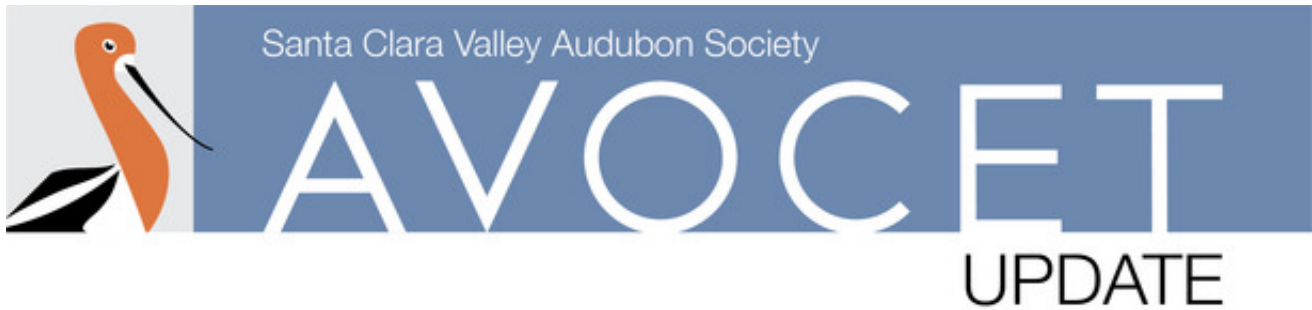


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"Gray-headed" Orange-crowned Warbler. Photo by Jean Zuo

Welcome to the **Avocet Update** for September, 2021. September is a great month! The slow summer break is mostly a memory and everyone seems to be going somewhere. The schools are back in session, and one has to strategize one's commute to avoid the long line of cars dropping kids off at class near McClellan Ranch. I don't mind the traffic though, because it also means something else—the birds are going somewhere too! Yes, fall is replete with avian migrants that are coming and going—from Accipiter, to Zonotrichia! We're going places too. We've got in-person field trips, self-guided trips, and two new classes to help you enjoy the fall bird spectacle, and a brand new installment of backyard birding if you'd rather stay home and avoid the traffic. Whatever you do to celebrate this September, enjoy! It only comes once a year...

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director



Birders Needed: Oak Savanna Community Science Project

Help us fill in the checklist! Join the "OSCSP" survey list and bird this restricted site with us.

Birders are needed for monthly eBird surveys of the North Coyote Valley Conservation Area. Surveys are in the mornings, one Wednesday and Saturday each month, and are open to all ages. Participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Contact Carolyn Knight at programs@scvas.org with interest. Participants do not need to be available for all surveys.

Educators Needed: Education Committee

SCVAS is looking for volunteers interested in joining SCVAS's Education Committee. Committee members are involved with developing curriculum for elementary and high school programs, supporting youth field trips, and supporting programs for young birders and naturalists. Background in education is preferred by not required. Contact Carolyn Knight at programs@scvas.org with interest.



Let's Go Birding Together: Don Edwards

Saturday, October 2; 10am-12pm
Don Edwards Environmental Education Center

SCVAS is proud to explore under the Let's Go Birding Together banner this October at Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. We'll meet at the Don Edwards Education Center and move through the salt ponds and boardwalk, keeping an eye out for our fall migrants of shorebirds and waterfowl. After the outing, everyone is invited to bring food (your lunch, a snack, etc.) and stay to eat and socialize at the outdoor pavilion near the parking lot. All are welcome, loaner binoculars available upon request. Space is limited.

[Register Here](#)



Two new classes!

Warblers: Parts 1, 2, 3

The fall migration of Warblers is an exciting event for birders. It can also be daunting because many of these tiny tree-top insectivores lack the distinctive breeding plumage that makes them so memorable. How do we sort through the many similar features and identify the individuals we find? Why are there so many species on our checklist which (according to the range maps) shouldn't be here at all? In this three-part online presentation, instructor Matthew Dodder will guide you through the basic (and not-so-basic) challenges of our "confusing Fall Warblers". We will discuss places to go to find Warblers, what field marks and behaviors to watch for, and how to enjoy some of the most confusing and enigmatic migrants of the fall season.

[Register Here](#)

eBird: Getting Started (coming soon!)

