



The

AVOCET

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

Winter 2020 · Vol 68 Num 1



Coyote Valley *Eve Meier*

Monthly Speaker Series

OBI KAUFMANN

THE CALIFORNIA
FIELD ATLAS

Wed, Jan 15 at 7:30 pm

Redwood Hall at
The Terraces in Los Altos



Based on decades of exploring, Obi Kaufmann's lavishly illustrated *California Field Atlas* takes readers off the beaten path. His book blends science and art to illuminate the multifaceted array of living, connected systems like no book has done before. Mr. Kaufmann outlines the epic narrative of the California backcountry, which holds enough art, science, mythology, and language for a hundred field atlases to come.

More details at
scvas.org/SpeakerSeries

A Big Win in Coyote Valley

Shani Kleinhaus

After decades of persistent advocacy and fierce opposition to sprawl in Coyote Valley, we now celebrate the permanent protection of 937 acres in North Coyote Valley (see map on the next page). SCVAS is proud and thankful: proud of this success, thankful to Mayor Liccardo and the leaders of San Jose, the Open Space Authority, the Peninsula Open Space Trust, and our partner environmental organizations who helped realize a dream. We are especially thankful to you – our members – who have faith in us and continue to support our work.

In 30 years, SCVAS never wavered, never hesitated, and never eased the pressure to preserve this critically important area for birds and other wildlife species. We never abandoned the hope that one day, the land could be restored to oak woodlands, grasslands and wetlands.

It took a lawsuit to stop development at the turn of the century. More recently, serendipity and a synergistic series of natural phenomena and political events highlighted the importance of Coyote Valley and change its fate: climate change underscored the importance of preventing sprawl; the Coyote Creek Flood of 2017 accentuated the importance of Coyote Valley in attenuating floodwater; and when developers tried to impose new zoning rules to build the valley – San Jose residents defeated them in the polls. Our work in promoting good ballot measures and opposing misleading measures was effective: in 2018, San Jose voters made it clear that they could not be fooled, and that they cared. They voted down the rezoning of the land, and allocated 50 million dollars to purchase land in Coyote Valley.

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We applaud Mayor Sam Liccardo for embracing our cause, and Council Members (especially Sergio Jimenez of District 2 that contains Coyote Valley). Together, they initiated a transformative (and heart warming) change to the history of our region.

With the Open Space Authority leading restoration efforts, Laguna Seca can now return to its days of wetland glory where willows and reeds harbor a diverse community of avian species, raptors hover above, Fisher Creek provides migratory pathways along wide riparian corridors, and Burrowing Owl find a place to thrive. ●

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Happenings @ the Ranch

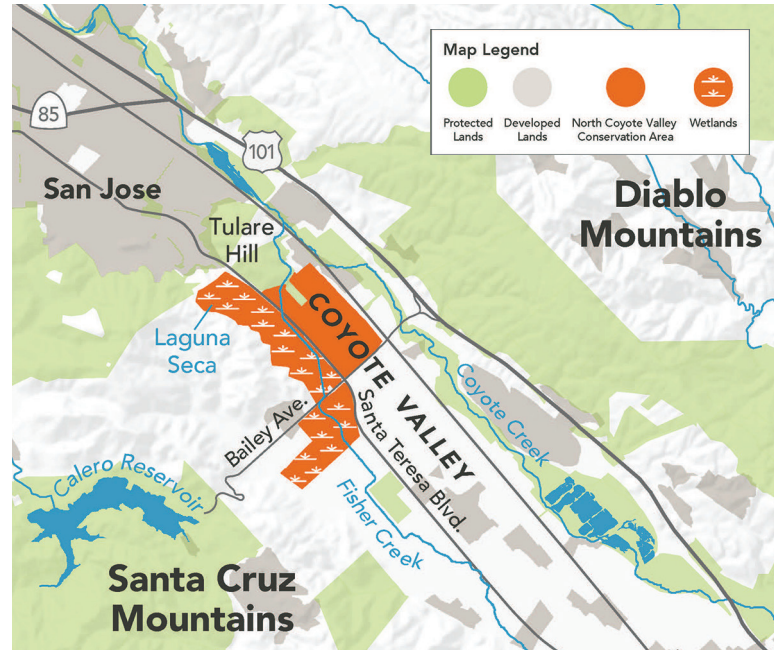
As I write this, it is cool and strangely quiet at the Ranch. Sure, the winter Sparrows are crowding our feeders, squabbling with resident Chickadees and Titmice, but there is a fatigued calm in the air as well, and very few birds are singing.

Despite the apparent calm we see in the birds here today, work continues feverishly at SCVAS. Our office manager, April Austin, has worked for months organizing Wildlife & Harvest Day, our largest event of the year. She balanced 22 exhibitors, 80 volunteers and it was a huge success with over 1000 attendees!

Our education program is in full swing with multiple classroom visits and field trips each week led by Carolyn Knight and her volunteers. It's busy enough that we are actively looking for additional volunteer docents for these programs and those interested should contact her here at the Ranch.

Meanwhile, our environmental advocate, Shani Kleinhaus has been actively working on a number of critical environmental issues and city planning projects, and has seen a major victory in Coyote Valley. She will address these in this issue.

Eve Meier and her field trip leaders are gearing up for a packed season of spectacular field trips. The Christmas Bird Count is rapidly approaching as well, and the committees are busy with their respective tasks including fundraising and outreach efforts.



Our website has also undergone a huge overhaul. Barry Langdon-Lassagne worked with us to refresh the look, improve the functionality, and move our site to a new, more easily managed platform.

Our Speaker Series is filling up with engaging presentations by noted artists, authors and researchers. Our photo archive, spearheaded by Bill Walker, will soon provide a searchable and permanent home for the thousands of photos and videos we receive from field trip leaders, members and participants. Eventually, Avocet newsletters dating back to 1929 will also find a home here for the historically curious.

