



Coyote Creek Riparian Station
P.O. Box 1027, Alviso-Milpitas Road
Alviso, CA 95002 • (408) 262-9204

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Newsletter of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station

Volume 9, No. 2

New Headquarters for CCRS

by Michael Rigney

After three years of putting up with cramped office space, poor lighting, dust, and decaying floors, the Coyote Creek Riparian Station now has a new headquarters building. With 1,440 spacious square feet of floor space, the permanent staff can all be housed under one roof along with a large conference room and library.

This saga began nearly a year ago as it became obvious that our programs were growing and we would soon run out of space for new staff and their program needs. We began searching for either a new location to move all but the ongoing programs associated with Coyote Creek itself or a way to expand facilities at our present location.

In the meantime, staff members working on our Santa Clara County Stream Inventory and our StreamKeeper programs were forced to work out of their homes since space was not available for them at CCRS. We first examined the possibility of leasing space at Cupertino's McClellan Ranch environmental center (where the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society currently resides) specifically for our "stream" staff. However, the expense of leasing space, the cost of which was not factored into the various grants and contracts supporting these programs, was deemed to be too high. Other options of offsite office space were explored but the logistical problems associated with such a solution (difficulty communicating with staff, additional

travel time for staff meetings, duplicate equipment) were daunting.

Then last summer Board member Dr. Lloyd Thompson began researching the possibility of CCRS acquiring one of a number of modular buildings which San Jose State University was trying to sell. These buildings had functioned as temporary faculty offices but were no longer needed. In the fall, we began preliminary discussions with University officials about acquisition procedures, and in late 1993 began a very successful fundraising drive which netted over \$18,000 to purchase one of the buildings. Everything looked promising until, at the last minute, a University department stepped in and requested that all the remaining buildings be moved to the University's south San Jose campus.

Disappointed but not discouraged, we began investigating other options. We found that used modular trailers of similar size and configuration could be bought for about the same price we had estimated it would cost to buy the SISU building. The one we finally settled on was the same size but included intriguing features such as indoor plumbing (as in a real indoor flush toilet, with the addition of an exterior holding tank) and moveable partitions which would allow for adjustments in office configurations as our staff requirements changed. The asking price, however, was about \$5,000 more than we had budgeted, but the building was only a couple of years old. After discussing the matter with the Board of Directors, we



Managing Director Mike Rigney oversees delivery of new trailers.

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The Birds of Santa Clara County

by Bill Bousman
(Copyright June, 1994)

"Countable" Birds

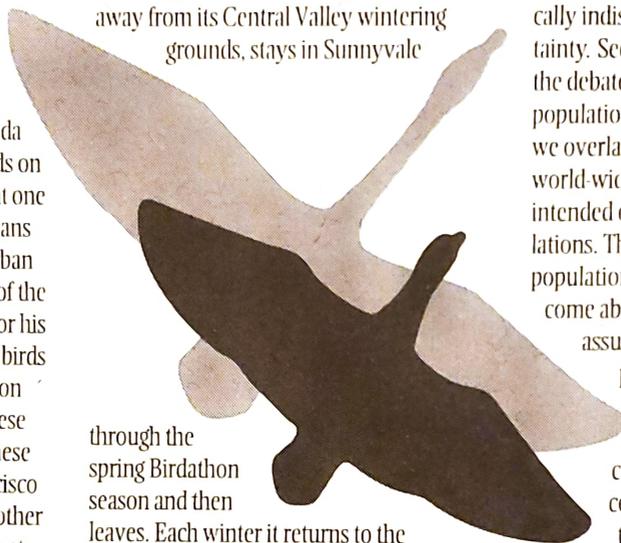
I doubt that birds care very much whether we count them or not. Their business is closely focused on finding food, finding territories, finding mates, and raising the next generation. But for birders the question of whether a bird is "countable" or not becomes tremendously important. The debate has its humorous aspects, particularly if you can stay uninvolved, but there are some real issues at the core of this debate.

