

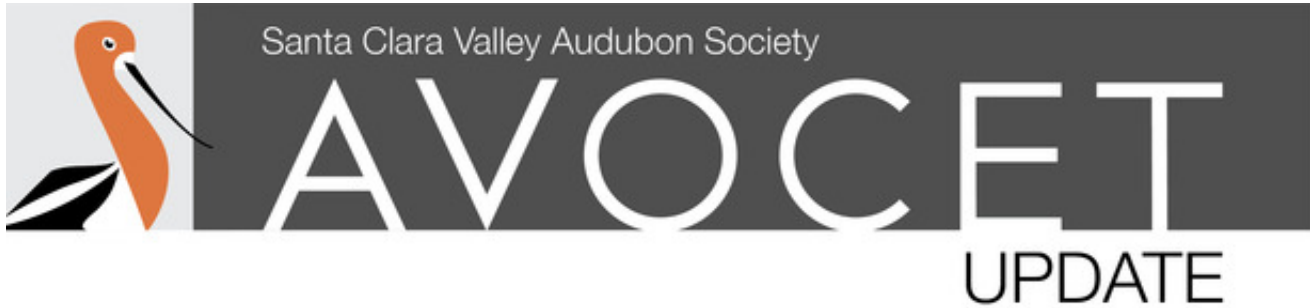
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Black-and-white Warbler: Matthew Dodder

March 2023

This is an important time of year! The rains inspire new growth on the hills to celebrate this seasonal event with a vivid green dress. And while it may be cold and gloomy today, spring is indeed just around the corner. That means our annual Birdathon begins soon. It is vital we bring the rain to nourish our programs for the year as well. Our Education Program for example, serves more than 2,000 students each year but can only continue with the funds our members contribute. Our Environmental Advocacy helps protect our local green spaces and waterways but can only do so with your support. Our field trips, speaker series, and classes all rely upon your help. If you think these are important, let us know with your support. The Birdathon was created to sustain the Education Programs, but this year has been tough for all of us, and our Annual Appeal fell short of its goal. Please help us get back on track during the Birdathon. Now is the time to sign up for a team, pledge your support and help us meet our goal of exceeding last year's fundraising. Can we reach \$60,000 this year? Can we raise even more? I think if we all work together, we can refill our reservoir this spring and fuel the coming year.

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director

A light blue t-shirt with the SCVAS Birdathon 2023 logo. The logo features the text "SCVAS Birdathon 2023" and "scvas.org" above a circular arrangement of colorful birds in flight.

SCVAS
Birdathon
March 27 – May 7

It's the biggest event of our year!
Support the SCVAS Education Program by
joining or sponsoring a team. Start your own team...

scvas.org/birdathon

Sign up today!

Get ready for the big event! Our Spring Birdathon is almost here.

Join or sponsor a team [on our website](https://scvas.org/birdathon).

Show your support for the SCVAS Ed program by [pre-ordering our new 2023 t-shirt](https://scvas.org/birdathon).



Speaker Series

Brian Sullivan

Wednesday, March 15

8:00 PM - 8:00 PM (via Zoom)

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology—Bending the curve for birds and biodiversity

It's easy to feel hopeless these days. Our planet is on the edge, nearer than ever to the point of no return. Bird populations are crashing, as ecosystems around the world suffer from climate change, habitat loss, and myriad forms of anthropogenic deterioration. What can we do to stop it? What can you do? What can I do? If you find yourself struggling with these questions, join Brian Sullivan for a glimpse into what one organization is doing to create a ecosystem of tools to engage a global community of birders, generate the best most actionable science from the data, and get these data into the hands of decision-makers around the world--all in a collective effort to 'bend the curve' for birds, biodiversity, and humanity. Learn how you are making a difference in this battle, or, how you could!

[Register Here](#)



The Avocet is Online

Download the new Spring issue [here](#).



Field trip to Cuesta Park led by Susan Tenney and Dan Bloch

Field Trips

In-person field trips for March post on **February 28**. Visit [field trips](#) for more information and to sign-up.

UPDATED! To help more people have a chance at getting a spot on trips, please limit your sign-ups to 2 **WEEKEND** trips per month.

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



White-headed Woodpecker: Tom Grey

Self-Guided Field Trips

Visit Yuba Pass and Sierra Valley this June! A modest drive from our county brings birders to the beautiful mountain landscape and its characteristic mix of species. The itinerary describes birding stops ranging from alpine Yuba Pass (7000') which hosts Williamson's Sapsuckers, Mountain Quail and Clark's Nutcrackers to the subalpine Sierra Valley (4800') home to Sage Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrows and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

- [Yuba Pass and Sierra Valley](#) by Matthew Dodder

Or browse our [complete collection of guides](#) by location, name, or season.



Killdeer by Teresa Cheng, Merlin by Airdrie Kincaid, Yellow-rumped Warbler by Curt Bianchi, Hooded Merganser

Backyard Birding

Great Backyard Bird Count

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Great Backyard Bird Count! We hope you had a wonderful time observing birds during the four days of the event. Our GBBC online image gallery of GBBC images to enjoy can be found [here](#).

Be sure to **submit your checklists on eBird or Merlin by March 1**, in order to have them counted in the official results.

