



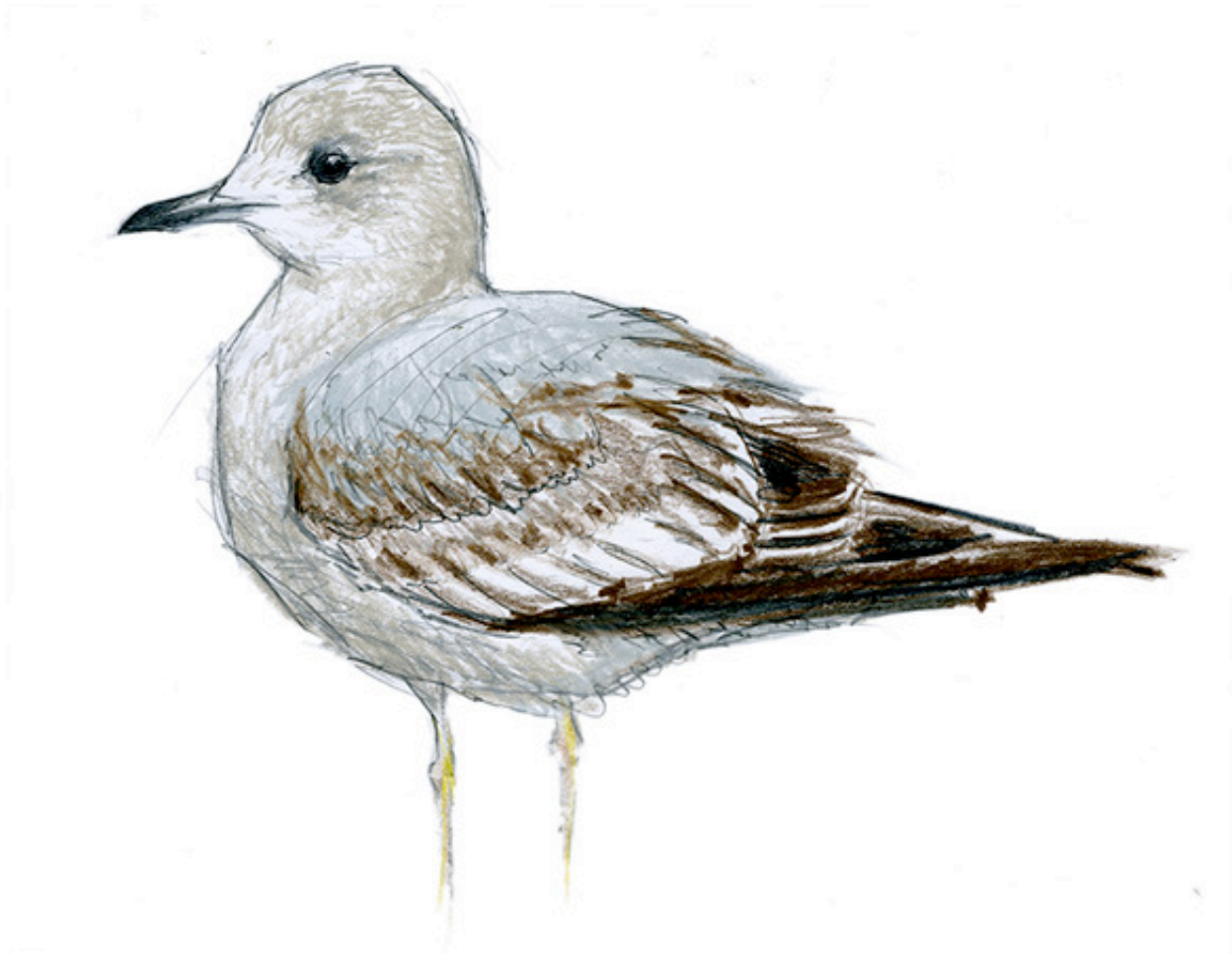
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Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

AVOCET

UPDATE



Mew Gull, First Winter. Sketch by Matthew Dodder

Welcome to the **Avocet Update** for February 2021. Well, wow! A whole lot has happened in the last month, and there's more ahead you can be sure. SCVAS is keeping up the pace and just launched our first online class (it's about time). It was a three-part series on Gulls, and despite the fact that it might well be the least popular topic in all of the birder world, it was very well attended and a lot of fun! We look forward to offering more classes in the near future with topics ranging from bird song, how to use eBird, understanding Flycatchers and other complicated family groups—who knows, what else! We're open to suggestions for classes you would like to attend as we continue rolling out this program. In the mean time, enjoy the great new stuff below. Stay healthy, stay in touch.

