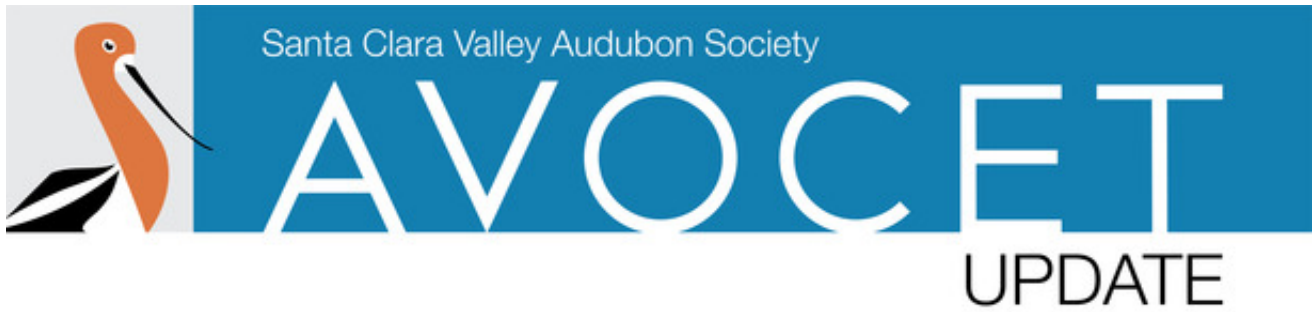


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Lazuli Bunting: Dave Zittin

Welcome to the **AVOCET Update** for May 2021. The days are lengthening and definitely getting warmer out there. No more heavy jackets, and it feels pretty nice. Lazuli Buntings and Purple Martins have also arrived with all their structural blues and I sometimes wonder how we survived for all those months without all that color! After a great start with a record number of teams, the spring Birdathon is now drawing to a close. We've posted wonderful accounts from participants and there are more to come. Most importantly, there is still time to help us reach our \$50,000 goal. Visit the Birdathon page to sponsor your favorite teams. We've got two great upcoming speakers lined up next month, new Self-Guided Field Trips, Backyard Birds and more! Significant numbers of people are getting vaccinated each day, we're feeling more comfortable and optimistic—life is returning to what it was before. And SCVAS is making progress toward resuming our beloved field trips! Stay tuned for details as

we finalize our plans. Until then, enjoy the colorful and sonorous birds of spring! It's only May 2021 once!

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director

Upcoming Events:

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents:

John Richardson

Tanzania's Rich Tapestry of Birds and Supporting Cast

Wednesday, May 5, 2021 7:00 PM ([via Zoom](#))



Vitteline Weaver: John Richardson

In Tanzania's great Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Tarangire national parks there are no fences, no jet trails high overhead, no paved roads, just seemingly endless savanna punctuated with kopjes (some of the oldest granite deposits on Earth), ancient euphorbias, and thorn trees. There are forests to be sure at Lake Manyara and Arusha national parks and high altitude volcanoes. I was struck by the sheer numbers and varieties of birds, many of which we had not seen before except, perhaps, on a previous trip to Uganda. Mammals in great herds were constantly moving, enjoying their freedom from humans and just following the water and vegetation within the huge national parks. The big cats were there too, to keep the herds in check. It struck me as a healthy ecosystem—but just a snapshot of what Africa was like millions of years before humans came on the scene and exerted our will over nature. There are incredible photographic opportunities every day, as well as wonderful people and guides showcasing their home.

An Evening with Carl Safina

Wednesday, May 19, 7:00 PM ([via Zoom](#))



Hear **New York Times Bestselling Author** of *Beyond Words*, and his recent *Becoming Wild: How Animal Cultures Raise Families, Create Beauty and Achieve Peace*.

Safina's work has been recognized with MacArthur, Pew, and Guggenheim Fellowships, and his writing has won Orion, Lannan, and National Academies literary awards and the John Burroughs, James Beard, and George Rabb medals. Safina is founding president of the not-for-profit Safina Center. He hosted the ten-part PBS series *Saving the Ocean with Carl Safina*. He lives on Long Island, New York.

[Purchase tickets here](#)

Birdathon Prize Ceremony

Saturday, May 29 7:00 PM ([via Zoom](#))

We're working on the plans now... Details to come!

Speaker Series presents:

Jennifer Rycenga

Queer Birds: Community Inclusion, Community Building, and Community Science

Wednesday, June 2, 7:00 PM ([via Zoom](#))



Peggy and Jennifer: Robert Siegel

In the early 2000s, LGBT rights were under attack; there was no marriage equality, and LGBTQ people often felt unsafe in the field. To build a veritable, ongoing community, a group of LGBTQ birders banded together to start what is now called QBNA - Queer Birders of North America. Local Bay Area birder Jennifer Rycenga spearheaded the west coast organizing efforts for this group, which has now flourished for almost two decades, with biennial birding trips both nationally and abroad. The community built up through QBNA has always been open to all allies of the cause, and has been the occasion for genuine solidarity with many straight birders. This model of open, accepting community parallels the 21st century growth in Community Science projects like eBird, iNaturalist, and the BioBlitz movement. This talk will look at the history of LGBTQ birders and QBNA in particular, and the rapid growth of community science in the Bay Area, as examples of how birding can create and sustain diverse communities of people.