And stop by our nature shop to pick up your 2023 GBBC sticker, pictured above! Available while supplies last.

The final GBBC results aren't in yet, but as of February 24, Santa Clara County birders had already reported **193 species on 959 eBird checklists**. And worldwide, 7,437 species of birds have been documented so far, on over 300,000 checklists! You can review data from the event on eBird's GBBC Explore page.

By taking part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, you support conservation efforts for birds. Thank you for joining in and giving birds a helping hand!

For more information visit scvas.org/gbbc.



Townsend's Warbler: Deanne Tucker

All Around Town

We're accepting **submittals for the new edition of All Around Town**, our regular round-up of backyard bird observations, through Saturday evening, **February 25**.

Send your backyard and neighborhood bird observations for January and February to backyardbirds@scvas.org. And tell us your stories from the Great Backyard Bird Count! Notes, lists, photos, videos, audio clips, sketches - however you enjoy expressing yourself - are all welcome.

Previous editions of All Around Town can be viewed [here](#).



Online Class

It's time to brush up on those pesky greenish-grayish mysteries that baffle so many of us. Learn the field marks, behaviors, habitat preferences and vocalizations for these insectivores during this two-session online class. Just in time for the Spring Birdathon when they start to arrive! Register [here](#).



Palo Alto Baylands tidal marsh just beside the trail, the fragile home of Ridgway's Rail. Photo by Matthew Dodder

Conservation Corner

Palo Alto Electric Bikes on unpaved trails – February 27

Palo Alto allows electric bikes (and other electric mobility devices) on paved trails in parks and nature preserves. Looking to reduce impacts of recreation and retain the tranquility of nature preserves, **the Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission recommended not allowing electronic bikes on unpaved roads and trails in open space and nature preserves.** Bike advocates are asking the City to allow electric bikes on unpaved trails, especially in the baylands.

While not specific to e-bikes, scientific literature shows clearly that faster moving uses and/or louder uses have greater impacts than slower and quieter recreational uses. Impacts include the distance at which animals are disturbed and fly away, the species diversity (which is lower with greater impacts) and behavior (more animals in alert behavior rather than feeding or relaxed behaviors with louder/faster uses). We believe that electric bike traffic along bay levees will add disturbance to areas that provide critical habitat for many migratory birds and allow refuge to endangered species in the baylands.

Please email Mayor Kou and the City Council and ask them to support the **Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation and to not allow electronic bikes on unpaved roads and trails in open space and nature preserves.** Please email City.Council@cityofpaloalto.org and title the email **"Item 7 on 2/27 agenda: Support for PRC recommendations"**.

Mountain View Priority Session – February 28

The use of Artificial Light at night is increasing exponentially in our region and the world, causing pervasive and devastating impacts to ecosystems, species, and public health. We must all do our part to reduce this form of pollution. Please email Mayor Hicks and the City Council and ask them to **prioritize the preservation of a dark sky/lighting ordinance to protect environmental and public health.** Please email: city.council@mountainview.gov and title your email: **Feb. 28 Agenda: Please prioritize our dark sky!**

Mountain View Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan – March 14

We have been advocating with the City of Mountain on the Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan (SWMP) for several years, and are happy to share that the city is currently moving forward with the updated plan. Because of the active involvement of the public and comments provided by SCVAS's advocacy team, the SWMP expanded from Shoreline to include the Shorebird Way Egret Rookery as well as the nearby retention basin within its area of focus. The Plan also expanded to add Monarch butterfly to the four avian umbrella species - the California Ridgway's Rail (*Rallus obsoletus obsoletus*), Black Skimmer (*Rhynchops niger*), White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*), San Francisco Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas sinuosa*). The existing Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) Preservation Plan is integrated with the SWMP.

We thank everyone who has helped highlight the importance of the SWMP and to see you at the March 14 City Council meeting to support the adoption of the plan as well as the recommendations by the Parks and Recreation Commission for: 1) a yearly presentation and 2) an urgency for the protection of the Shoreline Lake island, which is used by nesting birds and is currently being threatened by wave erosion.

Updates on light pollution and billboards (Gilroy, Cupertino)

Our advocacy, and working with community members in Cupertino and in Gilroy, helped the planning commissions of these cities reject billboards that would bring light pollution and clutter to highways 280 and 101 (respectfully) with visual blight.

In **Cupertino**, the applicant appealed and received approval for the Storage Billboard from City Council. A local resident appealed this decision, and so the humongous orange illuminated sign will come back to Council for reconsideration. If you live in Cupertino, or drive along Highway 280, **please contact the Cupertino City Council and let them know how much you object to this visual assault on the night sky and our scenic roadways.**

In **Gilroy**, we helped coordinate opposition to a change to the City zoning code to allow freeway-facing electronic billboards and construct one such billboard. The City's Environmental Review process concluded that a 75-foot high, 30-by-22.5-foot LED billboard, where the graphics change every eight seconds, will have no significant effect on the environment. **The Gilroy Planning Commission denied the project. The applicant has appealed, so the next step is the City Council. If you live or shop in Gilroy please contact council members to express your opposition to this project.**



Outfront Media's proposed electronic billboard on Automall Parkway is shown in this concept rendering to the right.

As always, contact advocate@scvas.org for more information.



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