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Newsletter of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station

Volume 10, No. 2

The Importance of Avian Research at CCRS

Chris Otahal, Avian Research Coordinator

Anyone who has sat down with a copy of *RipariaNews* and perused the writings of Colwell, Danielson, Bousman, Rogers, Terrill, Katano, Otahal, and the other dedicated scientists here at CCRS, can vouch for the fact we collect a tremendous amount of data. We report on arrival and departure dates of thrushes and vireos, breeding distributions of warblers and flycatchers, birds captured by net hour and species distribution versus sample location. Each issue of *RipariaNews* is bulging with graphs, tables and charts. But what does it all mean?

All that early morning mistnetting, the point counts, vegetation surveys and nest searches are but a single step towards the mission of the Avian Research Program — to contribute to the

understanding of riparian habitats and the wildlife they support in order to provide a stronger foundation for the conservation and restoration of these priceless places.

The downward population trends of many neotropical migrant songbirds are well documented, and protection of breeding and overwintering habitat has become a priority for avian conservation. However, destination habitat for the migrants is only part of the picture. What's happening en route? The importance of riparian habitat for "stopover" or refueling areas, especially in urban landscapes, is not well documented. Unfortunately, the undocumented suspicion of the importance of these habitats isn't a persuasive argument for the protection of the last remnant urban streams from channelization and encroachment. In the recent public discourse regarding development setbacks from creeks in San Jose, the questions kept coming up: Is protecting creekside habitat really necessary in the urban context? Do we really need a setback? How wide is wide enough? Data collected by CCRS was an important element of these discussions and played a significant part in the decision to provide a one hundred foot setback from the riparian corridor within city limits.

► A central component of the avian research program has been the ongoing monitoring of the revegetation area here at the Station. The

Corridor Width Study

Chris Otahal, Avian Research Coordinator

The Avian Research Program is interested in examining the question of minimum corridor width for neotropical migrant stopover. Conclusive scientific data on topics such as species diversity and habitat use based on corridor width would provide guidance for city planners, resource management agencies and other policy making organizations. We believe our bird banding program can be modified to provide relevant research on riparian habitat width requirements for wildlife use. A proposal to support such a plan was submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for funding. The project we proposed, however, is very ambitious, and to our knowledge has never been tried before in an urban setting by volunteers. We propose to band birds at three locations a mile apart simultaneously seven days a week during spring and fall migration. The three sites were selected to represent corridor widths of 100, 200, and 300 feet. Before we attempt this, we have much to learn.

Starting June 1 the CCRS Avian Research Program took the first step towards this goal through a new project involving an expanded study area and summer schedule. New net lanes were cut at the extreme north and south ends of our study site, and 10 to 12 nets are currently being run at each end twice weekly. The volunteers operate out of field kits at the study sites and birds are released at the nets in which they were captured.

Continued on page 9 

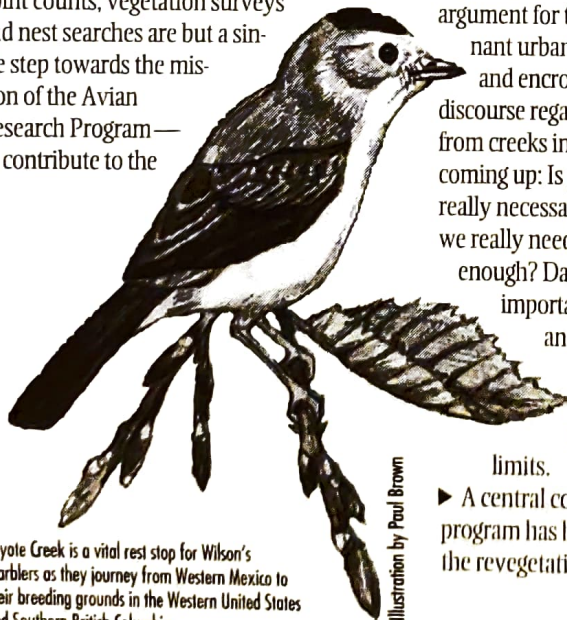


Illustration by Paul Brown

Coyote Creek is a vital rest stop for Wilson's Warblers as they journey from Western Mexico to their breeding grounds in the Western United States and Southern British Columbia.

Continued on page 9 

Director's Note

by Michael Rigney, Executive Director

Being a pioneer is risky business, but it occasionally has its rewards. Back in 1992 CCRS began exploring the idea of putting our experience in using well-trained volunteers to collect information on riparian ecosystems throughout Santa Clara County. We have reported in *RipariaNews* the successes (and some setbacks) we have had with our Community Creek Watch Program. As we began to network with other interested groups, agencies and individuals (first locally, then regional and nationally), we began to tap into a growing movement focused on stream ecology and restoration, watershed management, and resource planning. We found that, while some of the activities we had undertaken had their origin in some form in the eastern U.S., we were the first in California. In addition, some features of our program, particularly those focused on terrestrial riparian monitoring methods, were new and innovative. Add to this our evolving Avian Research Program (see accompanying article by Chris Fischer and Chris Otaha) and CCRS has found itself in an enviable and somewhat perilous position; we are now being used as a "model" for the development of similar programs throughout the Bay Area (and ultimately, throughout the State).

CCRS is the first of what is hoped will be a network of riparian stations within the San Francisco Bay region. In support of that network building process, the State Water Resources Control Board has funded CCRS to work with the San Francisco Estuary Institute in Richmond to provide technical support to at least two new "riparian stations" in the Bay Area. This contract is the first step in that process. Over the next year, several other staff members and myself, will be working with these fledgling riparian stations to help them build

their volunteer base, identify key issues within their focus watersheds, and develop strategies for implementing and supporting their programs. This will indeed be a challenge! Not only will we be providing these groups with the assistance they require, but we must also keep CCRS on track and functioning as the "model" for other organizations to follow.

