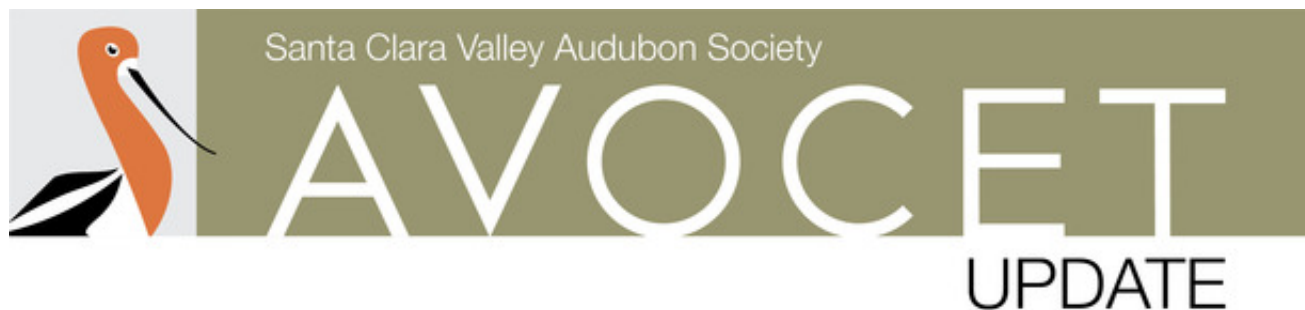


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White-throated Sparrow by Tom Grey

Welcome to the AVOCET Update for November, 2021

November is one of my favorite months. My mother's birthday is just before Thanksgiving. She would be 92. My grade school teachers used to instruct us to make things like glued macaroni and crepe paper harvest-themed decorations for the holiday seasons as gifts. So you know... mom's birthday never got the proper mom's birthday attention it deserved. But she made pumpkin pie and turkey soup for my dad and me anyway, and the whole house smelled like a holiday with glue and glitter. She hugged more tightly when it was cold outside too. So many things... We lived in Boston then, and November was when the windows began to fog up on the inside and there seemed to be more urgency at the bird feeder outside the back door. Some of the visitors were Common Redpolls, and if they came, they did so by the dozens. They didn't come every year - the Redpolls were special, and I loved their pink and white colors. Occasionally it snowed overnight and in the morning the ground by the feeder looked like crushed strawberry ice cream as they searched for food. The frozen oak and maple leaves crunched softly as I walked to school. And there was a peculiar muffling blanket that draped over the neighborhood, pierced by a lone sparrow's song, "*Long-term memory, memory, memory.*" Once in a while, I still get lost in these feelings where we live now in Mountain View. But instead of a White-throated, it's a Golden-crowned, "*She's still here...*" There's no snow or frosty leaves, and my mother is long gone too of course. Alzheimer's. But I still feel her in the cool November air. I miss a lot of people this time of year.. It's still family time for me though, and I love it more than I can say. To all those who can't be with their loved ones - for whatever reason - maybe you too will find the same joy in the November Sparrow's song, and smile about how beautifully full of

memories a single month can be. Happy Thanksgiving to you all!

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director



Wildlife & Harvest Video Festival

The second **Wildlife & Harvest Video Festival** will hit our SCVAS YouTube channel beginning **Monday, October 25**. Like last year, we have dozens of videos from an assortment of wildlife and environmental organizations from around the Bay.

Videos include fun facts about local birds, bugs, mammals, plants and more! You can even download our brand new Bird Coloring Book, build a nest box or a pinecone feeder to attract birds to your yard!

Look for new video release each week (until the end of November) beginning this Monday [here](#).

Enjoy the show!



Speaker Series

Julia Clarke

Wednesday, November 17, 2021
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM (via zoom)

The deep history of traits we think of as distinctly avian.

How do we study evolutionary novelty in deep time? What can dinosaurs teach us about how novel structures and functions evolve?

Julia A. Clarke is John A. Wilson Professor in Vertebrate Paleontology at the Jackson School of Geosciences, The University of Texas at Austin, and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor. She has published over 100 papers including 14 in the journals Nature and Science. She is interested in how new structures and functions arise in deep time with a focus on the evolution of dinosaurs including birds. She has an international field program in paleontology (e.g. in Antarctica, South America, Asia) as well as leading highly interdisciplinary collaborative teams integrating data on living animals to ask new questions of the fossil record. Her research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Humboldt Foundation, The National Geographic Society, Explorers Club, AAAS, Howard Hughes Medical Institute and has been covered by NPR's Science Friday, The New York Times, Washington Post, National Geographic Magazine, NOVA, and other outlets. She is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology, American Ornithological Society, and The Anatomical Society. She received her degrees from Brown University (B.A) and Yale University (PhD).

