STAFF HIRINGS HERALD CHANGES AT SCVAS

Santa Clara Valley Audubon announced a major restructuring of personnel this month with the hiring of a new Office Manager and the creation of two part-time positions, Environmental Advocate and Administrative Aide. The Board expects this trio of new employees to help achieve such goals as elevating the chapter’s status in the community, augmenting volunteer and committee activities, improving office efficiency and boosting merchandise sales.

While negotiations were still under way with candidates for the two new positions at press time, we are pleased to welcome Jayne DiCandio, an experienced and versatile volunteer for numerous SCVAS activities over the last 18 months, as Office Manager, 75%-time. Her main responsibilities will be to run the office and Nature Shop at McClennan Ranch, coordinate volunteer efforts, and work with committees on various chapter programs.

A native of the east coast, Jayne has volunteered for Rhode Island Audubon as well as SCVAS and has a strong background in environmental action and birding as well as retail experience.

“I can’t wait to get started working with our merchandise—I think the Nature Shop can be a real money-maker, especially with the holidays coming up,” commented Jayne during a recent visit to McClennan Ranch. Her enthusiasm and retail skills will be particularly useful as the chapter attempts to recover from sagging Birdathon and merchandise revenues over the last few months. Jayne will continue to represent SCVAS at local environmental fairs and events as she has done in recent months as a volunteer, and also attend board and general meetings.

Her starting date of employment is November 1, and her regular office hours will be announced in December after she has settled into the job.

--Continued on page 6

General Membership Meeting, Wednesday, November 17
7:30 PM Refreshments, 8:00 PM Program
Palo Alto Cultural Center
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Orcas, Beaked Whales, Incredible Marine Mammals and Birds

Debi Shearwater founded Shearwater Journeys 17 years ago and has done over 900 boat trips since then, photographing marine birds and mammals along the way. She leads trips in and around Monterey Bay, offshore Monterey to the Albacore Grounds and to the Davidson Seamount, Cordell Bank and Bodega Canyon. Tonight’s presentation will feature new information on Killer Whales Debi has gathered while working with marine mammologist Nancy Black and others, plus some incredible Orca sounds on cassette. Her photos include rare species such as Streaked and Manx Shearwaters, and Baird’s Beaked Whales breaching, tail-slappping and rubbing beaks. Thanks to Debi’s boat trips and her efforts to keep people’s attention focussed on the amazing diversity of marine life off Monterey Bay, we now have a protected Monterey Bay Sanctuary. Don’t miss this outstanding program!

Meeting is co-sponsored by the Palo Alto Open Space and Sciences Division.
**Chapter News**

**Can You Give Some Time?**

Santa Clara Valley Audubon needs more volunteers to continue and improve the many services which we offer. Below is a partial list of positions we need to fill. If you have an interest or skill which is not included here and would like to volunteer some of your time, please call SCVAS, 408/252-3747.

**Program Committee.** This committee is responsible for running the general membership meetings 10 times a year at the Palo Alto Cultural Center and a few times a year at the Cupertino Public Library. We need four members, including the Chair, for the following positions: to find guest speakers, to greet members (especially new ones), to prepare newsletter write-ups and press releases about the meetings, and to serve refreshments. Call Gail Cheeseman, 408/867-1371.

**Telephone Rapid Response Team and Coordinator.** We have purchased a "phone tree" calling device which can relay recorded messages to members of the group without losing any of the message along the way. The coordinator will be responsible for maintaining the list of persons participating in the telephone tree and writing the messages for the Phone Tree Machine when calls should be made. The work entails about two hours a month depending on the number of important issues requiring a quick response. Some knowledge of environmental issues and legislators is a plus for the coordinator. Call Tony Eppstein, 415/326-1376.

**Armchair Activist, Letter of The Month Club.** Each month receive a clear, brief summary of an issue of concern to SCVAS and a sample letter and the name and address of the policy maker. A donation of $6.00 is suggested, but not mandatory, to cover costs of the mailing. Call Cynthia McLaughlin, 408/253-4588.

**Testimony Writers and Presenters.** We greatly need members who can tactfully and effectively present testimony to county and city councils and other public agencies, usually on weekdays during daytime hours. A knowledge of the issues and politicians can be acquired, and about 4 hours a month or more may be required. Call Tony Eppstein, 415/326-1376.

**Writers for The Avocet.** If you can write stories or have ideas for stories or can help cover the "Environmental Action News", call SCVAS, 408/252-3747.