This is also an opportunity for us to learn. Working with the San Francisco Estuary Institute's team of scientists and educators is a personal thrill. Many of these individuals are tops in their field and we will be trying to absorb as much from them as we can over the course of this next year. In addition, many of the groups with which we have made contact and will be working, have new and innovative perspectives on riparian ecosystem protection. New protocols and new community involvement strategies are being developed at a feverish pace.

This is indeed an exciting time in the Bay Area, despite the environmental struggles and setbacks taking place on a national level. It appears clear that communities throughout the greater Bay Area are increasingly committed to stream protection, restoration and enhancement. We get calls on a daily basis from individuals, groups, and agencies asking how they can get programs like ours started in their communities. It is our goal to help as best we can, to support the continuation and expansion of community-involved urban river and stream programs throughout the Bay Area. It's a tough job being a pioneer and a role model. There is little room for failure. With your continued support, we will do our best to keep the process moving.

Meet Dave Johnston

Dave Johnston was appointed in May as the new Research Director for Coyote Creek Riparian Station. For the last sixteen years, Dave served as the Executive Director of the Youth Science Institute located

in Saratoga. In the early 1980's Dave expanded the Institute and opened two new sites, the YSI Vasona and the Sanborn Nature Centers. During his tenure with YSI, the organization's budget grew from \$66K/year to \$650K/year. Johnston has also worked as a field ornithologist for the Bureau of Land Management, and has led extended natural history tours to various locations in North and South America.

Continued on page 9 



Dave introducing aquatic denizens from Saratoga Creek to elementary school teachers from Saratoga Union Elementary School District. The entire district plus Saratoga High School is engaged in the project. Photo courtesy Saratoga News.

What is a Riparian Station?

Coyote Creek Riparian Station and the San Francisco Estuary Institute envision Riparian Stations located within key watersheds bordering the San Francisco Estuary. Each station would coordinate monitoring of its river systems and riparian habitat within its watershed and offer training and environmental education programs to the surrounding communities.

Riparian Stations can exist within public schools, interpretive centers, or in offices of local regional agencies, for example, Resource Conservation Districts, Mosquito Abatement Districts, or Flood Control Districts.

The goal of each Station is to develop community support and participation in serving ecological goals by providing scientific, technical, educational, and logistical

Continued on page 6 

The Birds of Santa Clara County

by Bill Bousman
(Copyright June 1995)

Goldeneyes, Mergansers, and Stiff-tailed Ducks

Part three of my coverage of the duck family *Anatidae* deals with the goldeneyes and bufflehead in the genus *Bucephala*, the mergansers in the genera *Lophodytes* and *Mergus*, and the Ruddy Duck, all alone in the genus *Oxyura*. As will be discussed below, the reports I've received over the last 15 years indicate population expansions in Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, and, perhaps, Red-breasted Merganser. However, the reports people send to me represent a biased sample and it must be questioned as to how much reliance can be placed on the trends that I will show in this column. The trends are interesting, nonetheless, and a discussion of some of the potential biases in the data behind the trends will provide all of us insight.

I show the distribution for the seven species over a year's period in Figure 1 where the thick line means common or abundant, the medium line means fairly common, the thin line refers to uncommon, the dashed line is for rare, and the dotted line is for very rare. A double asterisk behind the species name indicates that it breeds each year. For the rarer species the distributional information is based on records submitted to me over the last 15 years while I've maintained the county records.

Our common goldeneye is the Common Goldeneye and this wintering duck shows a strong preference for salt water although it is fairly wide spread in occurrence and may show up on fresh water lakes and reservoirs as well. Although we occasionally find birds in early October the first significant move-

ment of birds into our area is in the second or third week in November. We normally encounter good numbers of birds into mid-March and then birds are scarce in April with only a rare bird found in the area in May. Overwintering birds are very rare and these are normally injured or in poor health. A badly worn bird was seen in Palo Alto on Aug 8, 1981 (Howard Cogswell; AB 35:974) and an injured female was seen in the Alviso area last year Jul 17 - Sep 16, 1994 (Steve Rottenborn, Richard Jeffers, m.ob.). However, a male in the Palo Alto estuary Sep 25, 1979 (Bill Bousman; AB 34:195) appeared healthy and was probably just an early wintering bird. Grinnell and Miller (1944) noted that the data available did not indicate any major population changes for this diving duck.

Our other goldeneye is Barrow's Goldeneye and, based on recent records, this species can be considered rare in the county during the winter months. Figure 2 shows the distribution of records over the period of a year and Figure 3 shows the variation between years. Figure 3 includes data from both the county records as well as the total of birds seen on both the Palo Alto and San Jose Christmas Bird Counts. For this figure I have multiplied the CBC data by 5X to allow comparison between the two data sets.

The data from the county notebooks represents a biased sample in that there is no accurate means to determine the actual amount of observer effort. The definition of sighting that I use here is essentially one bird seen in one location for one week or less. Thus, if I receive reports of birds at Shoreline from three observers during a week period and one reports three birds, another five birds, and the third only two birds then the number I graph is five, as this represents the maximum during this period. If during the next week, for whatever reason, I receive no

reports of Barrow's at Shoreline then I don't make any entries in the notebooks. Thus the figures I show are dependent upon observer effort (and the courtesy they extend in sharing their observations) but I have no measure of that effort that

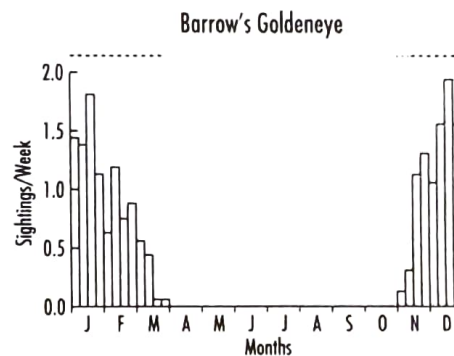


Figure 2. Barrow's Goldeneye yearly distribution of sightings (1980-1994).