Geese, the subject of this issue's column, provide one of the best introductions to the issue of countable birds. Let's suppose that someone, with the best of intentions, introduces a few Canada Geese to a habitat suitable for these birds on the central California coast. Knowing that one of the eastern subspecies tolerates humans and will become nonmigratory in an urban setting, this individual selects this part of the very diverse Canada Goose gene pool for his introduction. With this assistance these birds find food, territories, and mates, and soon there is a new generation of Canada Geese spreading along the urban corridors. These birds, now nesting all around San Francisco Bay, have much the same genes as the other geese that winter at remote reservoirs, yet there must be genetic differences as well since the wintering geese, to the best of our knowledge, continue each spring their long return flights to their northern breeding grounds.

Our urban breeding Canadas are doing well and are now nesting well away from the urban centers. A few pairs nest annually on Grant Lake and a few have stopped by private reservoirs in the Diablo Range although I am not aware of any nesting attempts there as of yet. Perhaps a dozen generations have passed since the non-migratory birds first settled on the bay—are these birds any less countable than the wintering flocks which appear to carefully avoid any area with public disturbance?

Consider a second example. A Ross' Goose is rehabilitated after an injury, perhaps a gunshot wound, and is released at Vasona Reservoir. At this point this small goose, apparently able to fly perfectly, takes up with the local domestic goose and duck flocks and becomes quite accustomed to the feeding

schedules and generosity of the local citizens. Somehow, as the hours lengthen into spring, the genetic master book, with the directions for a return to Arctic Canada, is no longer followed. Is this a lazy bird? Did the injury somehow short out the hormonal circuits that carry the instructions? For whatever reason this bird becomes a part of the local flock and as best we can tell his genes, defective or not, are lost to the population. In contrast, another Ross' Goose shows up at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant in the first winter of its life and consorts, much like the Vasona bird, with a flock of well-fed domestic geese. Conveniently this bird, well away from its Central Valley wintering grounds, stays in Sunnyvale



through the spring Birdathon season and then leaves. Each winter it returns to the Sunnyvale ponds, rejoins its sedentary friends, and acts as though nothing has changed. Did this bird make it to Canada? Did he (or she) find an unmated bird and an available territory? We don't know. We know this bird has survived two summers away from the South Bay, but we don't know if its genes have been passed on to the next generation. So are both of these birds countable? Or neither?

The debate of whether a bird is countable or not bears some similarities to the legendary debate of the medieval theologians arguing about the numbers of angels that could dance on the head of a pin. However, I think there are two reasons to be interested in this debate. The first is rather simple. If you use checklists as a way of understanding the distribution of birds in a local area it is useful to understand the record sorting process that underlies a checklist. The checklist should represent the best knowledge we have on local birds at the time of publication. In sorting out the records of birds we don't want to create new categories (nonmigratory/genetically indisposed) simply to reflect our uncertainty. Secondly, and this underpinning of the debate is far more important, all wild populations must deal with humans where we overlap in range, and this overlap is now world-wide. The things we do, whether intended or not, may influence wild populations. The genetic differences that exist in populations that are widely distributed have come about over long periods and, we can assume, are adaptive. When we move parts of these populations about we stir up the gene pool for our own purposes with no thought of the consequence. If the debate over countable birds can bring us closer to understanding how our actions influence the genetic foundations of bird populations, then it will have been a worthwhile debate indeed.

Whistling-Ducks, Swans, and Geese

We have one species of whistling duck that has occurred historically in Santa Clara County, one species of swan and, presently, five species of goose. I show the distribution of these seven species in Figure 1 where a

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Fulvous Whistling-Duck												
Tundra Swan											
Greater White-fronted Goose									
Snow Goose									
Ross' Goose											
Brant											
Canada Goose		•			•		•				

FIG. 1. Distribution of whistling-ducks, swans, and geese in Santa Clara County.

medium line represents "uncommon," a dashed line represents "rare," a dotted line represents "very rare," and dots show accidental records. The Fulvous Whistling Duck, because there are no recent records, shows no distributional information. Tundra Swan and Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Ross' Geese are either common or fairly common wintering species in the Central Valley, but what we see locally is a spillover effect—birds that have apparently overshot their normal wintering grounds. Sometimes these birds remain for the winter, but more often they move on. Brant, on the other hand, are coastal migrants and birds found locally rarely stay unless they are sick or injured.