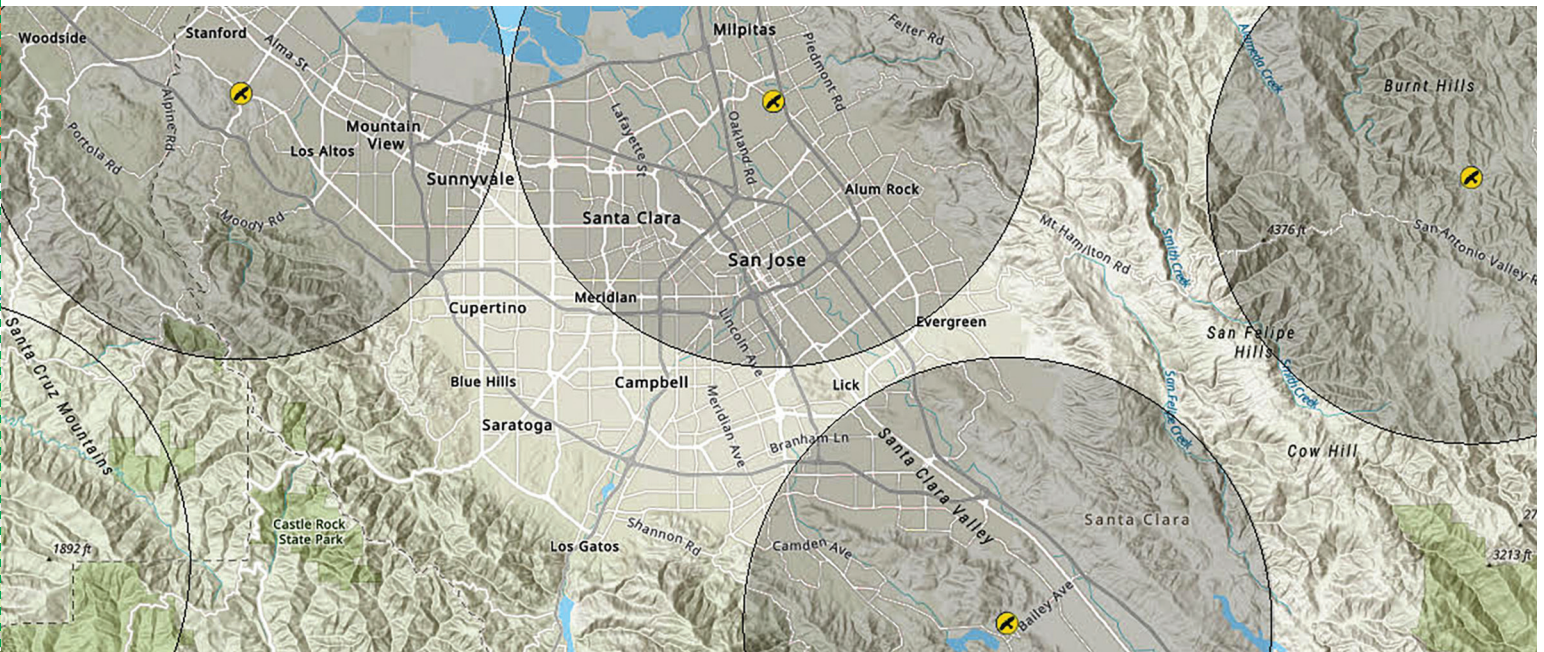
By now, you've certainly noticed the newly-designed Avocet newsletter. Melissa Lee, a graphic designer from De Anza College and UC San Diego worked with us over the summer to elevate our design. Her reinterpretation of *The Avocet* helps show our chapter's works in the best possible light.

There's been a lot going on in other words, and there's much more work ahead! Of course, we rely on dozens of volunteers and we are grateful for their hard work. Thank you! We couldn't do what we do without you!

Things have been active here for months and it remains busy in the most wonderful way. Read through our newsletter, and you can see for yourselves how much is happening at the Ranch.

Matthew Dodder
Executive Director





CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Join us for another year of adventure! Contact the compiler of the region you are interested in and help us continue the country's longest-standing citizen science bird project. Participation is free and all birders are encouraged to join!

San Jose: Sun, Dec 15

Birders of all experience levels are welcome and needed. Bird identification skills are an asset but spotters (who just look for birds in the sky, trees, and bushes) and recorders (who tally the number of birds of each species) are also valuable! Some count all day, while others only take part for a few hours. The day is followed by the optional Countdown Dinner for those who are up to hearing stories of rare sightings from theirs and other groups. It is a great experience!

Contact Mike Azevedo at geochelone@aol.com

Palo Alto: Mon, Dec 16

This count circle extends from the Bay to the Santa Cruz Mountains, with four regions in each of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. We welcome eager birders at any level of experience. There are three new region coordinators since last year's CBC: Casey Girard in region 3 (San Mateo Co. lowlands "west" of Hwy 101); Charles Coston in region 6 (Santa Clara Co. foothills, west of I-280); Curt Bianchi in region 8 (higher elevations in, mostly, Santa Clara Co.).

If you have previously participated, and want to count in the same region as before, please contact your region coordinator soon. If you are new to this count, or if you would like to

explore a different region, or if you do not know how to reach your coordinator, contact Al Eisner. In order to find you a good spot, we need to hear from you at least two weeks before the count (the sooner the better). Thanks in advance for your participation.

Contact Al Eisner at eisner@slac.stanford.edu

Calero-Morgan Hill: Sun, Dec 28

This count in south Santa Clara County stretches across the valley to foothills in both the Coast and Diablo ranges, and includes several creeks, lakes and wetlands. It covers city and county parks, open space preserves, water district reservoirs, and private properties, many not usually open to the public. Annual targets include both eagles, several falcons, Burrowing Owl, Grasshopper Sparrow, and a surprising variety of gulls. All counters are welcome afterwards to the countdown dinner in New Almaden.

Contact Rick Herder at rick.herder@gmail.com

Mount Hamilton: Thu, Jan 2

We hope to have a great count again throughout the Mount Hamilton and San Antonio Valley area. Count leaders are especially needed.

Contact Bob Hirt at bobhirt@aol.com

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Matthew Dodder Executive Director



23.5° of separation

What a shift there's been since August when I began this column. We now have fewer daylight hours, darker afternoons, cooler temperatures, and perhaps even a little rain (in normal years, of course). We're wearing sweaters, and driving home in the dark. All of these changes, and more, are due to the 23.5° angle at which our planet is tilted... and now, we are tilted away from the sun during the day. Birds experience the same phenomena we do, but with a heightened sense of urgency because their lives depend on responding appropriately to seasonal changes.

