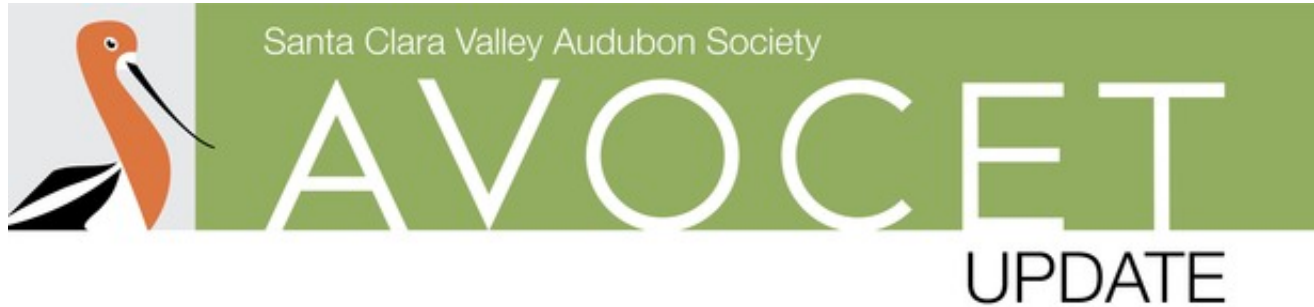


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## May 2023

By now you've noticed a drop in Waterfowl numbers. Nothing to be alarmed about; it's just time for them to retreat to their breeding ranges to the north. Soon, we will see a similar reduction in Shorebird numbers until the mudflats have been drained of all but our resident birds. Many of the migrant Shorebirds will swing through again in summer creating a pre-fall treasure hunt for rarities along the bay and on sheltered ponds. That tan-striped White-throated Sparrow has stuck around in the bushes just outside our conference room, perhaps waiting for the crowned Sparrows to make the first move north. I detect a strong anticipation in them. Meanwhile, the colorful breeding birds like the Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Western Tanagers are finally here and in full song. It's a spectacular season of change and at the Ranch it is on full display. Enjoy the lovely weather, and the vibrant green hillsides. We've had our share of cold and wet winter, but spring is finally here. Check out what else is going on...

~Matthew Dodder, Executive Director



Field trip to Coyote Valley Open Space led by Andy Melnick, Sheila Raymond and Joyce Zhang (March 25, 2023)

## Field Trips

In-person field trips for May post on **April 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.



Pacific-slope Flycatcher: Carter Gasiorowski

## Self-Guided Field Trips

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.



White-breasted Nuthatch: Deanne Tucker

## Backyard Birding

### Send us your backyard bird sightings

Spring is here! What birds have you seen in your yard, or around your neighborhood, in March and April?

Send your notes, stories, photos, sound clips, and other creative expressions to [backyardbirds@scvas.org](mailto:backyardbirds@scvas.org) and we'll publish them in the next All Around Town, our backyard bird report.

**All Around Town submittals for March and April are due by Monday, May 1.**



Hooded Oriole (male) by Hita Bambhania-Modha

## **Hooded Orioles are back!**

Each spring, these sunny birds, much loved by backyard birders, arrive in Santa Clara County neighborhoods to build nests and raise their young. The birds especially like to nest in palm trees in residential areas.

**Often you will hear the birds before you see them:** listen for a sweet, lively, upward-gliding *chirp!*, repeated periodically, or a softer, rapid, monotone *chitter*.



Hooded Oriole (female): Becky Ewens

Males are a bright orange color that immediately draws the eye, an anomaly against the foliage. They have a black throat swatch and black wings with white stripes. Females are a sunny yellow color. They also have dark wings with stripes but lack the black throat of the males.

For more about the birds, browse our [introduction to the Hooded Oriole](#) and our [All Around Town guide to identifying Hooded Orioles](#) (scroll to the end of the article).



Oak Titmouse with nesting material: Steve Zamek

## Keep Nesting Birds Safe

It's springtime and the birds are nesting!

**Please remember to give nesting birds their space and privacy.** Breeding birds are highly vulnerable, and birds that are spooked by us may abandon their nests, including eggs and baby birds, resulting in a complete loss of the offspring. Human activity may also attract predators.

You can still enjoy and observe nests while keeping birds safe. See [NestWatch's code of conduct](#) for best practices (the code is for monitoring nests, but the same basic principles apply to observing them). Thank you for caring for the birds!



## Conservation Corner

**Here is a chance to celebrate Earth month by advocating for birds and nature:**

### **All Santa Clara County Residents:** Respond to a Survey

Santa Clara County Parks is updating their Countywide Trails Master Plan, which includes a map and conceptual trail routes in the County. County Parks is looking for public feedback on where trails should be and the prioritization of trails for implementation. We think trails are a great way for people to experience and connect with nature, but we also want to make sure trails are not built in sensitive plant and wildlife areas. In natural areas and along creeks, electric bikes can disrupt wildlife use of their habitat. The [project's website](#) includes a survey and feedback tool to give input on new trails and trail prioritization. Please ask the county not to block wildlife movement corridors with trails and the activity associated with them, and minimize intrusion into contiguous wildlife habitat. In addition, please ask for limits on access by motorized vehicles, including bikes. Please consider whether all parks and open spaces must be connected by trail.

### **Sunnyvale Residents:** Action Alert for Moffett Park Specific Plan

The City of Sunnyvale is moving quickly towards the approval of the Moffett Park Master Plan, with residential towers (20,000 housing units and 10 Million Square feet of additional office space in towers 145-275-feet tall). Despite the plan projected 60,000 new employees and 42,000 new residents, the Environmental Review concluded that there will be no impact to wildlife and migratory birds in the baylands.

The planning commission will make a recommendation **May 8th**, and council is procasted to approve the plan soon after. Sunnyvale residents, please contact [advocate@scvas.org](mailto:advocate@scvas.org) for more information on how you can help. And here is the SCVAS comment at the Planning Commission study session (delivered by our own Rani Fischer):

The EIR dismissed our concern that adding 42,000 new residents and 60,000 employees will contribute to significant degradation of existing park and recreation facilities and disrupt migratory birds and other special status species in the baylands,



water treatment ponds and other water features.

We disagree, impacts to recreation facilities and amenities will likely happen as residents and employees use them to commute and enjoy their surroundings. Furthermore, the Plan relies on use of these facilities, especially the Bay Trail, to provide active transportation for employees and residents alike. It seems highly likely that there will be a significant, not minimal, increase in Bay Trail usage by new employees, and that thousands and thousands of residents and employees will explore the levees among wetlands and ponds, with impacts to migratory birds and special status species such as the Western pond turtle.

In our letter, we suggested mitigations, For example, with the exception of commute trails (Such as Bay Trail and the East and West Channels trails), we suggested that the City should limit access to human-powered-only, and prohibit electronic or motorized mobility devices. This should reduce disturbance to foraging and resting birds. We also provided a map that presented Levees that can and should be closed seasonally without an impediment to recreational activities.

We believe that including our recommendations should reduce the impacts and should be included in the Plan and the Final EIR.



## **Egret Office Hours**

It's our favorite time of year! Join us for a visit to the Egret Rookery of Shorebird Way in

Mountain View. We'll be holding office hours **May 10, May 31, and June 14, 11:30 AM-1:00 PM.**



## Save the Date!

Our Birdthon 2023 Awards Event will be **Saturday, June 3 at 5:00 PM.** The festivities will be outside at McClellan Ranch. More details to be provided soon. Don't miss it.



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