[Register Here](#)



A New Checklist

We are excited to announce an all new Santa Clara County Checklist of birds. This twelve-page booklet covers all 410 species that have been observed in the county, along with breeding status and frequency data. It uses the latest taxonomy and species names and is based on current eBird data along with our own records of historical species. The checklist includes a map showing the birding regions in our county, along with a list of some suggested birding hotspots (for more ideas on where to go birding, check out our extensive Self-Guided Field Trips).

[Download your Checklist here.](#)



November In-person Field Trips

November trips include Palo Alto Baylands (wheelchair accessible), Don Edwards, McClellan Ranch (wheelchair accessible), Rancho San Vicente and Los Capitancillos Ponds. Visit our [Field Trips page](#) to see our schedule, read our trip policies and reserve your spot!



Self-guided Field Trips for November

Fall migration continues and the weather has begun to cool! Bird New Chicago Marsh to check out Avocets through Willets or head to the foothills for sparrows and other songbirds. Looking for an easy, paved choice? Try out Blackberry Farm.

- New! [Penitencia Creek Trail](#) (San Jose) by Chris Johnson
- [Coyote Lake: Mendoza Ranch Area](#) (Gilroy) by Michael Hawk
- [John Nicholas Trail](#) and [John Nicholas Trail](#) (español) (Los Gatos Hills) by Luis Villablanca
- [Ogier Ponds: Birding By Bike Or Walk-In](#) (Morgan Hill) by Dani Christensen
- [Marsh Birds And Wintering Waterfowl on the San Francisquito Creek Trail](#) (Palo Alto) by Adam Burnett

Visit our [self-guided field trip page](#) for more November recommendations.

Field Trip Leaders Needed

SCVAS is growing our team of **field trip leaders** for our member-led free field trips that are open to the public. We are looking for a diverse group of people who are enthusiastic about sharing their love of birds. Leaders choose their field trip locations, the route, and set the pace of the trip. We'll pair you up with one of our current trip leaders to help get you started. Required: SCVAS member, attended several SCVAS field trips, intermediate or better birding skills, ability to use the eBird mobile app. Contact fieldtrips@scvas.org with interest.



Western Screech-Owl by Binu John

Have a Bird-Friendly Halloween!

Are your Halloween decorations safe for birds?

Fake spiderwebs, netting, and decorations that hang or form loops can trap and harm animals, like the Western Screech-Owls. Here are [some tips for a wildlife-friendly holiday](#) from WildCare, a wildlife hospital in San Rafael.



Anna's Hummingbird by John Richardson

Backyard Birding

Did you know that the nesting season for the **Anna's Hummingbird** starts in November? That's because the fall rains cause winter-flowering plants to bloom. Learn all about this tiny, bold bird, and how to attract it to your yard, in Dave Zittin's latest [Backyard Bird of the Month](#) article.

They're here - crowned sparrows, warblers, kinglets, and more! Many of you reported **your first observations of birds that migrate here for the winter** in the latest [All Around Town](#), our monthly round-up of backyard bird sightings.

What birds are you seeing in your yard or neighborhood? Write to us at backyardbirds@scvas.org and we'll publish your observations in the next All Around Town.

Project FeederWatch starts on November 13! This winter, count birds in your yard with FeederWatch, a community science project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

To participate, **count the birds that visit your yard this winter and tell the Lab what you see.** Design your own count schedule, which can be as frequent as weekly, or only once or twice during the whole season. You don't even need to have feeders!

For more information, visit feederwatch.org and read our 2020 [interview with Dr. Emma Greig](#), the U.S. FeederWatch project leader.



Cupertino Canopy by Matthew Dodder

Conservation Corner

Palo Alto Tree Protection Ordinance

The Palo Alto City Council moved forward a community-led Tree Protection Ordinance initiative, which will protect native and ordinary trees and promote planting native trees, especially oaks. This Tree Protection Ordinance is the most direct implementation opportunity for the city's Urban Forest Master Plan. If approved next spring, it will improve biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and quality of life in Palo Alto. Thank you to everyone who supported this initiative - we will keep you informed as the new ordinance moves through the public process.

Cupertino Climate Action Plan 2.0

The commissioners at this month's Cupertino Sustainability Commission voted unanimously to recommend Climate Action Plan update measures to the City Council. We were pleased with the robust discussion to ensure biodiversity will be a part of the actionable items, specifically when increasing tree canopy. **City Council will be hearing these recommendations at a study session on November 16th** and planning for an Urban Forest Management Plan could begin in the near future. This is a critical step forward in blending climate resilience and biodiversity protection!

Nyland Property in San Juan Bautista Permanently Protected for Grazing and Open

Space

In 2018, SCVAS supported the San Benito Agricultural Land Trust's request for Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation funds to support the acquisition of Nyland Ranch, near San Juan Bautista. We are pleased to report that the 540-acre ranch has been acquired and will be preserved for open space, grazing and wildlife. Nyland Ranch provides landscape level connectivity and is considered a high-level linkage priority between the Gabilans and the Santa Cruz Mountains, and includes 70 acres of fenced oak woodland and 29 acres of riparian habitats and wetlands, including freshwater ponds.



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