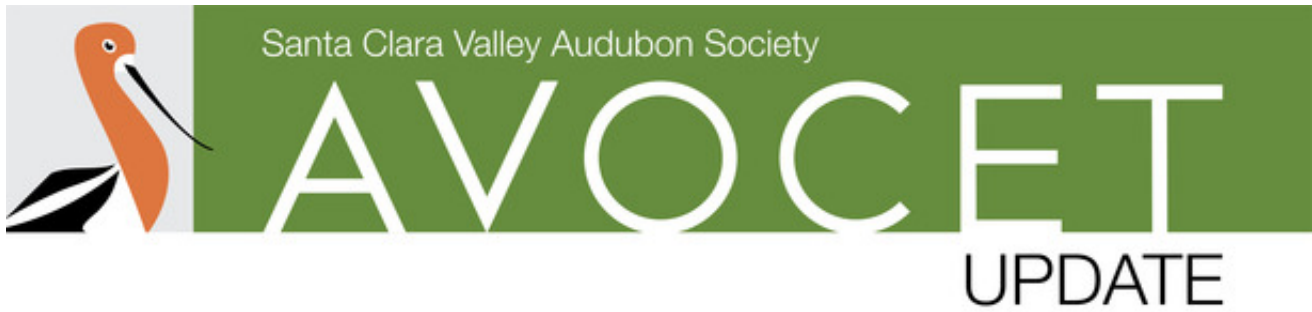


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Hooded Oriole: Hita Bambhania-Modha

Welcome to the **Avocet Update** for April 2021. Spring is finally here and the hills are covered with brilliant green. Some equally colorful migrants like Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager and Wilson's Warblers are also beginning to show up on our checklists and the forests are filling with songs we must learn all over again. Our Birdathon has gotten off to a great start with dozens of teams to choose from! We also have a special evening event planned with Richard Prum, author of "The Evolution of Beauty" and a new selection of Self-guided Field Trips! Oh, and the brand new SCVAS t-shirt is available...

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director

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## **Birdathon Benefactor's Grant**

**A first for our Chapter**



North Coyote Valley Conservation Area: Matthew Dodder

The Birdathon has started! The window for participating teams began on Saturday, March 27 and will continue for approximately eight weeks, until Sunday, May 9. If you missed our Kickoff Meeting, check out the [video](#).

In what has been our most popular annual fundraiser, the Spring Birdathon is striving for new heights. Thanks to current and past members of our Board of Directors, along with anonymous benefactors, we have created a grant to help boost our fundraising efforts. If we can reach \$5,000 in donations by April 10, the Benefactors have offered a \$5,000 match which will raise our total to \$10,000. If we reach \$15,000 by April 30, a second \$5,000 will kick in, bringing the total to \$20,000. (These additional funds apply to the overall total and are not credited to individual teams). With your help and these boosts from our benefactors, we're hoping to reach our stretch goal of \$50,000 this year.

SCVAS has long had a successful **Education Program** largely funded by proceeds raised by the Birdathon. For over 30 years the Chapter's **Wetlands Discovery Program** has introduced thousands of grade school children to our bayfront habitats. This program encourages a love of knowledge of birds and other wildlife, as well as conservation of our unique natural ecosystem.

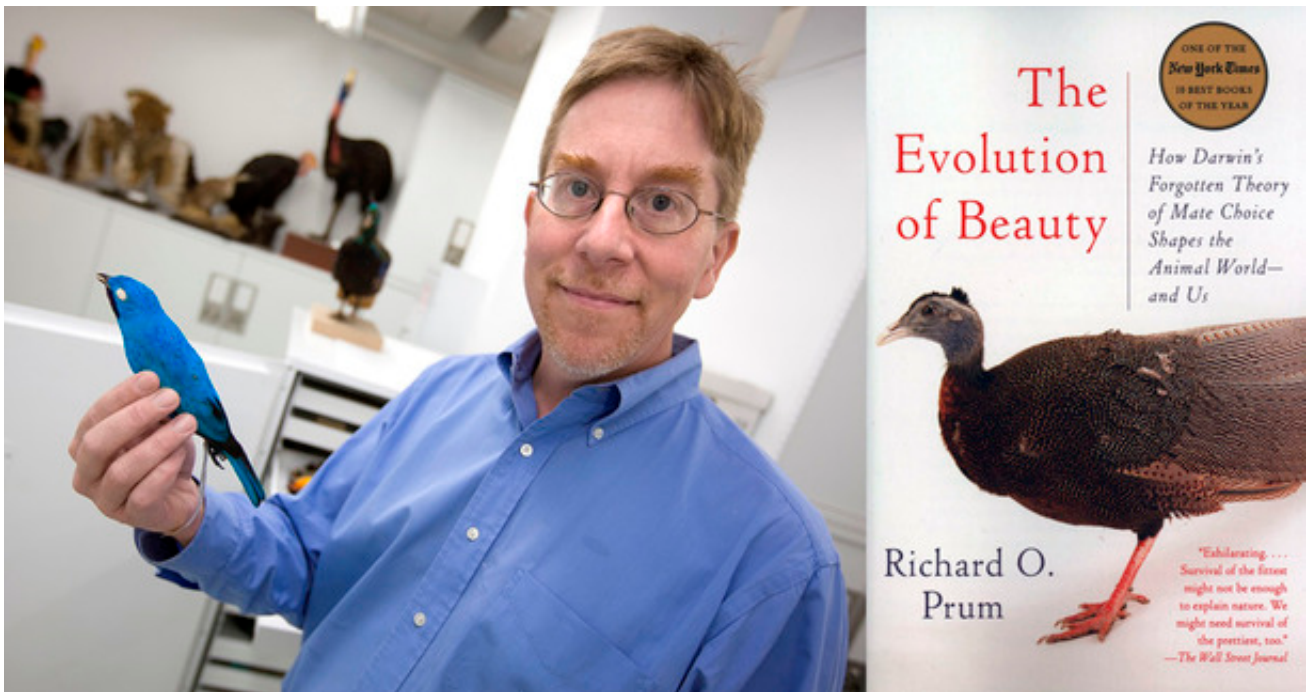
Funds raised during the Birdathon will primarily go toward the creation of our new Oak Savanna Citizen Science Project. This project will include a new high school curriculum designed to reach underserved urban students (emphasizing Title 1 schools) and help fund classroom activities and field trips to the North Coyote Valley Conservation Area. These funds also support bioblitzes, other public citizen science projects in North Coyote Valley, and associated staff and office equipment. Please see our [website](#) for more of this year's information on how you can engage, donate, and have a lot of fun.