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**Christmas Bird Count Update**

**San Jose**

The identification of Section Leaders for our December 19th CBC promised for this issue of *The Avocet* was, like Mark Twain's death, prematurely announced. Section Leaders for San Jose and Region Leaders for the Palo Alto CBC will be named in the December *Avocet*. Many of these positions have been filled and, if you counted in prior years, you may receive a call asking you to volunteer once again before the mailing of the next *Avocet*. If you have questions about the San Jose CBC, call Reid Freeman, 408/255-4969.

**Palo Alto**

The Palo Alto CBC will be held on Monday, December 20, so please mark your calendars. Details will follow in next month's *Avocet*. If you have any questions call Bill Bousman, 415/322-5282.

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**SCVAS OFFICERS**

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Rob Colwell</td>
<td>415/326-2400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Past Pres.</td>
<td>Grant Hoyt</td>
<td>415/969-7892</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st VP</td>
<td>Tony Eppstein</td>
<td>415/326-1376</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd VP</td>
<td>Nick Yatsko</td>
<td>408/247-5499</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>John McLemore</td>
<td>408/261-9431</td>
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<td>Rec. Secy.</td>
<td>Clysta Seney</td>
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**STAFF**

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<tr>
<td>Office Mgr.</td>
<td>Jayne Di Candido</td>
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**DIRECTORS**

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<tr>
<td>EARL CILLEY</td>
<td>415/854-6285</td>
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<td>MIKE RIGNNEY</td>
<td>408/262-9204</td>
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<td>ALAN THOMAS</td>
<td>408/265-9286</td>
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<td>REID FREEMAN</td>
<td>408/255-4969</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANE BECKER-HAVEN</td>
<td>415/321-0776</td>
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<td>BOBBIE HANSEN</td>
<td>408/356-4263</td>
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<td>HOWARD JOHNSON</td>
<td>408/255-2422</td>
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**CHAIRPERSONS**

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<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Reid Freeman 408/255-4969</td>
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<td>Editor</td>
<td>Chrys Fitzpatrick 408/245-3860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Bobbie Handen 408/356-4263</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>Doug &amp; Gail Cheeseman 408/867-1371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Reid Freeman 408/255-4969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>John Mariani 408/997-1429</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aud Adven</td>
<td>Elaine Gould 408/448-0622</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo Club</td>
<td>Pete LaTourrette 415/361-2741</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
<td>Don Price 415/327-1254</td>
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<td>BAAC</td>
<td>Delegate Trish Mulvey 415/326-0252</td>
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<td>North County Field Trips</td>
<td>Alberta Jasberg 415/493-9546</td>
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<tr>
<td>South County Field Trips</td>
<td>Shirley Gordon 408/896-9863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birdathon</td>
<td>Tony Eppstein 415/326-1376</td>
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General meetings are open to the public. Board of Directors meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (408) 252-3747 for times and directions.

*The Avocet* is published monthly (except for July and August) by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, CA 95014. Deadline is the 25th of two months prior. Send contributions to *The Avocet*, c/o SCVAS at the above address.

SCVAS is the chapter of the National Audubon Society for Santa Clara County.

November 1993, Volume 40, Number 9

**Rare Bird Alert:** 510/ 524-5592
**Denotes Field Trip**

**Monday, Nov. 1, 7:30 PM. Environmental Action Committee Meeting.** Cupertino Environmental Center, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino. For more information call Tony Eppstein 415/326-1376.

**Wednesday, November 3, 7:30-9:30 PM, Bay Area Bird Photographers.** John Delavoryas will give a slide presentation on the wildlife of Trinidad and Tobago and of northern Venezuela. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center on East Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

**Saturday, Nov. 6, 8:30 AM. Half day. Arastradero OSP, Palo Alto.** Leader: Jim Liskovec 415/969-5542. Take Page Mill Rd. W. from I-280 to Arastradero Rd., approx. 1/2 mile on right, then another 1/2 mile to parking lot on right. Highlights: oak woodland species including woodpeckers, sparrows and raptors.

**Tuesday, Nov. 9, 9:30 AM. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Dr., Los Gatos 408/395-4264. Topic: Anna's Hummingbird.

**Wednesday, Nov. 10, 9:00 AM. Hayward Regional Shoreline.** Leader: Ed Gustafson 408/377-1123. Meet at the end of W. Winton Ave. off I-880 in Hayward. Highlights: shorebirds, ducks, grebes, raptors; bring a scope if you have one.