Sibley (1952) mentions an old record of Fulvous Whistling Duck, taken in Alviso before the turn of the century, and also makes reference to downy young found in the Mountain View marshes in the summer of 1917. McCaskie *et al.* (1979) indicate that the species is rare and irregular in interior Northern California. Although a bird was found in Alameda County in the early 1970s, to the best of my knowledge there are no local records in recent times.

Tundra Swans usually show up in South Bay locations in late fall or early winter and rarely remain for long. They are often in small flocks which are probably made up of family groups. Figure 2 graphs the records I have for this species since 1980 where a record may be of one bird or a flock of more than thirty. Our earliest record is of 15 adults and 7 immatures seen on 12 Nov 93 on the Alviso salt ponds (Mike Rogers) while our latest is of four birds in flooded fields near Bailey and Santa Teresa 25 Jan-2 Feb 86 (Hugh McPherson). These swans are rarely found at any location for more than a day or two. As shown in Figure 3 numbers are variable over the years and we have had some winters when none were found.

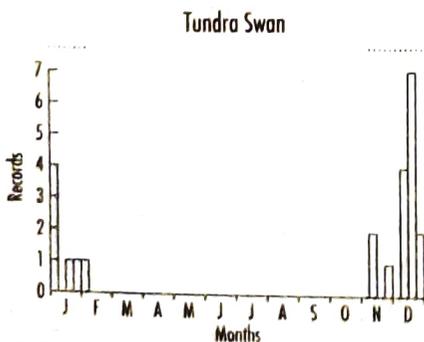


FIG. 2. Tundra Swan yearly distribution of records (1980-1994).

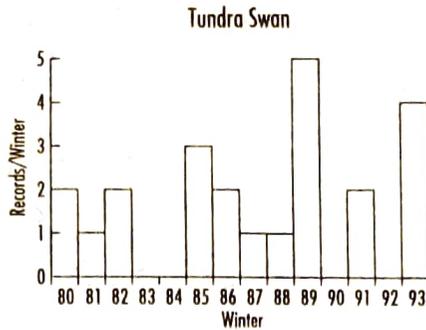


FIG. 3. Tundra Swan winter distribution, 1980-94, in records.

Grinnell and Miller (1944) noted that this species was more common in the north of California and became less common further south. They stated that numbers decreased substantially in the early part of this century and had since recovered, but not to historical levels. Sibley (1952) considered it a fairly regular winter visitant to the South Bay. Tundra Swans prefer fresh water in the winter, but also use brackish waters and the upper portions of estuaries (Grinnell and Miller, 1944). Within Santa Clara County they are most frequently found on freshwater reservoirs or larger stock ponds, but they also use the salt ponds along the bay. They will occasionally feed and stay for a while in flooded fields during rainy winters and I expect that they have always been a regular winter visitor, particularly in the southern Santa Clara Valley, but the first record I have of this species is of four found by Nielsen in Hall's Valley in November 1948 (AFN 3:20).

We occasionally find other kinds of swans in the county that have apparently escaped from aviculturists and become feral. In the past observers have reported both Mute and Black swans locally, but neither is established (fortunately).