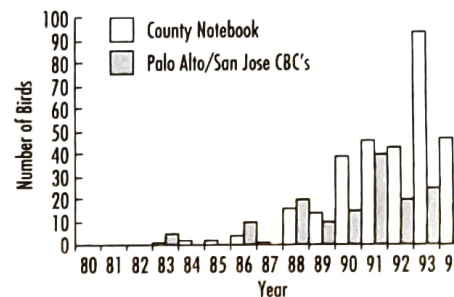


Figure 3. Barrow's Goldeneye winter distribution, 1980-94, in sightings. Combined CBC data scaled by 5X.

I can use to normalize the data. The combined CBC data, however, are closer to an unbiased sample in that the observer effort is quite uniform. The counts are made only on one day each year and there are measures of observer effort, such as the number of party-hours, that can be used for normalization. Over the last 15 years the number of party-hours on these counts has remained fairly constant and, therefore, these data represent a good sample for examining between year variation. With regards to Barrow's Goldeneye it is interesting that both sources of data show a significant increase in this wintering population in the last decade.

Based on our recent experience with this duck on Shoreline Lake in Mountain View, birds normally arrive in the second or third week of November and remain until March. Our earliest record is of a male and female on Shoreline Lake on Nov 6, 1992 and the latest record is a female that remained there until Mar 26, 1993 (both Bill Bousman).

The presence of Barrow's Goldeneye in the county appears to be a fairly recent event. Grinnell and Miller (1944) considered Barrow's to be a rare duck that bred in the

Continued on page 4

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Common Goldeneye . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barrow's Goldeneye . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bufflehead	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hooded Merganser . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Common Merganser** . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Red-breasted Merganser .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ruddy Duck**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Figure 1. Distribution of goldeneyes, mergansers, and Ruddy Duck in Santa Clara County.

The Birds of Santa Clara County

 Continued from page 3

central and northern Sierra Nevada and wintered on the central coast of California. It was unclear whether wintering birds were augmented from more northern breeding populations. Sibley (1952) included reports as far south in the bay as Ravenswood Point but not within the county. The first record I am aware of is a male in the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor on Feb 18, 1958 (Robert Wood *vide* Stoner Haven; AFN 12:303). This bird was also reported in 1959 on Feb 21 (Earl A. Albertson; AFN 13:317) and Feb 28 (Guy McCaskie; AFN 13:317) and again in the winter of 1959-60 (AFN 14:337). The latter report is interesting in that this was the *fourth* winter for this bird indicating that it was first seen in the winter of 1956-57 although I have no record of this first observation. In addition, this last report also included the comment that this bird was possibly a hybrid, based on back coloration. Following this first male Barrow's I have no records for the county until Dec 19, 1983 when a male was identified in the ponds north of Moffett Field on the Palo Alto CBC (Ivan Barnes).

The distribution of Barrow's Goldeneyes over the last 15 years in Figure 3 shows a substantial increase of sightings in the county. This species no longer breeds in California so these birds are from inland mountain areas to the north. Does the increase in numbers represent an expanding population or is it caused by something else? Shoreline Lake was constructed in the early 1980s and is obviously a good foraging area for diving ducks. Are the greater numbers we've encountered in recent years just a result of this new food resource? The majority of our county observations are from Shoreline Lake and this certainly suggests that this is the dominant factor in our population increase. It is interesting to note, however, that the San Jose CBC has recorded this species in only three of the last 25 years and these years were 1988, 1991, and 1993—years that match the Shoreline Lake increases.

Barrow's Goldeneye is normally found on salt water in the winter but we do have three records of birds found on freshwater in the county. An immature male and a female were seen on Coyote Reservoir on Mar 16, 1985 (Paul Noble, David Suddjian), a female was in the Penitencia Creek ponds on Dec 18, 1988 (David Suddjian), and an immature male and a female were on the

Ogier Avenue ponds north of Morgan Hill on Nov 19, 1994 (Steve Rottenborn).

Bufflehead is the third member of the genus *Bucephala* and is a fairly common wintering species. It is found widely in the county and does not show the strong affinity for salt water that the two goldeneyes do. Wintering birds start to arrive in substantial numbers in the last week in October and then are found on most bodies of water through the third week of March. We regularly see a few birds lingering to the end of April and, unlike the goldeneyes, overwintering birds are not exceptional. The county notebooks show that it has been recorded in five of fifteen June-July periods. There has been some decline in numbers over the long term, it appears. Grinnell and Miller (1944) stated that it was formerly abundant as a winter visitant and now only fairly common.

Hooded Merganser, the lone representative of the genus *Lophodytes*, is arguably the most beautiful of the North American ducks although some would cast their vote for the Wood Duck. Both accentuate the excitement of discovery by their use of small lakes and wooded streams, even in urban areas, so that we come upon them, sometimes at very close quarters, and then they are gone. The distribution of Hooded Merganser records over a year's period is shown in Figure 4 and the distribution of sightings over the

last fifteen winters is shown in Figure 5. This merganser is a rare winter visitor in the county with birds showing up in the second week in November and staying normally through March although in some years we encounter single birds into April and early May. A pair on Coyote Creek between Hwy 101 and Mabury on Nov 10, 1994 (Steve Rottenborn) is the earliest record I have of arriving birds and one reported to the Rare Bird Alert tape on May 9, 1982 is the latest. A record of a female at Palo Alto (Lawrence Binford; AB 28:944) on Jul 3, 1974 is the only summer record I am aware of.

