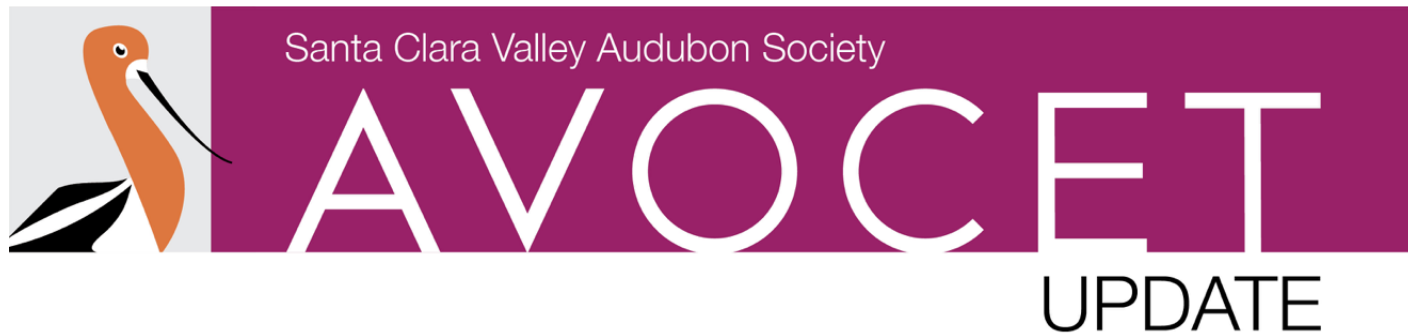


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White-crowned Sparrow: Chris Johnson

