for SCVAS' critical education and conservation programs. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> straight year this effort crashed past the \$75,000 barrier before the dust had settled.

Twenty-four individuals raised over \$1,000 with Dotty Calabrese leading the way by raising an astounding \$6,616. Dotty has been at the top of the leader board for many years and this year won a wonderful week at Sea Ranch courtesy of Nancy Teater. The Rock Wrens, led by Bob Hirt, and always a fundraising leader, raised the most money as a team at \$9,370.

The contest for most species identified was fascinating this year and chronicled in the last Avocet. For the Birdathon Period, the Santa Clara Skimmers, led by Rob Furrow, using bicycles and leg power only, took the prize at 179 species. Following the Birdathon, Mike Rogers and Steve Rottenborn broke this new county record with 187 species using both bicycles and one of those new-fangled gas-powered thingies. For the 4-hour period, Rob Furrow's Mean Green Birding Machines took top honors with 102 species. Extraordinary drama surrounded the Big Sit

this year as the Data-Sets, reigning champions, and the Eagle Eyes tied with 62 species each. The Fledgelings, everyone's favorites, came back for a second year and jumped from 65 species in 2012 to 94 species in 2013. More importantly, their fundraising was phenomenal with a team total of over \$4,000.

The Photography Birdathon teams were very competitive this year with Steve Tracey and the Plover Exposures taking top honors with 125 species photographed in a 24-hour period. The DeDucktions came in second with 113 species and the winner of the "best new team name" the OhMyGodwits came in with 105. Rounding out the 24-hour photography group were the Shutterbirds with a new team record of 101. Barry Langdon-Lassagne of the Jack Sparrows moved down a weight-class this year after

dominating the 24-hour teams in 2012 and took the glory for 4-hour photography with 64 species. Steve Patt won a hotly contested fight in the Most Artistic Bird photographed category with his Ring-necked Pheasant dans l'herb.

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

Thank you to all our participants, team leaders, sponsors, and prize donors. We hope you had fun and are blocking off some calendar time for Birdathon Mania 2014!



**Fledglings Are Hard To Beat!**

For the 2nd year in a row, members of the Fledglings Birdathon team blew past the competition, with three of them landing in the top-money-raising categories. While a little embarrassing for the rest of us, it's certainly nice to see that our Chapter will be well supported for many years to come!

*Photo courtesy of the Zolotar Family*

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

### Almaden Eagles:

Caralisa Hughes, Kirsten Holmquist, Richard Page, Leon and Janna Pauser, Michael and Alma Rogers, Ann Verdi

### Bob-O-Links:

Ed Aiken, Brian Andersen and Michelle Jolly, Joyce Bartlett, Dorsey and Katherine Bass, Galli Basson, Harriet Benson, Allan Berkowitz, Richard Berlin, Elyse Bloxham, Robert and Marion Blumberg, John and Rebecca Bradley, Johnny and Karen Brown, Dolores Butkus, Dotty Calabrese and Donna Clarke, Sally Cedarblade, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Dewey and Bessie Chang, Rosalee Clarke, Ann Davidson, Karen DeMello, Ed Ehmke and Mary Jane Parrine, David and Ellen Fraser, Garry George, John Glathe and Carol Seeds, Tom Grey and Barbara Babcock, Jan Hintermeister, Bob and Deb Hirt, Heather Hyde, Dean Iwata, William Jackson, Michael Karpinko, David Kellert, Vivek and Leena Khanzode, Richard and Rebecca Kirchner, Yukiko Lapin, Pete and Sue LaTourrette, Joanne Lazar, Brad and Cathy Loewen, Cheryl and Edward Martin, Bruce Mast, Bartshe

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### Cupertino Creek Crusiers:

Mary Amendola, Ruth Anderson, Joyce Bartlett, Timm Borden, Gail Bower, Patty Brown, Jeffrey Caldwell, Dotty Calabrese and Donna Clarke, Bridget Cash, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Irina Constantin, Corina Constantin, Donald and Nanette Corotto, Peter and Arline Dehlinger, Donald Deuchar, Daniel and Janet Farmer, Rhonda Farrar, Tom Grey and Barbara Babcock, Professor Robert Girard, Lisa Heath, Roland Kenner and Patricia Kenny, Lisa Killough, Ralph and Joanna Koch, Lina Lee, James and Renee Lewis, RPMC Silicon Valley Web Design & Hosting: Mondy Lariz, Anita Marlin, Ada Marquez, Joanne and Doug McFarlin, Victoria Moore, Anne and Samuel Ng, Enid Pearson, David Poeschel, Bruce Preville and Gretchen Sand, Emily Renzel, Ralph Riddle, Cynthia Robertson, Carol Ross, Elizabeth Rowan-Mitchell, Linda and Mike Ruthruff, Dina Saari, Clysta Seney, Barbara

*continued next page*



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*continued on page 10*

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Juliette Bryson, Lori Cuesta, Harold Fukuma, Kay Matthews, Brooke Miller, Shirley Wodtke

## Bird Banding

with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory  
"Conservation in Action!"



Join us for a special opportunity to witness live bird banding demonstrations by experts from the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO).

An invaluable tool for conservation, restoration and mitigation research, this activity will allow participants to view a wild bird up close (maybe even hear the heartbeat!), and tour an important area of active habitat restoration.

For all ages  
7\*\* and up!

Date: Saturday, August 17th; 8-10AM  
Location: Coyote Creek Field Station (near McCarthy Ranch), Milpitas  
Cost: \$25/family (or \$8/child and \$10/adult)

Registration  
Deadline: 8/12

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

**A limited number of family scholarships are available!**

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

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

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*Gifts received between April 1st, 2013 and May 31st, 2013*

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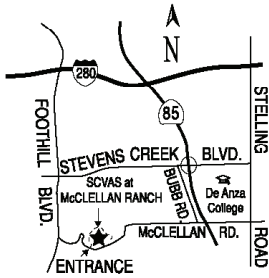
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### OFFICE HOURS

**Monday - Friday**

**10 AM - 5 PM**

**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

**2013 Volume 60, Number 4**

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

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