Sibley (1952), who considered this species a rare winter visitant, generally found on fresh water, noted specimens dated Jan 18 and 19, 1896 from the Stanford Natural History Museum and this represents our earliest record of the species. Near the mid-century mark, Grinnell and Miller (1944) categorized this merganser as relatively rare with no change in abundance. The records for the last decade and a half, shown in Figure 5, indicate different trends depending upon whether the notebook records or CBC data are considered more representative of this species' population trend. Clearly the CBC data are the more trustworthy in controlling for observer effort, however, it is also important to consider the geographical bias that is introduced in counting birds only within the CBC count circle. If wintering birds are found more commonly outside of the CBC circles then these data may not provide a suitable representation of the wintering population of Hooded Merganser. My own subjective judgement is that this species has become more common in the last ten years, but I am loathe to argue with the trends shown in the Palo Alto and San Jose CBC data.

The distribution of Common Merganser is shown in Figure 1. This species is fairly common in early winter on the larger reservoirs in the county and we also have a small population that resides in the county and is best categorized as a rare breeder. Early records of wintering birds include 25 female and immature birds seen on Almaden Reservoir on Oct 27, 1987 (Gerald Anderson) and 22 birds noted on Chesbro Reservoir on Oct 28, 1989 (Jane Glass). The latter observation is of particular interest as a survey of Uvas, Chesbro, and Calero reservoirs on Oct 20, 1989 showed no Common Mergan-

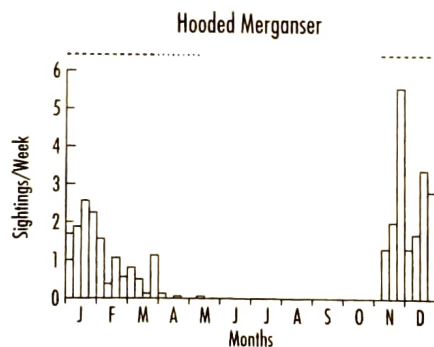


Figure 4. Hooded Merganser yearly distribution of sightings (1980-1994).

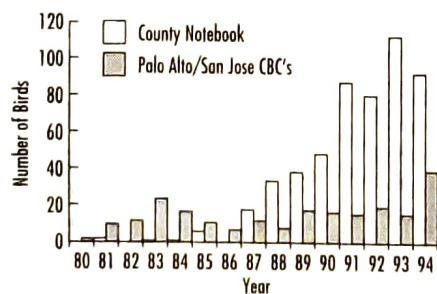


Figure 5. Hooded Merganser winter distribution, 1980-94, in sightings. Combined CBC data not scaled.

Continued on page 5 

The Birds of Santa Clara County

 Continued from page 4

sers present (David Suddjian). We sometimes encounter substantial numbers of this species in December and January. A count of 420 birds on Uvas Reservoir and 68 on Calero Reservoir on Dec 4, 1994 (Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn) is the highest count we have for the county. Numbers drop substantially in February and by March it appears that we encounter only our resident birds.

Grinnell and Miller (1944) stated that this species winters on both fresh and salt water and Sibley (1952) noted it as occasional on San Francisco Bay. However, our local experience is that this species is almost never found on the salt water of the shallow South Bay or in the salt ponds. Two females over lower Coyote Creek on Jul 18, 1993 (Steve Rottenborn) is as close as our local birds have come to a salt water visit.

Breeding of Common Merganser was recorded along the coast as far south as Mendocino County by Grinnell and Miller (1944). Sibley (1952) did not have any records of nesting in the South San Francisco Bay Region. This species was confirmed as a breeding species in Marin County during their atlas work, with one or two pairs breeding on Kent Lake (Shuford, 1993). Birds were found breeding in Monterey County in nine 5-km blocks during their atlas and this is the southernmost known breeding of this species in its range (Roberson and Tenney, 1993). The first breeding record we have in Santa Clara County is of a female and eight young found along Coyote Creek in Henry Coe State Park on Jun 29, 1986 (James Yurchenco, Amy Lauterbach). During the atlas period of 1987-93 we found this species to be fairly widely distributed in the county, although always rare, with breeding confirmed in ten 5-km blocks. Breeding birds were found in the drainages in the more northerly part of the Diablo Range that eventually flow into Alameda Creek, along portions of Coyote Creek in the central part of the Diablo Range, and in creeks on the eastern slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains that drain into Llagas Creek and, eventually, the Pajaro River. In any one year we have, perhaps, 10 to 30 pairs breeding in the county. I believe that breeding in our local area is a fairly recent phenomena and is probably tied into the construction of the reservoirs that provide safe refugia and foraging opportunities.

Red-breasted Merganser, the other representative of the genus *Mergus*, is strictly a wintering species in Santa Clara County and, almost the opposite of the Common Merganser, it is a visitor to salt water but not fresh. The distribution of the Red-breasted Merganser over the year is shown in Figure 6 and the winter numbers over the last 15 or so years is shown in Figure 7. Typically the first influx of wintering birds is at the end of October and the beginning of November. A total of 51 birds on the Alviso salt ponds on Oct 30, 1993 (Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn) is the earliest we have encountered large numbers of this species. This species has a particular affinity for the salt ponds in the Alviso area and, on those ponds, is fairly common in most winters. A count of 208 birds on Nov 14, 1994 (Peter Metropulos) is the largest number that has been found there. Away from these ponds, however, this merganser is decidedly uncommon in winter. There is, apparently, a decline in the early winter numbers in the Alviso area with variable numbers through March and, in a few years, a few individuals remaining into May.

The Alviso connection is an interesting one in that the salinity of those ponds is not much different from that of the ocean where this bird is a common winter visitant. Perhaps there are prey items resident in these ponds that are similar to those normally hunted in the ocean surf and these prey attract this species. Although it appears that the Red-breasted Merganser is normally present on these ponds in the winter it has been missed on four of the twenty-six San Jose CBCs during the period 1969-94 where the highest count has been 171. Within the Palo Alto CBC circle, on the other hand, this species is always uncommon and it has been found on only ten of twenty-six counts in the period 1969-94 with a high count of 78.

