Another great year...

We start with the above statement knowing how it must sound because, and this will come as no surprise to anyone, the past year was a challenge. Our staff and volunteers had to recalibrate every assumption they had about their work, but as a result, we adopted new ways of communicating with each other, our membership, and the not-yet-members of our family. It was unexpectedly... enjoyable!

We also discovered that while we undeniably missed the warmth of in-person meetings and events, the flexible schedule, and the freedom to meet online from our homes, was conducive to more organized agendas, and startlingly creative thinking. Out of all that were borne some our best—the distributed Birdathon team, the online auction, the weekly video content, the remote classroom, the self-guided field trip, and on, and on, and on. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. Truer now than ever.

It is also rumored that adversity breeds character. Well, we must say that has been confirmed without a doubt during this period. It was never in question actually, but it was demonstrated many times over by the steadfastness of everyone involved and by the overwhelming patience and generosity of our members as we each found our way though this unfamiliar wood. Without your support, we just don’t know how it would have gone.

So here we are, finally emerging from the darkest year and a half in anyone’s memory, holding the torch you helped us light—we’ll gather tightly to keep it out of the wind and continue onward. •

Matthew Dodder
Executive Director

Barry Langdon-Lassagne
Board President
There has been a cultural shift in the last year and a half. Maybe you noticed it. As the pandemic dragged on, more people expressed a desire to get out of their homes and connect with nature. Many were folks we had not walked or birded with before. Undoubtedly this urgent need to get outside was borne out of the universal fatigue with shelter-in-place, zoom meetings, and a simple desire to escape the news. We all want that relief.

The new-to-birding public is looking for something and finding it in the hills, the woods and the bay. And not surprisingly, our open spaces and county parks are welcoming hundreds of new visitors each week. The public will continue to explore, visit new locations and search for more connections with the natural world.

SCVAS believes this desire will only grow and should be channeled—directed away from simple escape to something active that will help protect the thing we love most. This is why SCVAS exists—to meet this demand. Our very mission is to inspire people to care about birds and the environment. We could not be more eager to help others understand and share our concern for the natural world and birds.

So let’s do it. Talk to the folks you meet on the trail whether they have binoculars or not. Share your enthusiasm, your knowledge. Help spread the message that millions of birders find joy in the outdoors, and for that reason, it must be protected. Tell them about the bird you saw and help them find it too. Now more than ever, the world needs us to elevate the wild world in the conversation—help others see the wonder to be found every day we step outside.

Where are we?
Our Mission
The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and other wildlife by engaging people of all ages in **birding**, **education**, and **conservation**.
We expect our education programs to be pushed into high gear this year. Carolyn Knight, our Education and Outreach Manager, has been making preparations for the rush of programs we expect to offer. To do so, we will need to allocate more funds, level up our materials, and engage more volunteers to assist in meeting the increased demand after the pandemic. The more we inform those around us about birds and conservation and the more we simply share our excitement about wildlife, the more we help students care about those same things.

This year we partnered with the San Jose Public Library to provide programs on birds and birding for children and adults, as well as Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful to explore the Coyote Creek Watershed and its environmental significance via live stream. We have also continued our engagement with our neighbor, Grassroots Ecology to introduce high school students to the

wildlife of McClellan Ranch Preserve.

Our flagship Wetlands Discovery Program used the time away from classrooms to create new video experiences for elementary school children that addressed wetlands and the tidal habitat of Charleston Slough. SCVAS Learn, our adult education program, launched with multi-session online classes on Gulls and Flycatchers, followed by Shorebirds, Warblers, and eBird Mobile. All were very popular and fulfilled a long-standing goal to provide adult classes.