Jennifer serves as the Board President of our sister chapter, Sequoia Audubon. Jennifer teaches at San José State University in Humanities.

Burn Zone Recovery



East slope of Mount Hamilton: Matthew Dodder

The summer issue of the AVOCET Quarterly will feature a photo essay on the recovery of Mount Hamilton and the San Antonio Valley after the devastating SCL Complex Lightning Fire. Separate from that, and part of an ongoing community science effort to monitor this spectacular area which is so important to birds and many other living organisms, I encourage our members to document their visits to the fire damaged area and send us your images. We are looking for examples of both fire damaged landscape, as well as fire recovery. Our hope is that by regularly updating our growing gallery of location shots, we will be able to document the slow but steady regeneration of this precious habitat. All submissions should include the photographer's name, date of image, and approximate location (if available, GPS coordinates are appreciated).

May Self-Guided Field Trips

- [New Chicago Marsh and EEC](#) (Alviso) by Mike Ambrose
- [Palo Alto Baylands](#) (Palo Alto) by Diane McCoy
- [Skyline Boulevard](#) (Saratoga) by Luis Villablanca
- [Santa Teresa CP](#) (San Jose) by Brooke Miller
- [Monte Bello Open Space Preserve](#) (Palo Alto Hills) by Kirsten Holmquist
- [Hunting Hollow Entrance to Henry Coe State Park](#) (Morgan Hill) by Michael Hawk
- [Del Puerto Canyon Road](#) (Auto Tour, Stanislaus County) by Matthew Dodder
- [El Parque de Christmas Hill](#) (Youth-centered Trip, Gilroy) por Ginger Langdon-Lassagne
- [Bald Mountain and Mt Umunhum](#) by Edward Rooks

Visit our webpage to see [past months' recommendations](#) or use our [index](#) to see all of

our recommendations.

SCVAS would like to hear from you! Do you have a favorite place you love to bird that you would like to recommend to our members? Is there a place you would like to learn more about? If so, please email fieldtrips@scvas.org.

Salmonellosis Outbreak



Pine Siskin: Barry Langdon-Lassagne

There was a **serious outbreak of salmonellosis** among Pine Siskins and other feeder birds this winter. Earlier this year, SCVAS had urged our members and the public to take down bird feeders and baths, in order to curb the spread of the disease.

Most of the Pine Siskins in our area migrate elsewhere in the spring, and their numbers have been decreasing in our county over the month of April. For this reason, **SCVAS believes that it is now safe for backyard birders in Santa Clara County to resume using bird feeders and baths.** Please thoroughly clean these items before putting them back out.

In order to keep feeder birds safe, we urge you to **regularly clean your feeders and baths, at least once a week.** Disease organisms are present year-round, regardless of whether you see sick birds.

Please [read our updated post on salmonellosis](#), which includes **specific cleaning instructions for seed and suet feeders, hummingbird feeders, and bird baths.**

We thank you for your efforts to protect our backyard birds.

Backyard Birds



Hooded Oriole: Hita Bambhania Modha

In recent weeks, we've seen the departure and arrival of backyard birds that migrate in the spring, like White-crowned Sparrows and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Learn **who's coming, going, and staying**, and explore **signs of nesting**, in our latest [Backyard Birder](#) column.

Check your neighborhood palm trees for **Hooded Orioles**, our featured backyard birds for the month of May! These bright birds with their chatter calls have arrived to nest here this spring. Learn all about them in our [Backyard Bird of the Month](#) article.

Nesting titmice, flying ducks, and molting warblers! These are just some of the **birds our members and friends have spotted in their yards and neighborhoods** recently. Read these stories, and enjoy the photos, in [All Around Town](#), our monthly round-up of backyard bird sightings.

What birds are in your yard or neighborhood? Send your notes and photos to backyardbirds@scvas.org and we'll feature them in the next [All Around Town](#).

Conservation Corner



An example of Light Pollution from the Reef at Night, Los Angeles: Dion Noravian

Bird Conservation should be on everyone's mind. Here are a few opportunities to contribute to bird conservation and environmental health:

The San Jose Urban Confluence Project proposes a "gift" of a **20-story tall, massive illuminated "iconic" structure** on the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek in San Jose. Because **light at night is harmful to all living things**, we have been consistent in **asking not to increase light at this location**, and **so have been other environmental leaders**. **Please help us say NO to this project.**

HOW TO HELP: Please respond to Council member Dev Davis **2-minute survey here**, **make a quick phone call**, or see our alert and **write to council here**. **Please say NO to this "gift" of light pollution, no to lighting, and explain why!**

Audubon California's Virtual Advocacy Day is June 10th! This year, advocacy will focus on advancing essential environmental protections such as the Human Right to Nature (AB 30), Conservation Ranching (SB 322) and other climate resistance measures. Space is limited so register today to join our flock! **Register Now** and please let **Shani@scvas.org** know that you have registered.

The Sierra Club is offering a 3-part webinar series (Thursdays 9 am - Noon, May 13, 20 and 27th) on "**Sea Level Rise: Why we need Nature Based Adaptation**"

May 13: What are Nature Based Adaptation Strategies

May 20: Where to use Nature Based Adaptation

May 27: How to Green the Project: Funding and Case Studies For more information on the program see here Registration is required.

Register **here**.



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