Grinnell and Miller (1944) considered the wintering population in California to be stable over historical time. They noted that birds occasionally are seen on fresh water, as did Sibley (1952), but locally this appears to be quite atypical. A female or immature was noted on Calero Reservoir on Nov 12, 1994 (Ken Kellman *vide* David Suddjian) and another single female or immature was seen on the Ogier Avenue ponds on Nov 26, 1994 (Steve Rottenborn). Not all of us pick through the flocks of Common Mergansers to find a look-a-like female Red-breasted, but a male would always be apparent and I have no record of males wintering on fresh water.

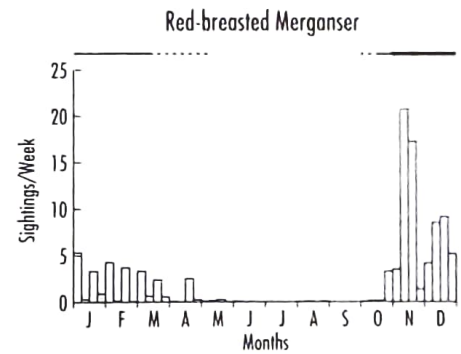


Figure 6. Red-breasted Merganser yearly distribution of sightings (1980-1994).

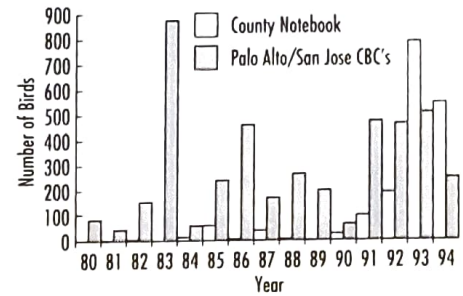


Figure 7. Red-breasted Merganser winter distribution, 1980-94, in sightings. Combined CBC data scaled by 5X.

The distribution of winter records for Red-breasted Merganser based on the county notebooks shown in Figure 7 suggests a recent increase in the local population but this is clearly contradicted by the CBC data. The largest proportion of wintering birds is within the San Jose CBC count circle and, therefore, these CBC data represent the best measure we have for this species. I suspect that the recent increase indicated in the county notebook data is an artifact of increasing use by local birders of the Alviso Slough Trail that encircles the Alviso salt ponds.

Ruddy Duck, the only representative of the genus *Oxyura*, is a common wintering species in the county and an uncommon breeding bird, as shown in Figure 1. Based on unpublished Charleston Slough census data it appears that the first fall birds appear in numbers in early October with good-sized flocks found by mid-month. Wintering birds remain in good numbers until mid or late April and then numbers drop in May until we are down to our summering population. Winter numbers can be exceptional in the South Bay: in 1973, 30,282 ruddies were counted on the Palo Alto CBC and 20,945 on the San Jose CBC, both high counts for recent years. The summer population is much smaller and numbers on the Palo Alto

Continued on page 6 

The Birds of Santa Clara County

 Continued from page 5

Summer Bird Count range from 56 to 358 with a mean of 156 birds/count.

Grinnell and Miller (1944) considered this species resident and noted that numbers were much reduced from historic times as a result of the loss of fresh water habitat. Sibley (1952) referred to it as resident as well

Corrigendum


The reference to Redhead breeding in San Mateo County in the previous column (*RiparianNews* Vol. 9, No. 4) is incorrect. There are historical records for Alameda County, but not for San Mateo County.

Earth Day 1995

On Saturday, April 22, Coyote Creek Riparian Station held a clean-up event on Guadalupe River near the San Jose Airport. Over 50 volunteers from CCRS, the Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, Red Lion Hotel, and the City of San Jose, joined in and removed six automobile tires, six shopping carts, motorcycle and bicycle frames, hula hoops, roofing tiles, linoleum, and various car parts from the river. They filled 140 garbage bags with plastic sheeting, styrofoam cups and packaging, aluminum cans, glass bottles, old clothing, and various other cast-offs. This kind of volunteer effort not only helps in beautifying our rivers, it protects wildlife from entrapment, injury, and strangulation, particularly from plastics, which can take several hundred years to degrade. Thank you all for coming out and helping!



although noting the winter population was abundant. During the atlas period, 1987-93, we found this species breeding in 12 blocks, both along the bay and in the Diablo Range.


For reasons that are unclear, we did not find any breeding, or for that matter even summering birds, along the eastern side of the Santa Cruz Mountains. 

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Clean Creek Tips: Pesticide Alert!

The Regional Water Quality Control Board has been testing creeks that run through residential neighborhoods for Diazinon and chlorpyrifos, two commonly used pesticides. Diazinon (also sold as Basudin, Diazol, Garden Tox, Sarolex, and Spectracide) is found in lawn care products, ant killer, and garden pesticides. Chlorpyrifos, better known as Dursban, is found in flea care products. Both products have been found in our local creeks at levels high enough to kill aquatic insects, an important food source for fish. Diazinon is mostly like coming from routine residential and commercial use of pesticides and lawn care projects. More specifically, from people applying it right before a rain, using too much, over-watering after application, or from improper disposal.

For information on finding alternatives to using pesticides which kill the good insects as well as the bad, call your local Master Gardener at the U.C. Cooperative Extension at (408) 299-2638 or call the Santa Clara Valley Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program at (408) 265-2600 and ask for their brochure *Pests Bugging You?* 

Reprints Available

Reprints are available on Chris Otahal's recent publications "Sexual differences in Wilson's Warbler migration" from the *Journal of Field Ornithology* and "Sexual differences in spring migration of Orange-crowned Warblers" from the *North American Bird Bander*. To receive copies please send your name and mailing address to the Station, Attention Chris Otahal, with \$2 per article to cover postage and handling. 

What Is a Riparian Station?

 Continued from page 2

expertise in monitoring and improving watershed "health." In addition, the stations would manage the data collected on each stream system, making it available for citizens's and agencies' use. 