Insectivores

The cooler temperatures generally mean fewer airborne insects and hence the annual departure of many flycatcher genera such as *Tyrannus*, *Myiarchus*, and *Empidonax* species, which have essentially left our county for warmer areas farther south. Of course, insects are still present during our mild winters, but many of those that eat them become harder to find. Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warbler are exceptions and actually increase in numbers here during winter. Yellow-rumps (their bold colors now mostly gone) become so common they are almost un-missable on any day outside! But they dare us to distinguish between their eastern "Myrtle" and western "Audubon's" forms. To do that, consider their throat color and facial pattern. Their calls differ slightly as well. It's interesting to note that the winter Warblers occasionally visit feeders in our yards, supplementing their cool weather diets with fat-rich suet or seeds. Adaptability is a valuable quality, or if you prefer, desperate times, call for desperate measures...

Seed-eaters

In place of many of these insectivorous species, we see newly arrived seed-eating species. The large numbers of White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrow, as well as the less common White-throated (the *Zonotrichias* or "crowned sparrows") now become daily companions on our birding walks. If one wants to see a White-throated Sparrow though, it's best to watch and wait when you find a group of Golden-crowns... They are more cautious than the Golden-crowned, and the last to emerge from the bush. Fox and Lincoln's Sparrow become common on our field trips, and occasionally Swamp Sparrow (if we're near suitably wet habitat). While Lesser Goldfinch may be found easily year round in our

county, Pine Siskin is found most easily in winter and occasionally crowd seed feeders in residential areas. They are smaller and streakier than the Goldfinches and usually show some inconspicuous yellow on their wings. Cedar Waxwing comes in droves this time of year also, not in search of seeds but berries, which are abundant in winter.

Waterfowl

Perhaps nothing characterizes winter more than the arrival of thousands of Waterfowl. Only a few ducks breed commonly in our county. Mallard and Gadwall come to mind. Several others breed sparingly, such as Cinnamon Teal and Northern Shoveler. But for the majority of ducks, their breeding occurs away from here.

After breeding in the far north, many species of ducks and geese arrive in search of rich California resources, particularly in the Great Central Valley. Merced MWR provides a banquet of fallow fields and shallow wetlands. In the Bay Area we see large rafts of diving ducks like Scaup, Canvasback, Bufflehead and Common Goldeneye in open water. Dabbling ducks may gather closer to the edges where they can feed more easily on items on or just below the surface. Locally, we may see very small numbers of Greater White-fronted, Cackling, and even Snow or Ross's Goose associating with resident Canada Goose. Much larger flocks of these are found in the Central Valley. The enormous flocks of waterfowl echoes the flocking of other winter species—there is added safety from predators in these large numbers, and the noise of conspicuous flocks can be a signal to other waterfowl of good feeding opportunities.

Carnivores

If you are a raptor enthusiast, this is your time! Although Swainson's Hawk have left Central California for the most part, making their way to South America for the winter, Ferruginous Hawk has just arrived. This handsome hawk, white and rufous, or warm chocolate brown, is found in Coyote Valley and other open grassy areas. Field trips to nearby areas outside our county may produce Rough-legged Hawk as well, especially when weather further north becomes extreme. For me, this time of year is always exciting because

Photos L to R:

Ferruginous Hawk, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Ring-billed Gull *Tom Grey*



Merlin
Tom Grey



White-throated Sparrow
Tom Grey



California Gull
Tom Grey

of our Merlin. Yes, our Merlin. For several years, my wife Kelly (Cricket) and I have had one spend his afternoons perched on the top of a cedar at the end of our driveway during the colder months. Perhaps by the time this issue prints, we will see him again.

And finally, Gulls!

There's hardly a word that elicits stronger feelings in birders. Either you love them or hate them, but it's guaranteed you have an opinion... I LOVE GULLS though, in the same way I love any subtle taxon (fall Warblers, Spizella Sparrows, and Empidonax Flycatchers)—they give us an opportunity to test our ID skills, AND our patience.

During the winter months, we find the variety of gulls in our midst at its greatest. Instead of 1, 2, or 3 gull species to consider during warmer months, we now have a minimum of 7 with which to contend. My best advice has always been to focus on learning the California Gull (the intermediate in most respects). It's probably the most common Larid here and wise to study it in all its variations—from the double-dark-barred pattern on the upper wing of first-winter birds, and the dark eyes, to the medium gray mantle and medium-long bill... they can be compared to other gulls that are lighter or darker, larger or smaller, slighter or bulkier, and help us recognize what's different.

The California Gull is your ambassador to the vast nation of gulls. Before you consider plumage of the various species, use the California's shape and structure to measure all other Gulls. Go to Palo Alto Duck Pond or Charleston Slough and take the first step toward gull anti-anxiety. Locate an adult California Gull. Study this adult carefully. Watch it walk, and swim, fly and preen. Become familiar with its lean structure—more like a baseball player than a football player (Western Gull). Its structural differences manifest themselves in every feature of this ambassador gull, no matter what it is doing. Use its form to help spot something that isn't a California Gull, and go from there.

Finally, this late-fall early-winter time period is truly one of change—for humans and for birds. Look at the newly arrived birds visiting your feeders, and those you find on your walks—old acquaintances from previous winters. You can thank that small tilt of the earth for the massive (but gradual) changes to the life around you... year after year. ●

Check out *Insectivores* at Los Gatos Creek County Park, *Seed-eaters* at Ulistac Natural Preserve, *Waterfowl* at Merced NWR, *Carnivores* at Coyote Valley OSP and Sierra Vista OSP and *Gulls* at Palo Alto Baylands and Charleston Slough.

Our trips to these areas for birds mentioned above can be found on page 14 or at scvas.org/FieldTrips



Conservation Corner

Shani Kleinhaus
Environmental Advocate

A recently published study by National Audubon highlights the dangers that climate change imposes on migratory bird populations in California and throughout North America. *Science Magazine* focuses on the great overall decline in numbers of birds (3 billion in 30 years!).

In Santa Clara Valley and throughout our region, it behooves us to continue to fiercely protect birds from harm, to oppose harmful development, and to support the types of development that regenerate native habitats in a meaningful way. Because birds are everywhere, we continue to engage in efforts to protect landscape-scale open spaces and natural resources as well as efforts to protect birds from hazards and regenerate habitat in urban/suburban landscapes.