Greater White-fronted Geese in some years show an early fall movement as indicated by the distribution of records since 1980 in Figure 4. More typical is the arrival of birds in late November and early December and it is not unusual for some birds to remain for a portion of the winter. Our earliest record was last fall when eight birds were seen over the Alviso salt ponds on 19 Sep (Mike Rogers). Two to three birds that wintered on Anderson Reservoir in 1988 lingered until 2 May (Dave Jensen *vide* David Suddjian) for our latest record. The distribution of records by winter season is shown in Figure 5. The winter of 1993-94 has been most unusual with two to four birds (including one adult) wintering along Shoreline Lake, an immature win-

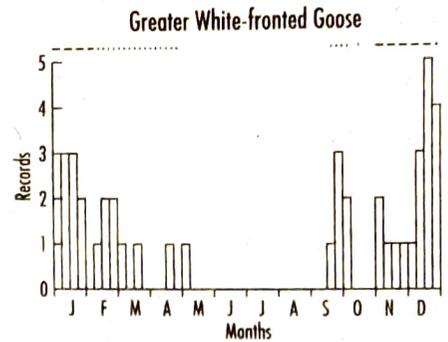


FIG. 4. Greater White-fronted Goose yearly distribution of records (1980-1994).

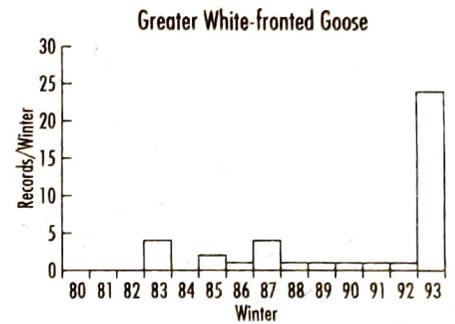


FIG. 5. Greater White-fronted Goose winter distribution, 1980-94, in records.

tering at Hellyer County Park, another immature near Grant Ranch in March and April, and sporadic records of both adults and immatures near the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant in January.

Grinnell and Miller (1944) note that this species was formerly abundant and widespread throughout the state, but by mid-century it was greatly reduced except for a few locations in the Sacramento Valley. McCaskie *et al.* (1979) considered the species common in interior California. For us, on the periphery of the range, it has probably always been rare.

The winter distribution of Snow Geese is shown in Figure 6. Except for a flock of 13 birds seen in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin on 3 Oct 85 (David Suddjian) there is no evidence of an early season movement of birds. For the most part we find this species in December and January and normally we find only single birds that remain for only a day or so. An exception is a bird that stayed at Crittenden Marsh from at least 25 Mar-23 Apr 84 (Susan McCarthy, Bill Bousman; AB 38:953). Our earliest seasonal record is the Flood Control Basin Flock mentioned above and the latest is the Crittenden bird. The distribution over the period from 1980 to the present is shown in Figure 7 and this species is found about one year in two.

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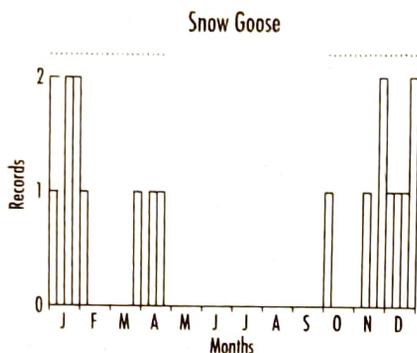


FIG. 6. Snow Goose yearly distribution of records (1980-1994).

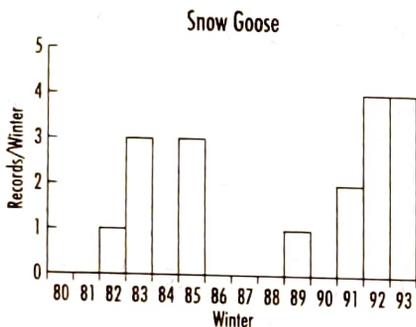


FIG. 7. Snow Goose winter distribution, 1980-94, in records.

The distribution of Ross' Goose over the winter season is shown in Figure 8. This graph is dominated by the observations of a single bird that has wintered at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant since December 1991. This bird, which normally associates with a flock of domestic geese (it does make it easy to find), was clearly an imm. bird when first found on 13 Dec 91 (Mike Rogers). We have no proof that the adult bird that rejoined the domestic flock in the winters of 1992-93 and 1993-94 is the same bird, but the circumstances make any other interpretation highly unlikely.