Finally, after months of grant preparation, SCVAS was awarded funds for our Oak Savanna Community Science Project. This brings us closer to our dream of bridging elementary school and adult education by providing local high school students with a rich outdoor educational experience where they will learn how they can become more involved with the environment through community science. •
Part 1: A Light Breeze

24
Birding Basics videos

9
Coyote Creek Watershed Tours

3
High school programs with Grassroots Ecology

Warblers
Part 1: Green, Yellow and Gray
Part 2: East and West
Part 3: Rare and Regular
19
Ask Birdguy videos

Shorebirds
Part 1: The Long Voyage
Part 2: Wayward Travelers
Part 3: Trial and Error

Matthew Dodder
Executive Director, SCVAS

5
Online classes for adults

16
School programs
Advocacy has long been a strength for our Chapter. Over the years, we have been successful at promoting good planning and opposing environmentally-harmful projects. During the pandemic, conservation efforts made progress but feverish development plans were still approved. In order to confront the threats to our urban forests, open space and bird habitats, we doubled our efforts—literally. With Giulianna Pendleton as our newest employee, working alongside our environmental advocate, Shani Kleinhaus, we could attend more City Council meetings, draft letters, and write Action Alerts for our member-subscribers to utilize. Your generous donations last year allowed us to hire Giulianna, but that need continues. Our advocacy focus has been on winning Coyote Valley, promoting urban forests, protecting baylands and promoting Bird Safe Design and Dark Sky. Our engagements span across Public Agencies including eight cities and towns throughout the valley (Mountain View, San Jose, Morgan Hill, Cupertino, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, Campbell, and Los Gatos) as well as Santa Clara County, Valley Water, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Open Space Authority, Habitat Agency, and other Audubon chapters. Our efforts even reach the state and national level as we advocated within broad coalitions for birds and open space. We were able to strengthen and leverage our engagement by collaborating with other local and state-wide advocacy groups to expand public awareness and environmental protections.

The need for environmental advocacy will only increase as the economy thaws, the county grows in population and we strive to balance the needs of people with the protection of our birds and wildlife. We hope to continue our efforts to keep bird habitat and wildlife part of the planning by gaining and maintaining the respect of elected officials and their staff.
62
Comments at public meetings

63
Engagement letters
1,700
Action alert recipients

28
Action alerts

25
Collaborations with other organizations
Perhaps no other aspect of our Chapter has undergone more dramatic changes during the past year and a half than birding. The very structure of our organization—the social nature of our activities, the field trips, the Birdathon, the Christmas Bird Count—all came very close to disappearing entirely. But we persevered because we had to and reinvented the way we bird.

We found ways to continue all our activities, with modifications. Our Birdathon team concept for example, was replaced with a novel “distributed” format, allowing team members to remain connected, but at a safe distance. The Christmas Bird Count not only had to contend with COVID restrictions, but limited access to survey areas as a result of office closures and reduced staff. Our traditional field trips became “self-guided field trips” and were hugely popular thanks to the great knowledge and talents of our many writers.

An interactive map made these self-guided trips truly successful. We have thought for some time that our “Birding at the Bottom of the Bay” county birding guide needed to be revised, but the challenge and expense of printing made it seem like an impossible task. As we know, once it’s printed, it can’t be unprinted or added to easily. The online guide we have begun assembling with these self-guided field trips will serve as the core of our new, completely updatable virtual guide to birding in the county. We have much work still to do, but the prospect of the guide growing and evolving online is exciting and worth celebrating.

Special thanks are in order for Eve Meier, the entire Field Trip Committee she oversees, the many volunteer writers and finally Barry Langdon-Lassagne for his remarkable work on the interactive map, found here scvas.org/self-guided-field-trips.
11,850
Self-guided portal views
86
Location guides

66
Unique locations

27
Authors

Yellow-billed Magpie. Photo by Chris Johnson.
Our Outreach Committee has been busy making connections and creating partnerships with other organizations. San Jose’s Saved By Nature, led by founder and Executive Director, Richard Tejeda has a mission to connect urban residents in Santa Clara County with the outdoors. With their reach in the urban community of San Jose, it seemed a perfect match. We have led monthly walks in partnership with Saved By Nature this past year and plan to do more in the future. Most recently, the Hispanic Heritage Month event was celebrated with a sunset walk at Sierra Vista where we encountered several Golden Eagles and a half dozen Tarantulas! Everyone enjoyed tacos as we admired the sunset.