Collisions with Glass

One of our long-term campaigns focuses on protecting birds from collision with glass. City by city, jurisdiction by jurisdiction, we make progress. In recent months, we have been successful in:

- ▶ **Mountain View** has recently adopted new, sustainable building requirements that include bird safe design for most types of new buildings in the city
- ▶ After hearing 10 of our advocates' testimony, the **Cupertino** Planning commission instructed staff to prepare a bird-safe design ordinance. They will also be developing dark-sky requirements, which will benefit birds
- ▶ We supported **Santa Cruz** advocates in their successful efforts to require bird safe design in that city
- ▶ **Santa Clara County** is starting to work on County Wide Bird Safe design guidelines
- ▶ Downtown **San Jose** now has standard and guidelines for bird safe design. The National Audubon Society recently published an online article that mentions this achievement, quoting our advocate, see <https://www.audubon.org/news/theres-growing-political-push-make-more-buildings-bird-safe>



Charleston Marsh in Mountain View
Matthew Dodder

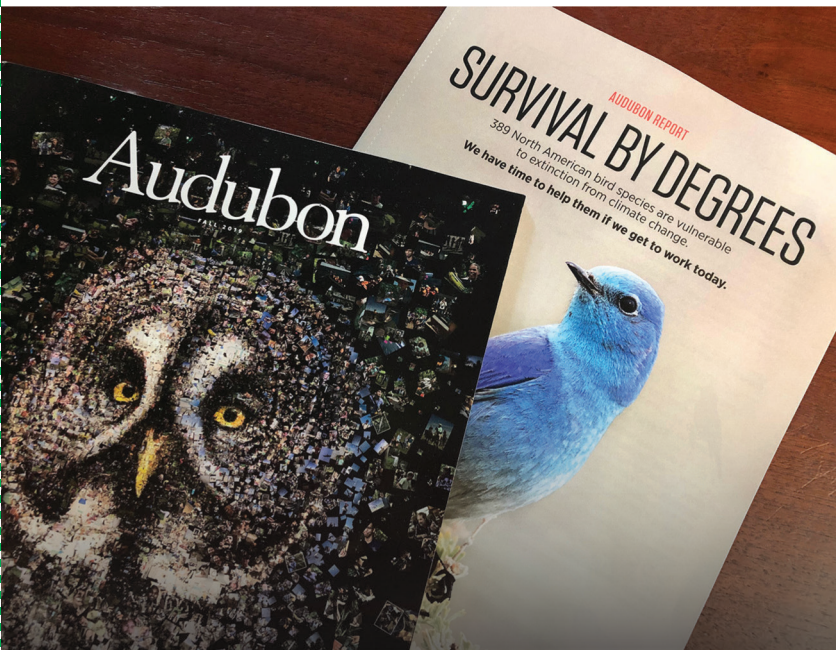
Soon, San Jose will be preparing city-wide design guidelines and we will be there to ensure that birds are not forgotten!

Habitat in Cities

Palo Alto is planning a pilot "Horizontal Levee" project at the edge of the wetlands at the end of Embarcadero. As stakeholders (and guardians of Ridgeway's Rail), we expressed appreciation for the project's intent to create habitat for native species while at the same time protecting Palo Alto from sea level rise. We also provided comments asking for a trail to be placed along the road, rather than on top of the levee.

In **San Jose**, we provided comments on the **ActivateSJ Strategic Plan** for the City's Parks and Community Services Department, advocating for a plan that includes the enhancement of habitat and nature, and promotes nature-oriented activities.

Also in San Jose, we are following **Google's mixed-use framework for the Diridon area**, which looks to remove parking areas in order to plant native trees along Los Gatos Creek in a wide, park-like creek setback. Google's plans are in contrast to the proposed Almaden Office Project on the Guadalupe, which we oppose because it looks to build a 2-block long, 17-story high (and 4 levels underground parking garage) within 30-ft of the riparian setback of the **Guadalupe River**. We are also following with concern the efforts of the Light Tower Corporation to solicit submittals to a design competition for an iconic structure in **Arena Green** park.



CA Legislative Session Ends

The legislative session came to an end in Sacramento. Of the bills we have been following, both of Assemblyman Ash Kalra's sponsored bills have been signed into law:

- ▶ AB-454 - Migratory Birds: California Migratory Bird Protection Act will reinstate protections to Migratory birds that were removed by the federal administration.
- ▶ AB-948 Coyote Valley Conservation Program has also been signed, authorizing the Open Space Authority to establish and administer the Coyote Valley Conservation Program to address resource and recreational goals of the Coyote Valley.

However, Governor Newsom vetoed two important bills:

- ▶ SB-767 Off-highway Vehicular Recreation: Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area: Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area. This bill aimed to stop the expansion of off-road vehicle recreation to an ecologically sensitive area in the East Bay. We hope the bill will be reintroduced next year.
- ▶ SB-1 California Environmental, Public Health, and Workers Defense Act of 2019: Aimed (among other goals) to reinstate protections to clean air and water, and protections to endangered species to respond to the removal of these protections by the federal administration. We are greatly disappointed as this surrender to Central Valley agribusiness puts many of California's endangered species and their habitats at risk. ●

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

SCVAS is currently looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help support our education efforts throughout Santa Clara County. No prior experience is required, only a willingness to learn and a positive attitude.

Wetlands Discovery Program Docents

Join our longest running educational program and help reach more than 1500 elementary students each year with the importance of birds and the wetlands.

Docents can take part in one or both of the components that has made this program such an establishment for so many local schools, and do not need to be available for all programs.

- ▶ In-Class Programs: Assist elementary students in a series of stations focused on wetland ecology, human interactions with wetlands, and the birds that call this habitat home. Programs take place Tuesday mornings during WDP season.
- ▶ Field Trips: Lead groups of students through Charleston Slough and the surrounding habitats in nature walks that focus on applying the lessons learned at schools to the real world. Programs take place Thursday and Friday mornings during WDP season.

Field Trip Leaders

Have a favorite birding location you would enjoy sharing with people who love to bird? Want to create trips for special groups like the scouts or beginning birders?