**Saturday, Nov. 13, 8:30 AM. Half day. Coyote Hills Regional Park, Newark.** Leader: Phil Hand 415/851-2623. Take Hwy. 84 (Dumbarton Bridge) E. towards Newark. Exit right on Thornton then left over freeway as Thornton becomes Paseo Padre. Turn left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd., meet in lot at entrance approx. 1 mile in. Possible park entrance fee. Highlights: waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds.


**Sunday, Nov. 21, 8:30 AM. Half day. Princeton Harbor and vicinity.** Leader: Reid Freeman 408/255-4969. Meet at corner of West Point Ave. and Stanford Ave. in Princeton, 4 miles N. of Half Moon Bay on Hwy. 1. Highlights: coastal ducks, loons, grebes and shorebirds; possible rarities Oldsquaw and Rock Sandpiper. Dress warmly!

**Wednesday, Nov. 24, 8:30 AM. Half day. Coyote Hills Regional Park, Newark.** Leader: Phil Hand 415/851-2623. (Same directions as for Nov.13 trip; see above.)

**Friday-Saturday, Nov. 26-27. Sacramento Valley Wildlife Refuges.** Leaders: Grant and Karen Hoyt 415/969-7892. Meet at Sacto. NWR headquarters approx. 6 miles N. of Delevan on I-5 at 9:00 AM on Friday. Group will tour Sacto. NWR Friday AM and then drive to Gray Lodge Waterfowl Area in the afternoon/evening for the spectacular duck "fly-out". On Saturday we'll visit Colusa NWR and National Audubon Wattis Sanctuary, with possible Sutter Buttes side excursion in late afternoon for hard-core participants. Highlights include large numbers of ducks and geese, plus curlews, ibis, herons, raptors, wintering flocks of blackbirds and sparrows, and perhaps a few surprises. Motels available in Colusa and Williams. Call leaders to reserve space on trip.

**Burrowing Owl Class at McClellan Park**

**Thursday, Dec. 2, 7-9:00 PM. Burrowing Owl class at McClellan Park.** Please see box below.

**Saturday, Dec. 4, 9:00 AM Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Allen Royer 408/288-7768. Take Hwy 101 to Mt. View, exit San Antonio Rd. N. Meet at its end at Terminal Way parking lot (1/4 mile).

**Saturday, Dec. 4, 9:00 AM. Half day. So. County Reservoirs.** Leaders: Emelle Curtis 408/779-2637 and Jean Glass 408/779-3637. Meet at corner of Oak Glen Ave. and Uvas Rd. at N. end of Chesbro Res. Lunch at Uvas Reservoir at noon. Highlights: ducks, oak woodland species, raptors (possibly including eagles).

**Monday, Dec. 6, 7:30 PM. Environmental Action Committee Meeting.** Cupertino Environmental Center, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino. For more information call Tony Eppstein 415/326-1376.
Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

Pelicans to Ibis

A concentration of 664 Am. White Pelicans on Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View on 8 Sep (SCR) is the largest number reported this month. Fourteen Brown Pelicans at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) the day before, 7 Sep (SCR) were a high concentration for this fall. Little Blue Herons have remained along the Alviso Slough Trail in the outer ponds this month with three adults there on 1 Sep (SCR), two on 5 Sep (MMR,PJM), and one on 19 Sep (MMR) for a very late record. Cattle Egrets have been regular in Alviso at the Arzino Ranch with from two to ten birds reported during the month (m.ob.). From one to four White-faced Ibis have been in the vicinity of the old Coyote Creek channel 1-6 Sep with four seen 2 Sep (SCR).