The first observation I have of Ross' Goose in the county is of a single bird at the ponds east of Calabazas Creek and north of Hwy 237 on 4-7 Jan 84 (Greg Mezaros, m.ob.). Including the Sunnyvale bird there are now a total of seven records for the county, but only the Sunnyvale bird has remained for any period of time during a winter. Earliest seasonal occurrence is of a single adult on the Knapp Tract in Alviso 8 Nov 92 (Peter Metropulos and Emilie Strauss) and the latest occurrence is of the Sunnyvale bird on 15 May 93 (Mike Mammoser).

Ross' Goose is less common in the Central Valley than Snow Goose (McCaskie *et al.*, 1979) and there is sometimes the presumption that this is also true locally. I am not convinced that this is the case for coastal birds and I occasionally receive reports of Snow Geese that might just as well be Ross' Geese. Both species are sufficiently rare in our area that observations should always include sufficient detail to demonstrate correct identification.

Brant is the rarest of our geese and I have only four records, as indicated in Figure 1. A first record is of one on the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant drying ponds 18 Feb 92 (Scott Terrill, AB 46:311); another was found north of the Alviso Marina on 15 May 94 (Mike Mammoser); a third was in Alviso on 13 Jul 73 (Bruce Elliott, AB 27:913), and the last in Charleston Slough 31 Oct 91 (Bill Bousman). In each case only a single bird was observed and, except for the July record, the birds could not be found the next day. The spring and fall records are probably of displaced coastal migrants, but the summer record may have been an ill or injured bird.

Canada Geese come in a confusing variety of forms and, therefore, provide a wonderful resource for the ongoing debate as to their origins and relationships. Palmer (1976) recognizes eight subspecies of the Canada Goose and it appears that at least four of these subspecies winter regularly in the Central Valley and, as with the other geese, occasionally spill over into the Santa Clara Valley. The situation is now compounded by a breeding stock of Canada Geese whose subspecific origins are unclear. Figure 1 shows the distribution of this breeding population which does not appear to have any particular seasonal movement.

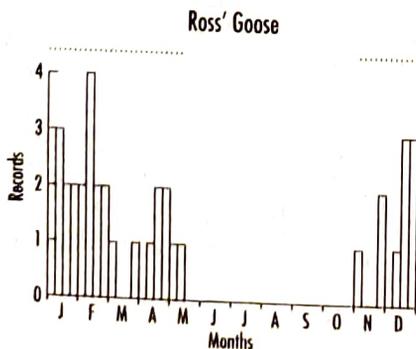


FIG. 8. Ross' Goose yearly distribution of records (1980-1994).

The Giant Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis moffitti*) has an interior breeding range that extends from the northeastern part of California across the center of the country to Illinois and Indiana (Palmer, 1976). Grinnell and Miller (1944) indicate that this subspecies is probably the source of birds that have wintered on our larger reservoirs and, until ten years ago, were an uncommon winter visitor.

The other three subspecies that winter in the Central Valley and probably occur here in some winters are: Lesser Canada Goose (*B. c. parvipes*), Aleutian Canada Goose (*B. c. leucopareia*), and Cackling Canada Goose (*B. c. minima*). Each of these subspecies is substantially smaller than *moffitti* with *parvipes* being less than half the weight or size and *leucopareia* and *minima* a third the size. *Minima*, in particular, is quite small, looking almost as small as a Mallard. Typically *leucopareia* and *minima* have a white collar of varying thickness and the white on the cheeks is separated by black on the throat. However, in both subspecies birds are encountered without collars and for which the white chin strap is continuous. I believe that each of these subspecies is a rare winter visitant to the county and it is important for observers attempting identification to include a complete description.