We've heard your requests and we agree! We will soon announce a beginner's class on how to use eBird. We will demonstrate how to open an account, log your sightings, and submit an actual checklist from your own mobile phone or desktop. Watch for details soon!



SCVAS Field Trip Leaders, Mike Ambrose at Don Edwards

In-person Field Trips are Here!

Our field trip leaders are so excited to start leading trips again! Some of our September trips include Ulistac Natural Area, Vasona County Park, Charleston Slough and Palo Alto Baylands. Visit our [Field Trips page](#) to see our schedule, read our trip policies and reserve your spot!



Yellow Warbler. Photo by Hita Bambhania-Modha

Self-guided Field Trips for September

Fall migration has started! Scan through the thousands of shorebirds at Palo Alto Baylands or hunt for songbirds at one of our many inland parks.

- NEW! [Guadalupe Creek off Guadalupe Mines Road](#) (San Jose, Accessible) by Ann Verdi and Janna Pauser
- [Palo Alto Baylands: Shorebirds along the Duck Pond Loop Trail and "Rail Alley"](#) (Palo Alto, Accessible) by Eve Meier and Unice Chang
- [Duck Pond Loop Trail y "Rail Alley" en las Marismas de Palo Alto](#) (Accesible) por Eve Meier Y Unice Chang, Traducido Por Carlos Marquez Garcia
- [Vasona Lake County Park](#) (Los Gatos): Warbler Watching by Eve Meier
- [Wood Road Trail in Almaden Quicksilver County Park](#) (San Jose) by Dani Christensen
- [Ulistac Natural Area](#) (Santa Clara, Accessible) by Chuq Von Rospach

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



Northern Mockingbird. Photo by Aaron Wippold

Backyard Birding

It's late summer - **the breeding season is drawing to a close**, adult birds are molting, and youngsters are gaining their independence and exploring the world. In [The Vulnerability of Birds](#), our Backyard Birder reflects on the **fragility of birds' lives** at this time of year, and **how she finds hope**.

Who's that bird singing at all hours of the day and night? Why, that would be the **Northern Mockingbird**, our September [Backyard Bird of the Month](#)! Learn about **this mimic's wide repertoire of songs and calls**, and what attracts it to yards, in Dave Zittin's new article.

Orioles galore, as well as young birds of all kinds! In the latest [All Around Town](#), find out what birds our members and friends have seen lately in their yards and neighborhoods. **What birds are in your yard or neighborhood now?** Send your notes and photos to backyardbirds@scvas.org and we'll feature them in our next [All Around Town](#).

You may have noticed that your **backyard birds look pretty scruffy now**, with worn, disheveled, and missing feathers. You may even have seen a few "bald" birds, looking for all the world like miniature dinosaurs!

This is the time of year when **many of our resident birds molt**, changing their old sets of feathers for new ones. Learn more about the **how's and why's of molt** in these introductory articles from the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology:

- [Understanding the Basics of Bird Molts](#)
 - [Two Tips for Telling a Bird's Age by Its Molt Patterns](#)
 - [The Basics: Feather Molt](#)
-



Conservation Corner

A Busy Month

This August, we submitted advocacy letters on six major issues. These included protecting tree buffer zones (Mountain View development), wildlife migration corridors (Santa Teresa Hills), dark skies (electronic billboards), riparian corridors (Almaden Office project along Guadalupe River), open space (Coyote Valley), and bird safety (Reid-Hillview Airport)! We thank everyone for their support offering public comments for advocating against electronic billboards in San Jose and against the Almaden Office Project infringing on the Guadalupe River riparian corridor in downtown San Jose.

Some Successes

After months of advocacy we have some exciting successes for environmental protections to report! The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors officially went into creative partnership with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and agreed to have dual-enforcement of the Ridgeline Easement along Permanente Ridge. Additionally, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to "take all necessary actions, including closure, to immediately prevent lead contamination from operations at Reid-Hillview Airport". The dual-enforcement will help preserve existing open space and it seems we might have an opportunity to enhance open space upon the possible closure of Reid-Hillview Airport.



Nature Shop

Fill in the gaps in your birding library! Stop by the Nature Shop, **10am-4:30pm Monday-Friday** and check out our extensive selection of gently used books, ranging from portfolios of truly amazing artwork to out-of-print birding guides, there's something for anyone's shelves in our stock.



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