Geese to Raptors

Early flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese were noted in the Alviso area with a flock of eight seen 19 Sep (MMR) and twelve or so heard on 25 Sep (PJM,VL). A male Blue-winged Teal, coming out of eclipse plumage, has been found irregularly at the Mountain View Forebay 14-26 Sep (PJM,MMR,AME). An early male Eurasian Wigeon has been there as well with sightings on 23 Sep (MMR) and 25 Sep (MMJ,DS,GH). An Osprey over the waterbird pond at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) 3 Sep (MMJ) was the only migrant reported this month. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk was seen migrating over the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve (OSP) 26 Sep (SCR) for our second county record. In three hours of observation, Steve Rottenborn counted 31 individuals of eight species moving over the preserve, including the Broad-wing. These birds were not following the ridges that trend northwest to southeast but instead were flying directly south. This may be one piece in the puzzle of where the raptors go that cross the Golden Gate at the Marin Headlands. The first Merlin of the season was one seen at Stanford 10 Sep (SCR). Additional birds were seen in Alviso 25 Sep (PJM) and over Monte Bello OSP 26 Sep (SCR). Adult and imm. Peregrine Falcons have been recorded in the Alviso area between Coyote Creek and Alviso Slough this month (m.ob.) with a family group including a male and female adult and an imm. near the Calabazas Marsh on 11 Sep (SCR). This family has probably dispersed from one of the central coast eyries. An imm. bird has also been seen in the Palo Alto area at the Emily Renzel Wetlands 10 Sep (CLW) and in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) 11 Sep (MMJ).

A Broad-winged Hawk over Monte Bello was part of a larger movement of migrating hawks.

Shorebirds

It appears that the American Ornithologist's Union, the final arbiter of lumps and splits, has split the Lesser Golden-Plover into two species: the Pacific Golden-Plover and the American Golden-Plover. Both have occurred in the county in the past. As mentioned last month, the separation of these two species remains difficult and not all records can be ascribed to the correct species, particularly for molting adults. This month a juv. Am. Golden-Plover was found at the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP 2-6 Sep (SCR,MMJ), and 1-8 on the Calabazas Marsh 5-11 Sep (WGB, PJM,SCR). Pectoral Sandpipers have been found in good numbers as well with 1-11 birds at the CCRS waterbird pond 1-26 Sep (m.ob.), 2-6 on the San Jose-Santa Clara WPCP 2-6 Sep (SCR,MMJ), and 1-5 on the Emily Renzel Wetlands 18-25 Sep (m.ob.).

The shorebird of the month was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper found on Salt Pond A18 on 2 Sep (SCR) and seen again the next day (MMR,WGB) for the third county record. Nearly as exciting has been the continuing presence of Ruffs in the local area. One to three adult females have been found irregularly on the CCRS waterbird pond 5-21 Sep (m.ob.) and another has been at the pond at Los Esteros and Spreckles in Alviso 11-26 Sep (SCR,m.ob.). Plumage comparisons suggest that as many as five birds have been present this summer and fall which is amazing considering that the first county record for this species was 1990.

Continued on Page 5

November 1993
Terns to Wrens

A single Elegant Tern was at Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View 8 Sep (SCR). Two juv. Black Terns were seen on Salt Pond A9 on 1 Sep (SCR). Good numbers of Willow Flycatchers have been found with 1-3 birds along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 6-21 Sep (MMJ,SCR), one on Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 17 Sep (WGB), and two on Coyote Creek above Hwy 237 22 Sep (SCR). A female Purple Martin in Alviso 11 Sep (SCR) is a rare fall migrant. A Rock Wren on a dike in Alviso 19 Sep (MMR) is probably a member of a migratory population rather than part of our resident population.

Warblers to Goldfinches

Observers have found some of our rarer western warblers this fall plus some vagrants as well. A Palm Warbler along Coyote Creek below Anderson Res. 23 Sep (SCR) is the earliest record I have for this rare vagrant. A female or imm. Blackpoll Warbler was found along Coyote Creek on 22 Sep (SCR) and is the fourth county record for this species. Rounding out the September trio of vagrant warblers was a female American Redstart found at the Alviso EEC 11 Sep (SCR), our ninth county record. Of our rare western warblers, individual MacGillivray's Warblers were found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 21 Sep, above Hwy 237 on 22 Sep, and below Anderson Dam on 23 Sep (all SCR). Yellow-breasted Chats were banded at CCRS on 9 Sep and 15 Sep (fide SCR). Another eastern vagrant, a Bobolink, was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 15 Sep (SCR) for our seventh county record. An adult Lawrence's Goldfinch was seen in the same area 21 Sep (SCR), the first indication of a movement of this species away from known breeding areas.
Field Trip Reports

Moss Landing

A dozen people met alongside roosting Elegant Terns and foraging shorebirds on Jetty Road on September 8. A pair of feeding Black-shouldered Kites, a Loggerhead Shrike and several Say’s Phoebes were striking land birds seen between the marsh and the beach where we found a Common Loon, a few Common Murres, Brandt’s Cormorants and other species out on the ocean. More than a dozen Snowy Plovers rested in the dried kelp left from the night’s high tide.