But what about our breeding birds, where did they come from? Lidicker and McCollum (1979) discuss the history of Canada Geese breeding on Brooks Island in San Francisco Bay as early as 1959 and they considered these birds to be *moffitti* and a natural colonization. However, breeding was also occurring nearby at Lake Merritt at the same time and it is unclear what the source of our present birds is. Shuford (1993) is convinced that the population is derived from introduced birds. Regardless of the source of these birds the population, once established, started to expand south from Contra Costa County, into Alameda County, and then Santa Clara County. The first breeding record for the county is of a pair with three downy young in Artesian Slough 23 May 86 (Woodlin, 1987). Today, they are widespread along the edge of the bay and are breeding on inland lakes and reservoirs such as Grant Lake, Parkway Lakes, and San Felipe Lake east of Gilroy. The latter birds may be an offshoot of the introduced Monterey populations (Roberson and Tenney, 1993).

The Marin and Monterey County Atlases

by Michael M. Rogers

Editor's note: California's first breeding bird atlases were recently published for two counties, Marin and Monterey. These two atlases differ significantly from our Santa Clara County atlas in various ways. The following article highlights some comparisons between Marin/Monterey published results and observations gleaned from the yet unpublished Santa Clara County atlas data.

"The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas" represents a detailed summary of the results of the first atlas undertaken in California. Field work for this atlas was conducted between 1976 and 1978, and then again in 1982. Writing up the species accounts, which are up to four pages in length and contain extensive information on ecological requirements, proved time-consuming and publication was delayed until last year. Because the Marin atlas was begun so long ago, standards for breeding bird atlases were poorly defined compared to current criteria, and several features of the Marin atlas differ from our atlas.

Perhaps the most obvious difference is the block size used to map breeding distributions. The Marin atlas blocks result from dividing a USGS 7.5 minute topographic map into 24 parts and are about one-fourth the size of our blocks. "Edge" blocks bordering oceans or adjacent counties are irregularly shaped to avoid coverage outside Marin. The end result is that Marin has 221 blocks compared to our 168, although these blocks are much smaller than ours.

The Marin atlas also kept no information on the dates of its atlas entries; the primary goal was distribution maps. Although dates have been added to some records in the publication, discussion of the timing of the breeding cycle for different species is relegated to an introductory chapter that draws on historical sources rather than detailed atlas data. Keeping track of dates is essential for properly judging whether a bird is probably a migrant, a breeder, or a post-breeding dispersant and the lack of dates must have made such evaluations difficult. This importance

of dates is reflected in the distribution map of **Nuttall's Woodpecker**, which includes a special asterisk symbol for blocks in which the birds were not noted until late June or July (and were therefore deemed dispersants rather than breeding birds).

The "Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Monterey County" is a much more recent undertaking. Field work was conducted from 1988 through 1992 and, remarkably, publication occurred only a year later in 1993. The blocks used in the Monterey atlas are the same Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) grid-based 5 km square blocks that were used in our atlas. Unlike the Marin atlas, the stan-

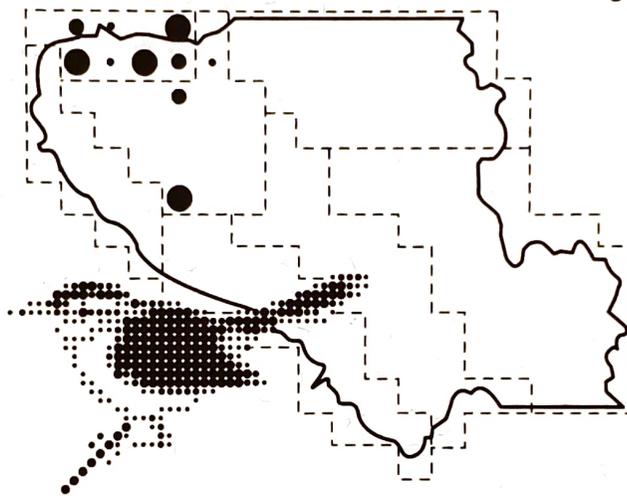
The biggest difference between the Monterey atlas and our atlas is that in the more remote, undeveloped portions of the county, Monterey employed a "priority block" scheme in which only one block in four (typically the southwest block of a "Quad") was covered thoroughly. Of the 385 blocks in Monterey County, 152 were defined as priority blocks—a more realistic goal for thorough coverage given the number of people involved in the project (and similar to our 168 blocks). However, since 75% of the blocks in the southeastern part of the county had only limited coverage, many distribution maps appear somewhat patchy.