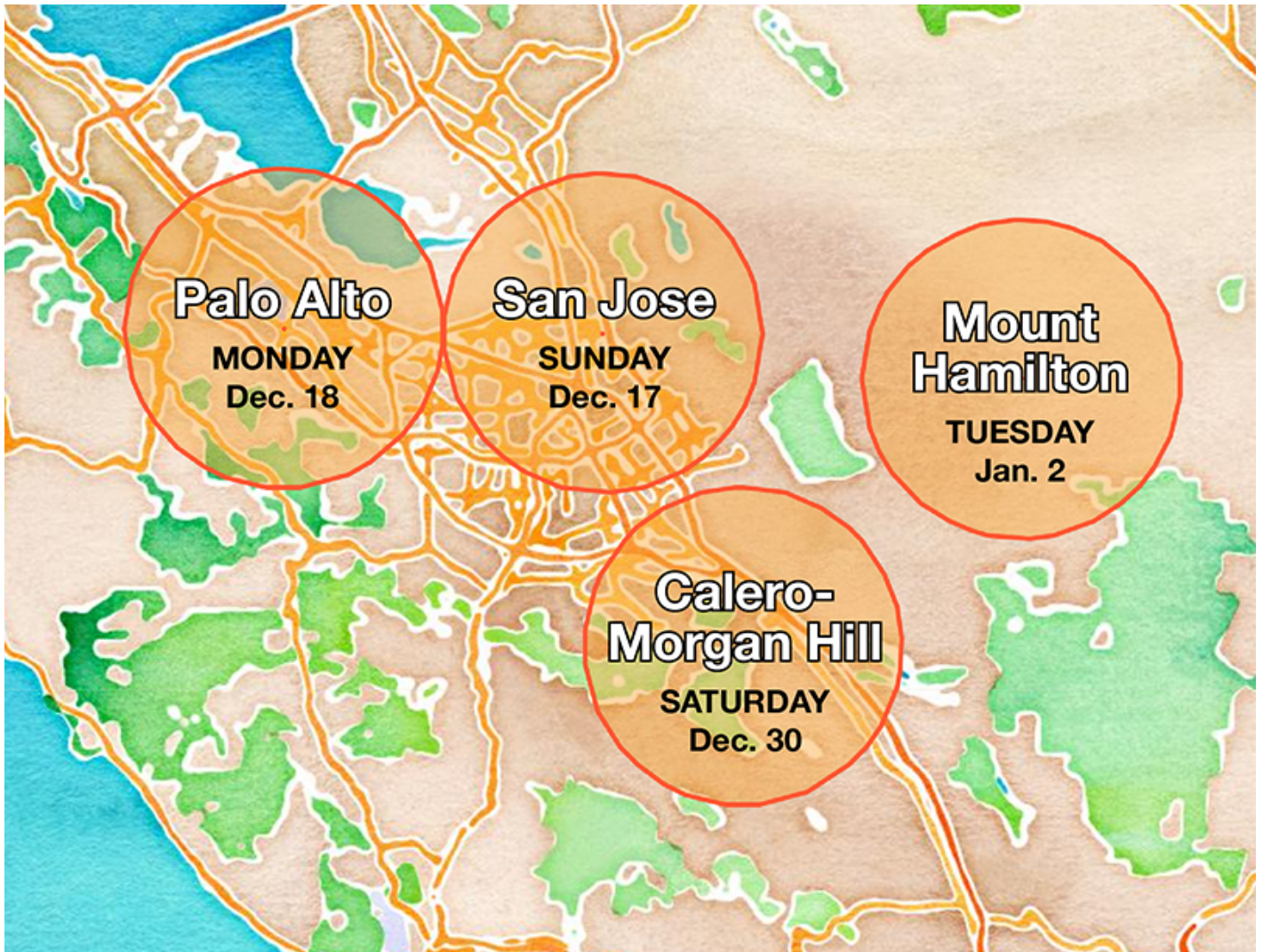
December 2023

Welcome to December! It's the season of gift-giving and of heartfelt thanks. While we watch the frenzied activity at the Ranch feeders, and eagerly await the arrival of each new Sparrow, we give thanks for all our members and your

generous support of this chapter. You make our Education Programs the successes they have become. You fuel our Conservation efforts and our Advocacy for bird-safe design and the protection of habitats. So thank you for all you make possible with your support! You may already have contributed to this year's fundraising drive, but if not, you can find the Annual Appeal [here](#) which explains where your contributions go. We have also improved our [Legacy Giving](#) and [Year End Tax Planning](#) materials to help answer questions you may've about those ways of supporting SCVAS. Wherever you go and however you spend your holidays this year, know that we are grateful for all you have done to help this chapter grow and thrive. Have a happy and safe holiday, and we'll see you all in January!

Matthew Dodder

Executive Director



Christmas Bird Count Dates and Contacts

Get ready for coolest birding of the year! Circle compilers are currently looking for birders to assist with this century-old community science tradition.

San Jose Count Circle

Sunday, December 17

Mike Azevedo geochelone@aol.com.

Palo Alto Count Circle

Monday, December 18

Ann Hepenstal paloaltocbc@gmail.com.

Calero-Morgan Hill Count Circle

Saturday, December 30

Rick Herder rick.herder@gmail.com

Mount Hamilton Count Circle

Tuesday, January 2

Bob Hirt bobhirt@aol.com



SCVAS field trip to Los Capitancillos led by Eve Meier and Edward Rooks in November 2023

Field Trips

In-Person and Self-Guided Field Trips

The next set of in-person field trips drop on November 28. Visit [field trips](#) for

more information and to sign-up.

Trips filled-up? Check a day or two before your trip of interest goes out. Sometimes we have cancellations.

We've come up with some great ideas for places you can bird on your own or with your household. Our self-guided trips direct you to where to bird and provide advice on which birds to look for in which habitats. Browse our [complete collection of guides](#) by location, park name, or season.



Townsend's Warbler: Molly Graham

Backyard Birding

Winter birds are back! Enjoy the latest [All Around Town](#), our backyard bird report. It's full of stories, photos, and sound clips of the birds that live among us, submitted by our members and friends.

What birds have you seen in your yard or neighborhood recently? Send a note to backyardbirds@scvas.org and we'll publish your observations in the next All Around Town.



Anna's Hummingbird: Steven Rice

The next All Around Town will be our special year-in-review! **We invite you to share your favorite backyard and neighborhood birding stories of 2023.**

What were your best birding moments in your yard, around your block, or at your neighborhood park? Do you have a few favorite photos, videos, or sketches? What did you learn from birding close to home this year? Do you have any reflections to share with others?

Submittals for the “Best of Backyard Birding 2023” are due in early January, but it’s not too early to start thinking about what you’d like to send us! Stories, images, and sound clips are all welcome - be as creative as you wish. Send your contributions to backyardbirds@scvas.org.



Conservation Corner

NEW ACTION ALERT:

Heritage Oaks Memorial Park - a threat to Coyote Valley

In 2014, despite broad environmental opposition, San Jose approved the Heritage Oaks Memorial Park project: an expansive cemetery on 102 acres off of Mckean Road just south of Almaden Valley and near Coyote Valley. Phases of the project are moving forward now to allow multiple buildings (funeral home, chapel, mausoleums, crematory, and more), in addition to an extensive network of circulation roads and parking lots.