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director

Online Speaker Series



Great Gray Owl (Arcata)... Because Matthew hasn't been to Minnesota yet.

Sparky Stensaas

Executive Director of Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, Minnesota

February 17 (Wednesday)

7:00-8:30 PM via Zoom

Join us as we host our special guest, Sparky Stensaas, as he describes Minnesota's famous Sax-Zim Bog and the assortment of Owls and other animal wonders that show up each winter, drawing crowds of brave birders from around the world. Sparky will discuss species like Snowy Owl, Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl, and the nearly mythic Northern Hawk-Owl. Don't miss it!

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

The Great Backyard Bird Count (and Competition)

How many birds can you find?

24th Annual Great
Backyard Bird Count

February 12-15, 2021

birdcount.org



Downy Woodpecker. Photo: Deborah Bifulco/Great Backyard Bird Count

Join birders across the world for this four day long survey of our neighborhood birds, **February 12-15**. If you're searching for some citizen science to get involved with, looking for a motivation to keep listing your sightings, or just want to explore your local wildlife, this is a great count to take part in!

This year we're celebrating the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) with some friendly competition, and are asking our members to send their eBird lists [to us](#), so we can award the birders who find the most species during the counts some SCVAS gear. Read more about the GBBC and SCVAS's birding competition [here](#).

Backyard Birds



Bird count gear. Photo by Julie Amato.

It's a new year - **challenge yourself to do a regular bird count** at home or another favorite spot! In [The Habit of Counting Birds](#), learn how - and why - to record and share the birds you see.

Get to know the Cooper's Hawk, our February [Backyard Bird of the Month](#). This hawk will prey on smaller yard birds, which can be distressing to some, but it is an important and majestic part of our ecosystem.



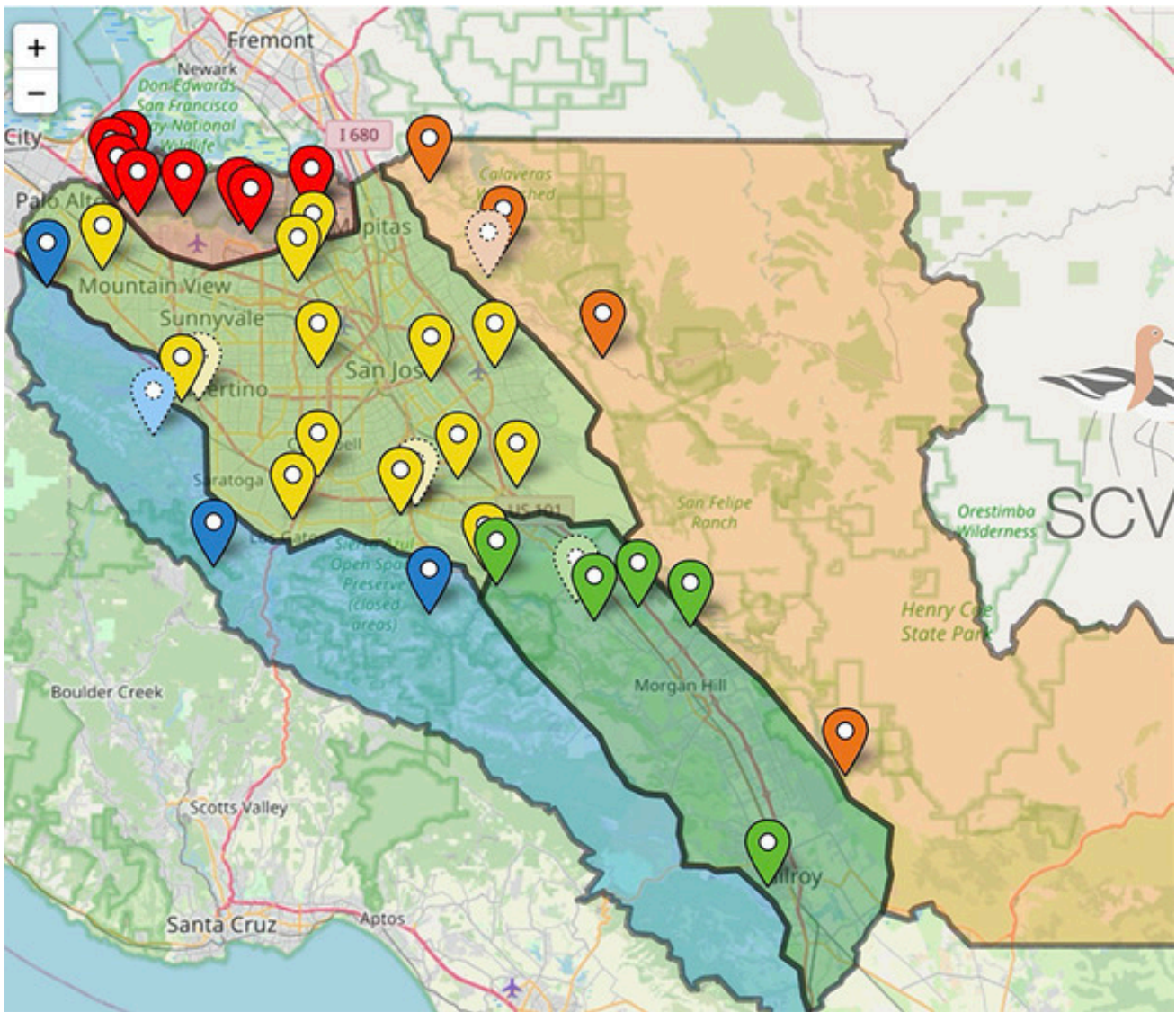
Cooper's Hawk. Photo by Binu John.