We also walked around the Moss Landing Wildlife Area along the north side of Elkhorn Slough where we scoped both Red-necked and Wilson’s Phalaropes from the parking lot. From the trail we watched several species of ducks, Semipalmated Plovers, Spotted Sandpiper, Long-billed Curlews, a pair of Kestrels and a Great Horned Owl. Back at the parking lot a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks and an immature Red-tailed Hawk interacted inside a thicket to the north. At Moonglow Dairy we ate lunch and watched Pectoral Sandpipers and a Baird’s Sandpiper among the Westerns—a great ending to a morning with 54 species observed.

—Gail Cheeseman

Marin Headlands Hawk Migration

On September 25, Approximately 35 Santa Clara Valley Audubon members joined me to witness the spectacle of hundreds of hawks and other birds passing by in their southward migration. For several weeks prior to our trip, the headlands had been shrouded in fog resulting in little visibility. About two days before our trip the weather patterns forced the fog away from the headlands, and a rush of hawks appeared. What a difference a day makes! On the two days prior to our trip, approximately 1,000 hawks were seen per day! Nonetheless, we did have a great day with over 300 hawks observed between 9 AM and 2 PM. Ten species of raptors were seen: Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper’s Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, and Merlin. Seven Broad-winged Hawks (including one adult) and 2 Merlins were also seen. Approximately 250 of the hawks were Sharp-shinned/Cooper’s at about a 4:1 ratio. Other highlights included 6 Lewis’ Woodpeckers flying over and a total of 2-3,000 Vaux’s Swifts, which came over in flocks ranging from a few to 200 birds. A great day, if not an exhausting one because of the 90-degree heat, was had by all.

—Don Schmoldt

THANKS HOWARD!!!

Since August 1 Board member Howard Johnson has stepped in as temporary Office Manager at McClellan Ranch and done an outstanding job. A dedicated and experienced environmentalist, Howard has also proven to be a tireless jack-of-all-trades in the office and a first-class organizer. His commitment to helping us through the difficult months since Cecily’s departure has been nothing short of phenomenal, and we are extremely grateful to him.

—Grant Hoyt

Staff Continued from page 1

The Environmental Advocate, whose duties will include advancing SCVAS’ position before local lawmakers, agencies and decision-makers, networking with other environmental groups in the area, and keeping members informed on local conservation and land-use issues, should also be hired by early November. This half-time employee will focus energy entirely on the environmental arena, with broad direction from the Board and more specific guidance from the Environmental Action Committee. The Board is optimistic that the creation of this position will strengthen SCVAS’ role as a leading voice in local issues where crucial bird and wildlife habitat is threatened.

The Administrative position, while only 25% time, is still an important one. The time-consuming and often frustrating tasks of bookkeeping, accounting and financial statement preparation, and managing the membership list comprise this job, with a fundraising angle tied into the streamlined and workable membership roster. By alleviating the Office Manager of these responsibilities, overall efficiency in the office should improve. The administrative job may be contracted out to an independent consultant, and this position should likewise be filled by early November.

A special fall fundraising letter will be mailed to our membership to help support the staff increase. Please consider a generous donation to back up the Board’s sincere commitment to improving our Audubon chapter. And remember, changes can bring uncertainty as well as new opportunities. Members are encouraged to become more involved with the chapter and acquaint themselves with our new staff as SCVAS enters a new era.

—Grant Hoyt

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November 1993
THE FIRST OF ITS KIND!

The first ever citizens' biological inventory of San Francisquito Creek has begun, and Santa Clara Valley Audubon members are playing a major role. Volunteers from all over the Bay Area are getting together to study this wonderful resource in our back yard. Dubbed the Community Creek Watch, the citizens' inventory is the first of its kind in California, and is funded by grants from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Community Creek Watch has a dual mission: to collect data on the presence and condition of wildlife habitat in the creeks of Santa Clara County, and to promote community understanding and support of these "ribbons of refuge." SCVAS Board member and Coyote Creek Riparian Station Manager Mike Rigney is lending his considerable scientific and practical expertise to the creek monitoring program county-wide, while Board member Jane Becker-Haven is organizing volunteers for specific monitoring assignments along San Francisquito, the county's northernmost waterway which forms a boundary with San Mateo County.