Our world has changed since 2014. Impacts previously dismissed are increasingly becoming significant and unavoidable. Assembly Bill 948 (2019, Kalra) which identifies Coyote Valley, including the Project site, as an Area of Statewide Significance. Indeed, much of the adjacent land, including Coyote Valley, is now protected. Wildlife movement (including Mountain lions and bobcats) will be impeded by this project. Impacts of Climate change and fire

hazard are evident in our landscapes and will be exacerbated if the project moves forward as proposed.

A Supplemental Environmental Impact Report is needed to allow the public and elected officials to evaluate evidence showing significant impacts to wildlife movement and mitigate them adequately.

Please participate by [ZOOM in a COMMUNITY MEETING](#)

Thursday, November 30, 2023. 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Please ask for a new Environmental Impact Report. Thank you!



ONGOING:

Saratoga Acorn Woodpeckers at risk

The Saratoga Retirement Community's expansion plans (currently in process) would cut down 124 trees, including 65 large trees. Among the trees is a majestic cork oak (tree 136) that provides a granary and a home to a colony of acorn woodpeckers. The removal of the tree is expected to make room for grading, a pathway, and a swale.

Acorn Woodpeckers are fascinating birds (see the recent [Bay Nature story](#)). They live in large social groups and work together to store thousands of acorns in granaries, like the granary in the Saratoga cork oak. Colonies nest and raise young together in a tree cavity. Lets protect the Woodpecker Colony of Tree 136!

We continue to follow the plans. For now, we encourage Saratoga residents to email or call the [Saratoga City Council members](#) and ask them not to allow the removal of the iconic cork oak and to protect the Woodpecker Colony of Tree 136!



ONGOING:

San Jose Light Tower Corporation's Breeze of Innovation

Light pollution has been proven to attract migratory birds to urban centers, diverting them from their flight paths and exposing them to hazards in the urban environment. A few weeks ago, in Chicago, over 1000 birds were killed in a single evening as they collided with glass in a lighted building (please [sign this petition](#)) In the past few years, we expressed our opposition to the San Jose Light 'iconic' Tower Breeze of Innovation project, which was first planned for Arena Green Park and is now proposed for Cesar Chavez Plaza. You now have an opportunity to respond to a [survey](#) and convey your opinion on the use of public parkland to build a light pollution generator!

Success in Palo Alto:

City approves a creekside estate with requirements related to Riparian setbacks, Bird Safe Design and light pollution

Almost a year after we expressed concerns with plans for a sprawling private estate on a meadow within 20-feet from Los Trancos creek, a modified project was approved by the Palo Alto city council. Council agreed that the proximity to the creek could harm the riparian ecosystem of Los Trancos Creek, and that special protections should be installed. The revised plans include a 50-ft setback, robust bird safe design features, reduced light pollution, and native plants. We thank Mayor Lydia Kou and Council members Pat Burt, Ed Lauing, Greer Stone and Vicki Veenker for their support.



Crossings

If you missed Ben Goldfarb's appearance on the SCVAS Speaker Series earlier this month, you can find the full recording of his fabulous presentation on our YouTube channel [here](#). His recent book "**Crossings: How Road Ecology is Shaping the Future of our Planet**" is an important chronicle in our highway system's impact on wildlife. In addition to his SCVAS presentation, Ben has appeared on Michael Hawk's podcast, **Nature's Archive**. You can find that conversation here as well as many other fascinating talks: And the full interview with Goldfarb about his book Crossings is [here](#).



Save the Date

Upcoming classes and presentations

Sign-ups will be announced soon.

Waterfowl ID (3-part series)

Mondays, January 8, 15, 22

Icterids ID

Monday, February 12

Sparrows ID (3-part series)

Mondays, March 4, 11, 18



Ye Olde Nature Shoppe

Swing by our Nature Shop and pick up some **holiday gifts**. We have a multitude of books (new and gently-used), shirts, hats, and all kinds of things for that bird-lover in your circle. One new item is sure to be popular—we have a collection of 125 beautiful **donated wood carvings** of local and international birds! There are **39 species** in all and we will be selling them for a **mere \$10** each. Stocking stuffers, table decorations, or office gifts... these are perfect small items for your holiday! Each antique carving is hand-carved, labeled and painted. All originals.





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