You've spotted all sorts of birds in your yards and neighborhoods lately! In this month's [All Around Town](#), **read stories and see photos of backyard birds from our members and neighbors**, including some of your favorites from 2020.

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

Finally, mark your calendars for the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#)! This global count and celebration of birds takes place from February 12-15, 2021. **Count birds for science and participate in SCVAS's friendly count contest** - see the feature above for details.

Maps to Guide You



Now you can view the location of every Self-Guided Field Trip on an interactive map. We've outlined five areas of interest in our county: West Hills, Bayfront, East Hills, Urban Areas and South County. We have a separate map showing Out of County adventures. There's also a new map with the locations of all the salt ponds in Santa Clara County. Visit [Self-Guided Field Trips](#).

Self-Guided Field Trips for February



Santa Clara Valley Water District. Photo by Laura Coatney.

Spring is just around the corner and love is already in the air or in the water! Check out mating behaviors of raptors in Coyote Valley or paired up ducks at an urban pond or at the bay. Head to Picchetti Ranch for the oaks or visit Santa Clara Valley Water District Headquarters for some quiet trails. Children in your life having too much Zoom time? Try our new youth-centered trip.

- **Parque Kelley:** [Observación De Aves En El Centro De San José](#) de Chris Johnson; Traducido por Carlos Marquez Garcia
- **Coyote Valley:** [Love and Raptors in the Air](#) (Accessible) by Dani Christensen
- **Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant:** [Duck for Days](#) by Mike Ambrose
- **Santa Clara Valley Water District:** [Urban Birding in San Jose](#) (Accessible) by Laura Coatney
- **Picchetti Ranch OSP:** [Oak Woodland Waiting for the Rains](#) by Barry Langdon-Lassagne
- **McClellan Groundwater Recharge Ponds:** [Mergansers! Buffleheads! Ring-necked Ducks!](#) (Accessible) by Diane McCoy
- **Raynor Park in Sunnyvale:** [Let's Find Birds... and DINOSAURS!!](#) (Youth-Centered Birding, Accessible) by Ginger Langdon-Lassagne

Visit our webpage to see [past months' recommendations](#) or use our [index](#) to see all of our recommendations.

SCVAS would like to hear from you! Do you have a favorite place you love to bird that you would like to recommend to our members? Is there a place you would like to learn more

about? If so, please email fieldtrips@scvas.org.

Volunteer Needed: SCVAS is looking for a volunteer who speaks Mexican Spanish to help translate and/or proofread our Spanish self-guided field trips. Please contact Carolyn Knight, our Education and Outreach Specialist, at (408) 252-3740 or at programs@scvas.org.

Conservation Corner



American Dipper along Los Gatos Creek, south of Main Street. Photo by Matthew.

Action Alert (2-10 minutes): Include birds in planning adaptation to climate changes

Valley Water is working on a Climate Adaptation Plan to identify vulnerabilities to climate change, and provides goals, strategies, and possible actions for water supply reliability, flood risk reduction, and water resources stewardship, as well as for emergency response. Valley water is seeking public input and you may participate by responding to the [survey](#).

You may select up to three goals. To protect birds and their habitat, please consider selecting "**Protect and Enhance Ecosystem Health to Build Climate Resilience**" as one of the goals. The survey allows you to elaborate on your selections. This is not mandatory, but if you have the time, please speak to your love of birds and ask Valley Water to prioritize birds and biodiversity in their goals, strategies, and adaptive actions along our streams, reservoirs, wetlands and baylands.

The deadline to respond is **February 5th**.



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