The 1994-95 Winter Season

by Bill Bousman

We banded 16 days in December, 12 in January, and 16 in February and, considering the rains we had this winter, this is quite an accomplishment. As always, winter is a slow time. Ruby-crowned Kinglets, which showed up in record numbers in the fall, continued to be captured at about twice the normal rate throughout the period. Both races of Yellow-rumped Warbler had a poor showing this past fall, but where Myrtle numbers returned to normal during the start of the spring build-up, Audubon's were captured in low numbers throughout the season. Golden-crowned Sparrows, one of our most abundant wintering sparrows, were captured at about half their usual rate. A similar pattern was seen for both of the races of White-crowned Sparrows. Gambel's, in particular, was netted at only about a fourth of the level we



typically see during the winter months. Our other common wintering passerines such as Hermit Thrush and Fox, Song, and Lincoln's sparrows appeared in normal numbers for the season.

We banded a Winter Wren on Dec 4 which is unusual as we have only one record in the eight previous seasons. This skulking species is a rare wintering visitor to our valley streams and, as with other secretive species,

the wintering population may be larger than we believe. There was a significant invasion of Golden-crowned Kinglets in the fall but, as in most years, the invasion was over by the end of November and we obtained only one new capture during the season with a bird on Feb 22. Our first Allen's Hummingbird of the season, netted on Feb 11, was a re-capture and our first sign of spring. This bird was first banded on Jun 23, 1991. ✨

Corrigenda

The Solitary Vireo listed as banded on Aug 11 in the 1994 Fall Season "Off the Wall" in Volume 10, No. 1, was in error and was actually banded in 1993, not 1994. Similarly, the Hermit Warbler listed for Sep 14 was also banded in 1993, but the Nov 30 bird was from 1994.

Western Bird Banding Report Summary

by Chris Otahal

For the sixth year in a row, CCRS has conducted the Annual Report for the Western Bird Banding Association. Each year a survey form is sent to each bander in the Western United States and Canada (including Alaska and Hawaii). This year about 250 banders responded and the results were compiled

(full results will appear in the September issue of North American Bird Bander). The accompanying table highlights the banding done here at the station. This table lists the bird species in which CCRS was among the top three banders. As can be seen, CCRS continues to be a leader in the gathering of base line data for many bird species in the Western Region.

Noteworthy Recovery

A very interesting recovery of one of our birds was recently brought to my attention by Rosalie Lefkowitz. A Golden-crowned Sparrow banded at CCRS by Bruce Katano on Oct 16, 1991 was recaptured on Apr 28, 1995 at a banding site near Victoria, British Columbia! ✨

Birds Banded at CCRS as Related to Other Banders in the Western Bird Banding Association Region

(AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY; AB, BC, YU, NWT; MX)

Species	Number Banded in Region	Number Banded at CCRS	Percent Banded at CCRS	CCRS Rank	Species	Number Banded in Region	Number Banded at CCRS	Percent Banded at CCRS	CCRS Rank
American Avocet	25	25	100	1	Brown Towhee	236	42	18	2
Northern Mockingbird	125	80	64	1	Common Yellowthroat	702	105	15	2
European Starling	63	31	49	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	188	26	14	2
Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow	733	356	49	1	Swainson's Thrush	2638	364	14	2
Anna's Hummingbird	489	198	40	1	Black-chinned Hummingbird	307	37	12	2
Black Phoebe	226	85	38	1	California Thrasher	37	5	14	3
Loggerhead Shrike	31	10	32	1	Common Bushitit	1209	151	12	3
American Goldfinch	1035	331	32	1	Killdeer	9	1	11	3
Bullock's Oriole	276	82	30	1	Willow Flycatcher	539	56	10	3
Western Flycatcher	2327	660	28	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	1704	168	10	3
Spotted Sandpiper	5	1	20	1	Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow	2915	252	9	3
Allen's Hummingbird	225	58	26	2	Fox Sparrow	1738	145	8	3
Hermit Thrush	1984	387	20	2	American Dipper	25	2	8	3
Golden-crowned Sparrow	1741	323	19	2	Downy Woodpecker	238	16	7	3
House Finch	4209	761	18	2	Nuttall's Woodpecker	76	5	7	3

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Newsletter Editor Needed

If you like to write about birds, creeks and other natural wonders, perhaps you would like to put your skills to work editing and writing articles for the *RipariaNews*. The job entails coordinating the writers and staff, editing, and writing one article every (or every other) edition and takes about 15 hours per issue. You will need a car to meet with the layout artist about two times an issue. Please call Karen Cotter at (408) 262-9204 for more information.

Bird Banding Opportunities

Summer is an excellent time to get involved in Avian Research at CCRS. Anyone interested is encouraged to tag along for a day and see what bird banding is all about. The program requires a commitment of two to four mornings a month for a minimum of one year. Good eyesight and nimble fingers are vital. Call Chris Fischer at (408) 262-9204 for more information on this exciting program.

Join the Stream Inventory

There are still many opportunities to come aboard and join the Stream Inventory on the Creeks in Santa Clara County! We are testing water quality parameters, looking at fisheries habitat, scouting for pollution while surveying for habitat types, surveying vegetation types, listening and looking for birds,

and digging for reptiles and amphibians. Sign up for a creek near you by calling Charles at (408) 262-9204.

California Coastal Clean-up Day

Circle September 23 on your calendar if you want to join in the fun in removing garbage from a local creek. Call Karen at (408) 262-9204 after August 15th for specific location and times.

Data Entry

Come into the office on week days, weekends, week nights, whenever! Learn Paradox! We need your nimble fingers to put the bird banding data into the computer before our data pile gets hauled away as a fire hazard by the Alviso Fire Brigade! We are looking for people who can commit to help at least three or four times before Paradoxical Fear develops. Call Chris Otahal to volunteer at (408) 262-9204.

It's a Jungle Out There!