A big thank you to all of our prize sponsors this year! We're proud to include prizes from the [Cornell Lab](#), [Alvaro's Adventures](#), the [Los Gatos Birdwatcher](#), [Zeiss](#), and [Beauregard Vineyards](#) for Birdathon participants. Amongst this year's prizes, all participants will get access to Cornell's Be a [Better Birder: Size & Shape](#) course after our award ceremony on May 29!

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## An Evening with Richard Prum

**The Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Forgotten Theory of Mate Choice Shapes the Animal World—and Us**



**A FINALIST FOR THE PULITZER PRIZE**

**NAMED A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR BY THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, SMITHSONIAN, AND WALL STREET JOURNAL**

**His best-selling book is a major reimagining of how evolutionary forces work, revealing how mating preferences—what Darwin termed "the taste for the beautiful"—create the extraordinary range of ornament in the animal world.** Richard Prum will discuss his work in the field of Evolutionary Ornithology and his position as Head Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the [Peabody Museum of Natural History](#) at [Yale University](#).

**Wednesday, April 21  
7:00 PM via Zoom**

**[Tickets Available through Ticketbud](#)**

**\$15 for Members**

**\$20 for Non-members**

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## Self-Guided Field Trips



Black-chinned Hummingbird: Tom Grey

### Check out our growing spring collection of trips!

- [Stanford Dish Trail](#) (Stanford University) by Adam Burnett
- [La Rinconada Park](#) (Los Gatos) by Lisa Myers
- [Los Gatos Creek Trail at Meridian](#) (Accessible, San Jose) by Brooke Miller
- [Rosendin Park Area](#) (Morgan Hill) by Rick Herder and Eve Meier
- [Old Oak Glen Avenue](#) (Accessible, Morgan Hill) by Brooke Miller
- [Ulistac Natural Area](#) (Accessible, Santa Clara) by Chris Johnson
- [Christmas Hill Park](#) (Youth-centered, Gilroy) by Ginger Langdon-Lassagne
- [Área para grupos de Live Oak, en Anderson County Park: Picnic con los Patos Arcoiris](#) (Wood Ducks) por Eve Meier, traducido por Carlos Marquez Garcia

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](mailto:fieldtrips@scvas.org).

## Salmonellosis Outbreak

**SCVAS urges our members and the public to take down bird feeders and baths**



Pine Siskin: Barry Langdon-Lassagne

There is a **serious outbreak of salmonellosis** right now among Pine Siskins in California and other western states. This deadly, highly contagious disease is observed almost exclusively at bird feeders and baths, places where birds congregate in close proximity, leading to contagion. The disease spreads readily to other bird species, like Lesser Goldfinches and American Goldfinches.

The California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) has received numerous reports of sick or dead siskins, and other finches, in the past few months. Many of these reports have come from the Bay Area.

In keeping with CDFW's guidance, **SCVAS urges everyone to take down bird feeders and baths** for the time being, in order to curb the spread of the disease.

Salmonellosis outbreaks occur periodically, but this one has been particularly severe because of the unusually large number (an "irruption") of Pine Siskins that are wintering in the United States right now. Over the next two months, most of them will return to their breeding grounds further north. Once the prevalence of birds in our local area has dropped, it should be safe to put out feeders and baths again.

We are tracking guidance from the State of California, and regularly monitoring the abundance of Pine Siskins in Santa Clara County using current eBird data. Right now, the birds' abundance remains high, well above the historic norm for this time of year. **When we believe that it is safe to put out feeders and baths again, we will update our recommendations.**

Please see our [revised and expanded FAQ](#) on the salmonellosis outbreak for more information, and check our website periodically for updates.

We have received many questions about this topic over the past month, and thank you for your concern for the birds.

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## Backyard Birds



White-breasted Nuthatch: Brooke Miller

The **White-breasted Nuthatch** is our featured backyard bird for April! Meet this busy and boisterous “upside-down bird”, and discover its foraging and nesting behavior, in our [Backyard Bird of the Month](#) article.

**Many birds form pairs in the spring.** How can you identify a pair, and how long do they stay together? **Learn all about pair bonds** in our Backyard Birder article [Two In A Bush](#).

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

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**SCVAS 2021 T-shirts Available!**



Available now!

# TYRANTS

of Santa Clara County

\$25 while supplies last

Call or email us to arrange pickup at our Nature Shop in Cupertino

[scvas@scvas.org](mailto:scvas@scvas.org) or 408.252.3747

Proceeds support Birdathon

Limited supplies of last year's t-shirt in Large and Extra Large are still available for \$15 each. All proceeds benefit our Birdathon.



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