We can help you make that happen. Consider becoming a field trip leader with SCVAS and we will provide all the support you need to get started, including an experienced leader to help you get comfortable leading your own trips.

Leading trips isn't a big time commitment, you can do as many or as few as you want. And you don't need to be an advanced birder, just an enthusiastic one.

For more information

Contact Eve Meier, Field Trip Coordinator, at scvasfieldtrips@gmail.com.

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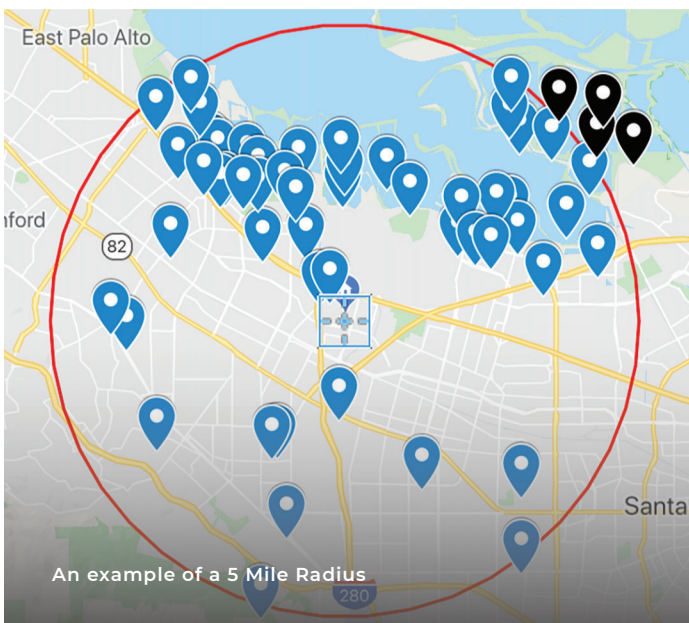
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ADOPTING THE FIVE MILE



There's an interest among birders to be more ecologically aware of the impact of our birding. Out of that has come a number of ideas to try to do this, but the biggest one has been the trend towards local birding, whether it's doing a big day by bicycle or putting your birding energy into your local region.

Out of this trend has been a new idea, which is to go hyper-local and to adopt the area around where you live and bird it intensively. This has become the 5 mile challenge, where you take the area within a 5 mile radius (5MR) of your home, identify the places within it and put effort into birding them and coming to know what birds are there and what the various greenspaces offer.

It is easy to get started: just identify the circle around your home at a 5 mile radius. Unfortunately, that's not so easy to do using Google Maps or other online mapping tools. Fortunately, Dennis (who doesn't offer his last name) has a blog post on *Diary of Dennis* that helps us identify the circle



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RADIUS CHALLENGE

Chuq Von Rospach
 Birder, Photographer & Writer

using the open street maps project so you can adapt it to your preferred maps.

This is my personal 5 mile radius area. The first thing I realized looking at it was how big it is. It stretches from Japan town in San Jose past the original Apple campus in Cupertino all the way to Alviso and down through most of Campbell. A quick count shows more than 50 green spaces in the region, from small local pocket parks to some large, well-known birding spots like Ulistac Nature Preserve. There's definitely enough to keep me going for a few years before I cover all of this.

There are two reasons I'm adopting a 5 mile radius challenge. One is that I do want to do more green/local birding and this gives me incentive to focus my birding time in the local area. I've just bought an electric bike as an alternative to driving everywhere, and I expect this challenge will be a primary reason for my using it.

The second is that this project will create useful information that can help us better understand what's happening with the area and birds around us, and this aspect of Civilian Science attracts me to these kinds of initiatives. By birding these not-birded and under-birded locations we'll discover new and interesting birding places and get a better idea of what's around us. By taking these observations and contributing them to *eBird*, you'll not only be able to keep track of them into the future, that data can be used by researchers to better understand what's happening.

You can track this data in *eBird* by defining what they call a patch. That allows you to attach multiple birding locations and hotspots into a single larger area so you can see what you've found in that area. You still submit observations for specific locations or hotspots – don't treat your 5 mile radius

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

as a single location – but after you can attach those locations into the patch to see the results of all of the data combined together.

Interested in getting started with a 5 mile radius? The *Nature in Novato* blog has a really good overview and ideas for setting this up and keeping the project going. Another good article to read comes from Seagull Steve via the *Bourbon, Bastards, and Birds* blog.

My primary patch within the 5 mile radius is a park near my house, Santa Clara's Central Park. It's a large park that includes baseball and sports fields, open lawn, the city's central library and a swim center, plus it has two creeks running through it, both adapted into flood control channels but still somewhat wild and surrounded by non-manicured brush and trees. These areas support a variety of birds, and I know Red-Shouldered Hawk nests there as well as Cooper's Hawk, and wildlife including healthy populations of opossums, raccoons and skunks. A coyote was seen in the street nearby in recent weeks as well, so this is a nice, healthy and fairly diverse habitat.

Despite that, it's not heavily birded, and that includes by me. When I went recently on my first trip to the park in too long, I quickly found a pair of Western Bluebirds in a location where I know they were nesting. When I did my *eBird* report, Bluebirds were reported as uncommon in the park, which I know is wrong, but since the park isn't birded often, their existence there is overlooked. That's something I can fix, and I will.

To cover the rest of that 5 mile radius, I'm going to try to pick one or two green spaces a month and explore it, going to new spaces until I've covered as much of that radius area as I can. With some of the smaller parks, I expect I can cover multiple parks in one trip. If I find an area that's not well birded but is showing some interesting birds, I can get the word out and we can start exploring it more thoroughly. Many of these places will be about what we can expect: Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow in winter, Jay, Mockingbird and California Towhee. But there will be some pleasant surprises to find and those are why I'm looking forward to this.

As an example: Ulistac Nature Preserve is one of the better known locations in the county and it is well birded and understood. But did you know there is a small city park across the street from it? Lick Mill Park is a typical small pocket park, with bushes and trees around the edges, lawn spaces and maybe ten parking spots. It's also a place I visited fairly regularly when I worked nearby as a place to take my lunch and hang out to get out of the office. For the most part, I saw the birds I just mentioned; nothing too special. But one fall migration, as I was sitting eating lunch, up popped a Wilson's Warbler, clearly stopping for a short visit on his way south.