We need help with clearing the net lanes of vegetation before the tigers and monkeys move in. Come join our wild safari as we bash through the bush. We supply the shears, loppers, gloves, and other equipment. Every second and fourth Saturday, 12:30 to 4:00 pm. Call Chris Fischer at (408) 262-9204.

Atlas Volunteers

The preparation of the Santa Clara County Breeding Bird Atlas is continuing. Two areas where we would be delighted to have some volunteer effort are: (1) putting together weather data, primarily rainfall, that characterize the rainfall characteristics in both time and space; and (2) extracting records from Audubon Field Notes and American Birds that pertain to birds in Santa Clara County. If you are interested in either of these tasks please give Bill Bousman a call at (415) 322-5282.

Volunteer Thank You's!

Where would the Station be without our special friends that come all the way out here and do odd jobs for us? We'd be up to our necks in weeds, overwhelmed by uncatalogued newsletters, and exposed to the elements every time "nature calls!" A big, big thank you to the following volunteers: **Janelle Johnson** and **Jeff Sicklesteel** for obtaining and assembling the water tank and pump to make our indoor toilet functional. Henceforth the bathroom shall be known as the Janelle and Jeff John! Thank you also to **Elsie** and **Jerry Richey**. The Richey's come to our office every Thursday like clockwork. Elsie catalogs books and newsletters in the library and when Jerry's not working on his crossword puzzles, takes his weed-whacker to good use cutting down the thistles and hemlock that surrounds the trailers. Speaking of weeds, **Chris Lonowski** has been coming out to the station in the early evenings to rid us of thistles and hemlock, too! And **Victor Bravo** has been laying new flooring in our old white trailer so we can now stop worrying about people crashing through the floor. Thank you so much every body!

Donations Needed!

Supplies needed at the office to contain our data piles! Please donate your used three ring or spiral binders, colored 8.5 X 11 paper, note pads, computers, or other office supplies to CCRS.

Our drive to collect old binoculars, cameras and field guides for the Universidad de Guadalajara research station in central Mexico continues. Please call Chris Fischer if you have any you would like to donate. (408) 262-9204. ✨

In Memory of Bette Wentzel

by *Elsie Richey*

When a good friend and co-worker dies needlessly, word often fail to express our feelings. Such is my situation with Bette Wentzel's recent death.

We believe there was an unusual accident during Bette's trip to Yosemite—a hit on the head and a fall into the river—strange coincidences for a person with Bette's outdoor skills. She often went to the Sierras alone. She had a camper van and spent many hours communing with nature, watching birds and enjoying native plants.

I first met Bette in the '70's—we took Phil Gordon's Natural History of California Birds together. We did many field trips together. In recent years, she led trips to Moss Landing and to the Evergreen area near Yosemite.

Bette started as a paralegal on Dwight Steel's staff. Before long, she was in law school, passed the bar, and set up a practice in Probate Law. She arranged a family trust for us. She served as a member of CCRS's advisory board and was involved in the Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas and in other bird censuring activities. Most recently, we worked on the San Leandro Creek Survey together.

Bette's loss is severely felt. As retiring president of Ohlone Audubon Society, she set a record for involvement in many conservation concerns. We all miss her.

Contributions may be made to the Bette Wentzel Conservation Fund at Ohlone Audubon Society, in care of Treasurer Mary Nordstrom, 1608 Walden Court, Fremont, CA 94539. ✨

Avian Research at CCRS

 Continued from page 1

Santa Clara Valley Water District began restoration efforts here in 1986, and contracted with CCRS to monitor the wildlife use of the existing and new riparian habitat. The data which have been collected over the last nine years have directly contributed to improved revegetation strategies by the District's Environmental Planners. The new mitigation strategy for Coyote Creek between Highway 237 and Montague Expressway was designed based in part upon our monitoring results. District and CCRS staff are currently collaborating on a paper documenting the importance of this monitoring effort for mitigation design and success.

► The recent publication of two papers on differential migration by Chris Otahal has attracted considerable attention both nation-

ally and internationally. We have received correspondence from researchers working as far away as Spain, Hungary, and Israel regarding these papers! The attention resulting from this research has resulted in the recent visit of Andreas Kaiser, a postdoctoral student from Germany who has worked extensively on migratory stopover behavior at the Max Plank Institute. He and Chris Otahal will be collaborating on stopover behavior studies over the summer.

► Coyote Creek Riparian Station continues to be a leader in volunteer monitoring and riparian research, and is becoming an important model for new organizations springing up around the country. CCRS training and quality assurance procedures are being incorporated into a plan to standardize bird banding protocols in the United States and Canada. Closer to home, a research station being developed in Napa is closely modeled after CCRS,

and will include an Avian Research Program very similar to ours. This is quite exciting, as the data collected on the Napa River may help us better understand the importance of riparian habitat on a more regional level, as well as provide us with a comparison for our data. We hope to work closely with this new effort, which is being led by the Napa Resource Conservation District and the California Department of Fish and Game.

While it is true that the Avian Research Program is currently going through some growing pains, we are all optimistic that through the continued dedication of the staff and volunteers, the program will flourish. We already have established a strong base for our research goals and now we have the opportunity to grow upon this foundation. ✨

Meet Dave Johnston

 Continued from page 2

Dave has had a life long interest in creeks and attributes his passion for creeks and biology to countless hours of his childhood spent playing in a wooded section along Saratoga Creek. Dave's interest in creeks has been evident for many years; the theme and central topic of study at the YSI Vasona Center is aquatic biology and he developed special school programs around aquatic biology, including WET (Water Ecology Topics), into the YSI repertoire. Dave's most recent work, developing a program for Saratoga Union School District entitled the *Saratoga Creek Project*, inspired him to turn more of his attention to creek education, research, and monitoring.