SCVAS has also embraced Birdability by adding accessibility information to all of our self-guided and in-person field trip descriptions, helping even more people get out into nature.

In addition, we have begun leading field trip, or excursion with the Billy DeFrank LGBTQ+ Community Center in San Jose. We hope to do many more such trips in the future with the friends and allies of Billy DeFrank Center, as these excursions were well-attended and happy events.

This is an exciting time for SCVAS as important connections continue to be made with the help of volunteer Ann Hepenstal, the Chair of the Outreach Committee. Recently we met with the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the Feminist Bird Club, and plan to partner with them on some future field trips, as well. These collaborations have been successful ways of connecting with new and very interested audiences. We are finding kindred souls with these organizations and learning so much about what it means to be truly welcoming to newcomers. •
Snowy Egret by Matthew Dodder
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Shirsho Sengupta
Elizabeth Steward
Alex Tey
Suresh Thirumalai
Shubha Tuljapurkar
Jerry Ting
Viyan Tiwari
Deanne Tucker
Perminder Tumber
Luis Villablanca
Steve Zamek
Gena Zolotar
Jean Zuo
SCVAS ended the 2020-2021 fiscal year (June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021) in the black despite the significant challenges presented by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In April we were able to conduct another very successful socially-distanced Birdathon fundraiser, raising over $68,000 and exceeding our budget estimates and prior year numbers. Our other contributions rose as well, indicating that our members, donors and community are pleased with our programs, conservation activities and member services. Over 85% of our expenditures are dedicated to our programs. Only 4% of our expenses are used for fundraising. Our investment portfolio increased from 2020 to 2021 by over 20% due to the investment market improvement this year. Our conservative investment policy certainly has helped us in these tough times. We look forward to 2022 with cautious optimism, lots of energy, and a very sound Balance Sheet.

The condensed financial statements listed here are a representation of the full set of financial statements which can be found at scvas.org/financial.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is headquartered in Cupertino, CA, has an EIN of 94-6081420, and is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations may qualify as a charitable deduction for federal income tax purposes. Consult with your tax advisers or the IRS to determine whether your contribution is deductible. SCVAS is classified by the IRS as a Charitable Organization, with a ruling year of 1977. (Source: IRS Business Master File and Form 990)
Our financial resources

**Income**
- Donations & Bequests: $296,798
- Grants & Contracts: $108,320
- PPP Loan: $76,535
- Investment & Other: $294,260

**Total Income**: $775,913

**Expenses**
- Conservation: $173,875
- Education: $99,614
- Membership Benefits: $83,466
- Administration: $44,635
- Fundraising: $18,656

**Total Expenses**: $420,246

**Net Income**: $355,667

* Paycheck Protection Program
Staff

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Education & Outreach Manager
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Environmental Advocate
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Environmental Advocacy Assistant
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Burrowing Owl Conservation
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(831) 431-3301

Office Manager
April Austin
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(408) 252-3747
(408) 252-2850 Fax
scvas@scvas.org

Bookkeeper
Eden Kerr

Nature Shop
Call to confirm hours
(408) 252-3747
scvas@scvas.org

Board

Meetings are open to all members. Call the office to confirm.

President
Barry Langdon-Lassagne

Vice President
Bill Walker

Secretary
Joan Leighton

Treasurer
Bob Hirt

Directors
Michael Armer
Gabrielle Feldman
Diane Hart
Peter Hart (outgoing)
Vivek Khanzode
Sue Pelmulder (incoming)
John Richardson

SCVAS is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations may qualify as tax-deductible.
In Memoriam

It is with great sadness we say goodbye to our friend Gail Cheeseman. She travelled the world, bringing her love of wildlife and the environment, and made friends everywhere she went. She generously shared her knowledge, enthusiasm and warmth with thousands of others, and those who had the pleasure of standing beside her knew they were in the company of a pure wonder. Her long service to the SCVAS board, program leadership, and support inspired us daily and brought joy to all of us. She will be missed.