Those kinds of special birds are out there, but we won't know about them, unless we go looking. The 5 mile radius challenge is our excuse to go looking, and if each of us takes on the areas near our homes, over time we can fill in the blanks and get a better understanding of what's going on around us – that we don't know because we haven't gone searching. ●

NEW MEMBERS Apr – Oct

Thank you and Welcome!

Grace M. Abbott • John & Cayce Adams • Karen Adams • William & Margaret Albrets • David Anderson • Mary Ann Anderson • Jay Anderson • Sharon Ardenboim • Elena Armstrong • Lewam Assefaw • John Hyland Baggerly • Susan Barber • Isabel Barrios • Kathleen M. Bauer • Karin Baye • Jean Beardsley • Martin M. Berndt • Judy Bernstein • Richard Berryessa • Margaret Betchart • Karen Bickinella • James Bilanski • Carolee Bird • Timothy Blackwood • Dyann Blaine • Steve & Marcia Block • Daniel Blum • David Boyer • Dana Boyer-

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Continued on back cover

FIVE MILE RESOURCES

Diary of Dennis

How to Draw a Radius with Open Street Map
<https://diaryofdennis.com/2018/10/06/how-to-draw-a-radius-with-open-street-map/>

eBird

Yard and Patch Guidelines
<https://help.ebird.org/customer/en/portal/articles/1006845-yard-and-patch-guidelines>

Nature in Novato

Birding Your Five Mile Radius
<https://natureinnovato.com/2019/02/01/birding-your-five-mile-radius/>

Seagull Steve

The Five Mile Radius
<https://seagullsteve.blogspot.com/2018/03/the-five-mile-radius.html>

Facebook

5MR Birding
Report your discoveries, post questions and give advice.

MONTHLY SPEAKER SERIES

At Redwood Hall at The Terraces in Los Altos
More details at scvas.org/SpeakerSeries

Wed, Jan 15 at 7:30 pm

Obi Kaufmann

The California Field Atlas
See description on cover.

Wed, Feb 19 at 7:30 pm

Ryan Phillips

Bird Conservation & Research

Ryan Phillips is the co-founder of Talon Conservation. He has been a bander at Golden Gate Raptor Observatory and spent over 15 years conducting research in Belize as a Field Biologist for The Peregrine Fund on the Harpy Eagle Restoration Project. Ryan was the Executive Director and Co-founder of the Belize Bird Conservancy and is currently the Belize Hawk Watch Director. He has conducted research on a wide-variety of threatened local species and habitats such as the Tricolored Blackbird.

SPECIAL MEMBER EVENT

Sat, Feb 29 – Details TBA

Jane Kim

Ink Dwell

Founded in 2012 by artist Jane Kim and writer Thayer Walker, Ink Dwell studio creates art that explores the wonders of the natural world. Merging classical techniques of science illustration with modern fine art, we create public and private commissions, illustrations, exhibitions and much more. Ink Dwell makes everyday places special and enhances iconic locations with wondrous imagery.



Wall of Birds – Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Ink Dwell



Detail – Jane Kim painting Wall of Birds



Bird Notes

Please report rarities to
pdunten@gmail.com

Pete Dunten
Santa Clara County eBird Reviewer

Geese through Skimmers

Winter typically brings Snow Geese in ones and twos; this year an unusually large number of Snow Geese arrived in late October. Four **Snow Geese** visited pond A17 from 24 Oct to mid-day on 25 Oct (MA, ST, PDo). As many as seven immature Snow Geese frequented Palo Alto Baylands from the evening of 25 Oct through 31 Oct (m. ob.). On 31 Oct two immatures and an adult were at the Shoreline Park Golf Course (RPh).

The **Common Loon** summering on Felt Lake was last reported on 25 Aug (FV). A **Sandhill Crane** flew over Byxbee Park on 27 Oct (ABu) and one, presumably the same individual, was over Shoreline Park on 28 Oct (MDo). Sandhill Cranes occur in the county less than annually, with nearly half our records in October.

Highlights of shorebird migration included a **Ruddy Turnstone** at A16 and A17 from 26 – 29 Aug (MJM, ST, MA), one to two **Pectoral Sandpipers** in New Chicago Marsh between 4 – 9 Sept (ST, m. ob.), and single **Baird's Sandpipers** at A13 from 1 – 4 Aug (WL, m. ob.) and Coast Casey Forebay on 20 Sept (MDo). Small groups of **Red Knots** were found on multiple dates beginning on 1 Sept when five were in a closed refuge area (RJ, MJM). Six were tallied on 29 Sept in a closed refuge area (MMR, FT), and on 20 Oct the high count for the period, 12 Knots, was recorded at the Stevens Creek delta (RWR). Four were noted there on 26 Oct (ST).

A **Ruff** in New Chicago Marsh on 3 Sept was a nice find (ALx et al., BB). It was seen between 3 – 9 Sept, on 15 Sept at Alviso Marina, and again 13 Oct in New Chicago Marsh (m. ob.) A second Ruff was another nice find on 27 Sept at the Geng Rd pond (JMa). The Ruff was found at the Geng Rd pond and in nearby San Francisquito Creek in both San Mateo and Santa Clara counties between 27 Sept – 11 Oct and again 18 Oct (m. ob.)

Western Gulls nested successfully this year, with an occupied nest noted on 1 Jun at pond A2W (WGB) and two juvenile gulls present on closed refuge ponds on 25 Aug (MMR, MJM, RJ). The high count of **Elegant Terns** this fall was fourteen over pond A2E on 15 Aug (RPh). Eleven were tallied on a survey of several ponds at the south end of the bay on 1 Sept (MJM, RJ). A **Common Tern** on migration stopped at



Tropical Kingbird
Eric Goodill



Clay-colored Sparrow
Brooke Miller



Vermilion Flycatcher
Bill Pelletier

pond AB1 from 5 – 11 Aug (GL, m. ob.) The **Black Skimmers** counts at Shoreline Lake included 11 young on 14 Aug (RPh). Beginning on 8 Sept Skimmers were reported at nearby Charleston Slough, with as many as 98 individuals present on 10 Sept, including 18 juveniles (RPh). A count of the group on Adobe Creek the next day included 19 juveniles among the 92 Skimmers (RPh). Numbers dropped off through Sept, with 14 at Charleston Slough on the 25th (WGB) and only two at Mountain View Forebay on 28 Sept (MMR et al.)