As a Ph.D. candidate in Biology under Brock Fenton at York University in Toronto, Dave has been working on the learning abilities of bats and why some populations of bats become better learners than others. In December of 1994, Dave spent a month in Zimbabwe for the World Wildlife Fund and the Zimbabwean government studying the effects of habitat destruction by elephants and its effects on other wildlife. He plans to complete his degree in late spring of 1996. In addition to coordinating and directing research at CCRS, Dave has future plans to incorporate research on bats associated with riparian ecosystems into the creek monitoring and inventorying program. ✨



The Blue Elderberry, frequently found in riparian corridors, provides a high energy food source for migrating songbirds.

Corridor Width Study

 Continued from page 1

The questions the program intends to address over the course of the summer include: 1) Are significant numbers of birds captured at one site recaptured at another? 2) If so, do birds move north or south in a generally random manner, or is there a trend in one direction or the other? We anticipate the data gathered from these two sites will provide baseline information regarding patterns and timing of movement along the riparian corridor. We will be looking for specific information on the species, age and sex of

birds moving from one site to another. Just as importantly, we hope to learn how to make avian research at CCRS more flexible and problem-oriented, in order to respond to specific needs for information and understanding of our riparian resources.

All of this extra activity is putting an additional strain on the financial resources of the Avian Research Program. We are already stretched thin and any monetary contributions to this program would be greatly appreciated. Please indicate on any contributions that the funds should go to the "riparian width" study. Thanks for your continued support, dedication and hard work. ✨

Calendar of Events

Tuesday Talks

Held at McClellan Ranch, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, the second Tuesday of each month. Dress for the field!

**August 8, 1995,
SPECIAL TIME—6:30 to 8:30 pm.**

Sampling Fish Populations

Dr. Jerry Smith of San Jose State University will present the fishes of Santa Clara County streams! Learn basic fish ID and habitat needs and see fish sampling techniques demonstrated. Bring your waders and dress for the field!

September 12, 1995, 7:00—9:00 pm.

Early American Plant Uses

A local ethnobotanist will present the uses of riparian plants by early native Americans. Bring your notebook, and dress for the field!

October 10, 1995, 7:00—9:00 pm.

BATS!

Dave Johnston, CCRS Research Director, will present the natural history and identification of bats in Santa Clara County, and discuss some of his research on these important animals. Dress for the field!

Board of Directors

David Blau, President
Maryann Danielson, Vice-President
Elinor Spellman, Treasurer
Elsie Richey, Secretary
Craig Edgerton, Member
Dr. Michael Rogers, Member
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Bruce Katano, Biologist
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Karen Cotter, StreamKeeper Coordinator, Interim Editor
Mike Westphal, Research Associate
Rich Seymour, Research Associate

Office Interns

Steve Morris
Jill Bernhard
Dianne Kodama
Janelle Johnson

Other Events

August 6, 1995 at CCRS, 9:00 am—2:00 pm.

Fall Review for Banders!

Join CCRS staff to review and prepare for migration. Unusual migrant ID, molt, skulling and more! All banders strongly encouraged to attend. Please RSVP!

**September 22-23, 1995 at CCRS,
2:00 pm—2:00 pm, 24 hours.**

BAND-A-THON

CCRS announces the return of the Band-A-Thon! This 24 hour event will commence when nets open 2 pm Friday September 22, 1995. Banding will continue until Saturday, September 23 at 2 pm. Everyone is invited to join us for a potluck countdown from 10 am on Saturday. Banders will be needed for four hour shifts throughout the 24 hours. Look for a packet in August on how to get sponsors for this important fundraiser. Proceeds will be applied to the Avian Research Program.

September 23, 1995

California Coastal Clean-up Day

Help us clean up one our local creeks. Call Karen after August 15th at (408) 262-9204 for specific location and times.

A Special Thank You

to those members who responded immediately to our fundraising appeal in support of our Riparian Corridor Width Study—as of June 27th we had raised \$1,005.00! And an advance thank you to those of you who have sent checks since then, or who are planning to send checks.

Does the company you work for have a corporate matching gift program? Please inquire—some companies will match employee gifts to non-profits, doubling the value of your gift! And while you're at it, ask if they have an "in-kind" donation program, and pass the information on to Elizabeth at CCRS.

New Members

Lyle Adams
Lorraine Bazan
Ronald Bjork
Robert & Marion Blau
Victor Bravo
Lisa Brown
Sheely Buranek
Lisa Connor
David & Sherry Cook
Dave Diller
Michael Fischer & Jane Rodgers
William & Lori Fish
Sallie Gisler
Dave Johnston
Jennifer Knuth
Jenny Kranz
Chris Lonowski
Debra Lambert
Humberto Manriquez
City of Palo Alto
Michael Tel
Lynne Trulio
Kathleen Schegler
Rich Slogar
Mavis Smith
Jamie Swain
Kirk Swenson
Zona Walcott & Ron Goldwaite
Phyllis Whitlock
Joseph Zelinski

CCRS Membership

Member	\$25 annually
Senior or Student	\$15 annually
Family	\$35 annually
Supporting	\$50 annually
Sustaining	\$100 annually
Corporate	\$500 annually
Life	\$600*
Patron	\$3,000*

* Life and Patron categories can be single payments or 4 quarterly installments.

Life membership payments and 10% of all other membership payments and general contributions go toward long-term support of CCRS activities. We acknowledge memorial contributions in *RipariaNews*. We welcome bequests including those of real property.

Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) is a nonprofit California membership corporation with United States and California tax exempt status. CCRS is dedicated to research on and the restoration of riparian and wetland habitats.

CCRS operates in cooperation with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

RipariaNews is published quarterly for the information of our CCRS membership; the personnel of the several cooperating federal, state, and local agencies; and other organizations and individuals concerned with the flora and fauna of riparian and wetland habitats.

You can reach us at: Coyote Creek Riparian Station, P.O. Box 1027, Alviso-Milpitas Road, Alviso, CA 95002; (408) 262-9204.

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