South county creek enthusiasts need not feel excluded—the Guadalupe River Watershed, Stevens Creek, and Saratoga Creek inventories have begun this fall. As on San Francisquito, volunteers will form groups studying birds, fisheries, vegetation, reptiles and amphibians. SCVAS members are encouraged to get involved with this dynamic new project that enables citizens to use their field monitoring and data collecting skills to help protect riparian habitat literally in their own back yards. What really goes on in the 13 creeks that flow through our local communities? There may be more Green-backed Herons, Belted Kingfishers, salamanders and crawdads than anyone knows. Anyone interested in participating in a creek inventory should call Chris Fischer at (415)364-8723.

CLEAN CREEK TIPS

As an alternative to using highly toxic copper-based algaecides to rid your swimming pool, fish pond or livestock pond of algae, a new non-toxic, organic product is now on the market. Bio-Restoration, sold by Enviro-Reps International, uses enzymes and microorganisms to biodegrade algae and other organic wastes and leaves your water clear. Bio-Restoration is available from Enviro-Reps International at (805)650-9187.*

When carpet cleaners and window washers come to clean your house, are you inquiring what they are doing with the waste water? Not putting it down the drain, we hope! Please remind them that our storm or gutter drains flow directly to the creek without being treated. Water containing detergents and solvents can be damaging to our creeks. Dispose of all potentially toxic waste water down a drain which flows to the sewage system plant (i.e., sink or toilet).

*This information is provided as a service to our readers, and does not constitute an endorsement of this product.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

—Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

November 1993

Non Audubon Events

Cheeseman Safari

There is still space on the Bosque del Apache/Sandhill Crane Safari, Dec. 27-31, to be led by professional wildlife photographers Renee Lynn and Tim Davis, $950. For details call Gail Cheeseman at Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, 408/867-1371. The Cheesemans are also offering all-day boat trips in Monterey Bay Jan. 8 and 15, $45, and further afield in the neotropics: Costa Rica, March 5-20, $2750; Venezuela, April 16-May 4, $2950; and Brazil, Oct. 22-Nov. 6 $2900 (includes a complete eclipse of the sun at Iguassu Falls on Nov. 3).

Avocet Festival '93

Bring your family for a day of fun and start your holiday shopping early. You'll find arts and crafts and a variety of gifts, as well as plenty of Wildlife and Nature, at the Avocet Festival '93 on Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 6 & 7, 9 AM-5 PM at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 1 Marshlands Rd., Fremont (at the east end of the Dumbarton Bridge). The Fair is cosponsored by SC VAS.

Announcing New Editor

Laura Lebherz will be the new editor of The Avocet beginning with the December issue.

Thanks to Grant Hoyt and everyone at SCV Hoyt who made my year-and-a-half as editor such a rewarding experience.
Twice in the past couple of months a Great Blue Heron was sighted only 50 yards from our Santa Clara Valley Audubon office here at McClellan Ranch Park.

On my way back from lunch as I neared the foot bridge which crosses Stevens Creek just to the west of our office, I said to myself, “Now heads up, you never know what you might see in the creek here today.” Years earlier I had seen some baby striped skunks with their mother at this very spot. And only weeks earlier I had watched a Black Phoebe which would swoop to catch bugs and then always return to the same favorite dead branch.

On this particular day as I neared the bridge, I was startled by the racket of a huge bird leaping from the water. It was a Great Blue Heron. Flapping hard, the heron flew up and out of the tight little spot where it had been fishing. I watched in shock as it swooped its huge wings between the narrow trees. I was electrified! I considered heading down the trail to see if I could get another look at it, but decided it would be better to leave it alone. I tingled with excitement for the rest of the day.

Several days later I saw the heron again in the same spot. I was more cautious this time as I approached the bridge. I was able to watch the heron from only 50 feet away as it fished in the creek below. Before the bird was gone, I fetched volunteer Kim Davis, who was helping out in the office, so she could have a look. She had never seen a Great Blue Heron.

Several days later I spoke to Barbara Banfield, the city naturalist responsible for McClellan Ranch Park, and she said she’s never seen a Great Blue Heron here in the 7 years she’s worked at McClellan. Could our lucky sightings have been a just reward for our hard work here at the office? Well, I don’t know, but I can tell you that a week later I sighted a Green-backed Heron just yards from where I had seen the great blue. The Green-backed Heron stood on a partly submerged branch and picked little things from the water.

What a wonderful place McClellan Ranch Park is!

Howard Johnson