Woodpeckers through Finches

A single **Lewis's Woodpecker** greeted visitors at Calero CP on 9 Oct (EvM et al.) and again on the following day (BLL et al.) A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was found visiting Stanford Campus on 13 Oct (TGr, WP et al.) The male **Vermilion Flycatcher** at J Grant CP first noted on 23 Jul remained through August and into September. Photos taken on 4 Sept showed the Flycatcher was molting primaries asymmetrically, and hence likely to stay a bit longer (EGa). The latest sighting was on 20 Sept (WGB).

A **Tropical Kingbird** at Shoreline Lake on 12 Oct fell within the pattern of primarily fall occurrence for this species (LM et al.) Two Tropical Kingbirds at the Palo Alto Duck Pond on 20 Oct set the record for the highest count at one location in the county (ABu). One to two have been found through 29 Oct at locations nearby including the Palo Alto WTP, Byxbee Park, and the edge of Mayfield Slough (m. ob.) In answer to one of the county challenges given in the July/August 2019 issue of The Avocet, an observer located a roost used by the **Pygmy Nuthatches** at Cuesta Park. Four Nuthatches were counted entering a cavity in a Palm Tree after sunset on 30 Sept (GL).

A **Lapland Longspur** briefly visited the Shoreline Park kite-flying area on 20 Oct (ChJ). A **Tennessee Warbler** was a nice backyard bird, seen visiting a birdbath near Los Capitancillos Ponds on 3 Oct and again the next day (STu). **Blackpoll Warblers** were the first of the offcourse migrating warblers to occur in the county. One was at Vasona Lake CP on 12 Sept (ST, PDo, SPz) and another was at Ulistac NA on 18 Sept (ST). The latest uncommon warbler to arrive was a **Palm Warbler** at the Palo Alto WTP on 27 Oct (BM). It found the environment to its liking and has remained into November (m. ob.)

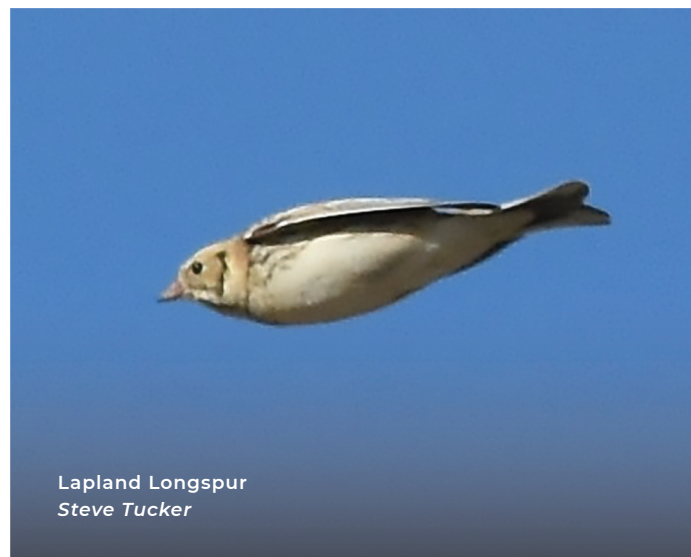
Six **Clay-colored Sparrows** in a 16-day period in late September and early October was a nice total. Single migrants were found at Ulistac NA between 21 – 23 Sept (MDo), on a closed refuge levee on 29 Sept (MMR, FT), at Vasona Lake CP between 1 – 3 Oct (AVE), along the SF Bay Trail between San Francisquito Creek and the Palo Alto Golf Course on 3 Oct (DPe), at TJ Martin Park together with **Chipping Sparrows** on 6 Oct (STu, ST), and at Los Capitancillos Ponds on 6 Oct (STu).

Two Tropical Kingbirds at the Palo Alto Duck Pond on 20 Oct set the record for the highest count at one location in the county

A **Vesper Sparrow** associating with two Savannah Sparrows was photographed late in the day on 19 Oct at the Stanford Dish (PDU). A male **Summer Tanager** posed for a photo along the Stevens Creek Trail between El Camino and Hwy 101 on 16 Sept (TrG, ERz), a day with rain in the morning that brought down many migrating passerines.

An immature **Painted Bunting** was one of the migrants photographed that day, stopping at the Sunnyvale WPCP (PKe). This is only the 4th county record; all have been at locations near the edge of SF Bay. Rounding out the records for the 16th of Sept, an immature **Blue Grosbeak** was noted along Stevens Creek near La Avenida, downstream of the Summer Tanager (WGB). **Evening Grosbeaks** arrived in the area on 13 Oct, when a group of six were found at Almaden Lake Park (JPa). Two overflew Shoreline Park on 24 Oct (RPh).

Observers Mike Ambrose (MA), Bob Bolles (BB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Adam Burnett (ABu), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Peggy Don (PDo), Pete Dunten (PDU), Leslie Flint (LFI), Tricia Gardner (TrG), Elinor Gates (EGa), Tom Grey (TGr), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Chris Johnson (ChJ), Pat Kenny (PKe), Alex Lamoreaux (ALx), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Garrett Lau (GL), William Lawton (WL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Juliana Manoliu (JMa), Eve Meier (EvM), Brooke Miller (BM), Lisa Myers (LM), Janna Pauser (JPa), William Pelletier (WP), Don Pendleton (DPe), Sergio Perez (SPz), Ryan Phillips (RPh), Bob Reiling (RWR), Ellie Resendiz (ERz), Mike Rogers (MMR), Francis Toldi (FT), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AVE)



Lapland Longspur
Steve Tucker



FIELD TRIPS

For full event descriptions and to RSVP, visit scvas.org/FieldTrips or call (408) 579-9590.



Beginner Friendly



Wheelchair accessible



Family-friendly, all ages



Family-friendly, 10 yrs and older



Family-friendly, 14 yrs and older

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve

Sun, Dec 1 at 9 AM, 2 hrs



Palo Alto Baylands

Sun, Dec 1 at 8 AM, 3 hrs



Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

Wed, Dec 4 at 12 PM, 1 hr



Diablo Foothills in South Santa Clara County

Sat, Dec 7 at 7:45 AM, 5.25 hrs



Charleston Slough

Sat, Dec 7 at 8 AM, 3 hrs



Ulistac Natural Preserve

Sun, Dec 8 at 8 AM, 3 hrs



Bugs, Snails, & Salamanders, Age 4+

Tue, Dec 10 at 10 AM, 2 hrs

Almaden Quicksilver County Park McAbee entrance

Wed, Dec 11 at 8 AM, 3 hrs

Drop-in: Charleston Slough

Sat, Dec 14 at 10 AM, 2 hrs



Backyard Birds for Beginners

Fri, Dec 20 at 1:30 PM, 1.5 hrs



Beginner's Bird & Plant ID Walk Series at Lake Cunningham Park Session #4: First Day of Winter

Sun, Dec 22 at 9 AM, 3 hrs
Joint Event with CNPS and SCVOSA



RSVP through meetup.com *California Native Plant Society – Santa Clara Valley Chapter* or through the Open Space Authority events page *Events at Open Space Preserves*.

Drop-in: Charleston Slough

Wed, Jan 1 at 10 AM, 2 hrs



Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve

Sat, Jan 4 at 8 AM, 4 hrs

Coyote Lake Harvey Bear Ranch County Park

Sun, Jan 5 at 8:15 AM, 3.75 hrs



Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant

Wed, Jan 8 at 12 PM, 1 hr



Palo Alto Baylands

Sat, Jan 11 at 8 AM, 3 hrs



MEMBERS ONLY:

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

Sun, Jan 12 at 8 AM, 4 hrs



Backyard Birds for Beginners

Tue, Jan 14 at 10 AM, 1.5 hrs



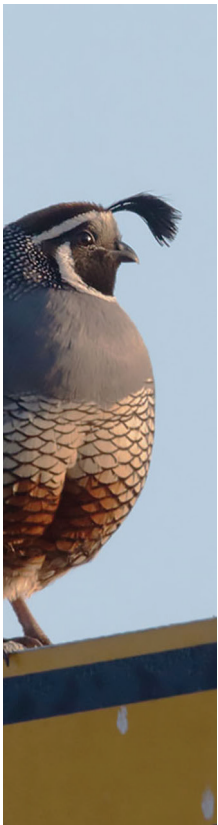
After Dark at Coyote Valley OSP

Fri, Jan 17 at 4:30 PM, 2 hrs



Uvas Creek Park Preserve

Sat, Jan 18 at 8 AM, 4 hrs



California Quail
Tom Grey



Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant **B** **14**^{Y R}
Sun, Jan 19 at 8 AM, 3 hrs

Families & Beginners: Age 7+ Sunnyvale Baylands Park **B**
Mon, Jan 20 at 9 AM, 2 hrs


Late Morning in Coyote Valley OSP **B** **10**^{Y R}
Wed, Jan 22 at 10 AM, 3 hrs

Charleston Slough **B**  **10**^{Y R}
Sat, Jan 25 at 9 AM, 2.5 hrs

Sunnyvale Bay Trail
Sun, Jan 26 at 8 AM, 4 hrs

Afternoon Drop-in: Coyote Valley OSP **B**  **10**^{Y R}
Sun, Jan 26 at 3 PM, 2 hrs
Joint Event with Santa Clara Valley OSA

Charleston Slough **B** **14**^{Y R}
Sat, Feb 1 at 8 AM, 3 hrs

Backyard Birds for Beginners **B**  **10**^{Y R}
Sat, Feb 1 at 9:30 AM, 1.5 hrs

Joseph D. Grant County Park **B**
Sun, Feb 2 at 8:15 AM, 3.75 hrs

Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant **B** **10**^{Y R}
Wed, Feb 5 at 12 PM, 1 hr

Sierra Vista Sunrise **B** **14**^{Y R}
Fri, Feb 7 at 7 AM, 3 hrs


Stevens Creek County Park **B** **14**^{Y R}
Sun, Feb 9 at 8:15 AM, 3.75 hrs


Coyote Creek at Silver Creek Staging Area
Wed, Feb 12 at 8 AM, 3 hrs

Los Gatos Creek County Park Oka Lane entrance
Sat, Feb 15 at 8 AM, 4 hrs

Palo Alto Baylands **B** **10**^{Y R}
Sun, Feb 16 at 9 AM, 2.5 hrs


Families & Beginners: Age 9+ Picchetti Ranch OSP **B**
Wed, Feb 19 at 9 AM, 2.5 hrs


Drop-in: Charleston Slough **B**  **10**^{Y R}
Sat, Feb 22 at 9:30 AM, 2 hrs

MEMBERS ONLY:
Merced National Wildlife Refuge **B** 
Sun, Feb 23 at 9 AM, 4 hrs

Shoreline Lake
Sat, Feb 29 at 8 AM, 4 hrs

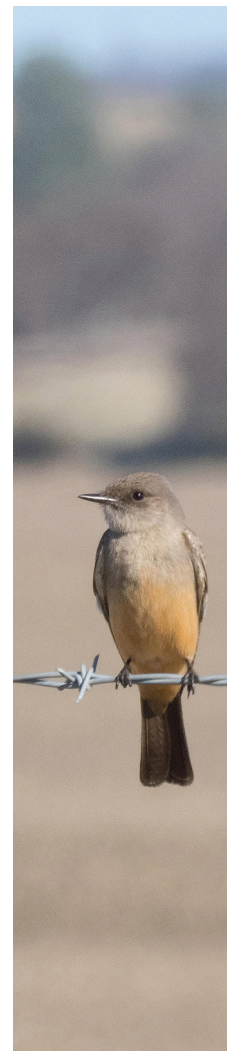
Lunchtime Bird Walk at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant **B** **10**^{Y R}
Wed, Mar 4 at 12 PM, 1 hr

Backyard Birds for Beginners **B** 
Fri, Mar 13 at 10 AM, 1.5 hrs

Afternoon Drop-in: Coyote Valley OSP **B**  **10**^{Y R}
Sat, Mar 21 at 3 PM, 2 hrs
Joint Event with Santa Clara Valley OSA

SIGN UP ONLINE

at scvas.org/FieldTrips



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Eric Goodill



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Thank You & Welcome!

NEW MEMBERS Apr – Oct

Continued from page 10

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