The Marin atlas contains 163 species accounts, not all of which are for confirmed breeders and six of which were not found during the atlas period. This compares to 190 species in the Monterey atlas (12 with no breeding evidence during the atlas) and 170 species in our atlas (11 not confirmed during the atlas). The highest diversity of breeding birds found was 84 species in a Marin atlas block and 86 in a Monterey atlas block. These numbers are somewhat lower than the 98 confirmed, probable, or possible breeding species found in block 0545 just east of Calaveras Reservoir during our atlas.

We can take pride in the thoroughness of the coverage of our atlas. Our species distribution maps typically have a higher

percentage of confirmed records and less patchy distributions than those of the other two atlases. Nocturnal birds provide one example of this. The Marin atlas managed only three confirmations of **Western Screech-Owl**, all from the "California Center for Wildlife" records. The Monterey atlas contains five confirmations, whereas we have over 30 confirmations of this small owl. Neither of the other two atlases found any **Common Poorwill** nests, but we found two nests with eggs and another with young. What species can be found breeding in Santa Clara County but not in Marin or Monterey? Most are birds associated with the salt ponds of the south San Francisco Bay. Birds that have bred (or attempted to breed) in Santa

Santa Clara County



Breeding Bird Atlas

dardized breeding codes are very similar to ours, although Monterey used an additional "M" code for "probable" breeding based on the presence of at least seven singing males found during one trip to a block and combined our "CH" and "X" possible codes into one. Like ours, the Monterey atlas covered edge blocks completely (including areas outside the county). However, edge blocks that were less than 10% Monterey County were not covered. Also like our atlas, the Monterey atlas contains valuable information on the timing of breeding based on the breeding evidence gathered. This information is presented by plotting the number of various types of confirmations (nest building, nest with eggs or young, or fledglings) against the time of year.

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The Marin and Monterey County Atlases

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Clara County but were not found breeding in either Marin or Monterey include **Eared Grebe**, **Little Blue Heron**, **Cattle Egret**, **White-faced Ibis**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Canvasback**, **Redhead**, **Lesser Scaup**, and **California Gull**. **Western** and **Clark's Grebe** have bred at Lake San Antonio in Monterey County (although not during the drought years of their atlas); similarly, our only known breeding location for these birds is Calaveras Reservoir—none have bred in Marin, however. **Snowy Egrets** and **Clapper Rails** bred in Marin but not in Monterey, and **Prairie Falcons**, **Wild Turkeys**, and **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** bred in Monterey but not Marin. These birds have all bred in Santa Clara County. Of course both Marin and Monterey have several breeding seabirds and other species that cannot be found here.

Many birds that breed in all three counties still show some differences in breeding behavior. One of the most surprising results to come from our atlas is that **Cooper's Hawks** are fairly widespread breeding birds in the urban areas of Santa Clara County as well as in more remote areas. We have located several nests in apartment complexes and other developed areas with large trees nearby. Despite this, Marin and Monterey found none in urban areas. Several other species seem to show greater variability in the extent to which they utilize man-made structures for nesting. The majority of our **White-throated Swift** nest locations are in man-made structures, primarily in drainage holes of overpasses or under roof tiles.

Although the Monterey atlas also found nests in such circumstances, the Marin atlas did not. All probable or confirmed breeding records of this species were at sea cliffs or, in one instance, a bayshore quarry. On the other hand, **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were found in freeway overpasses and drainpipes in all three counties. **Common Ravens** used human structures (often transmission towers) in all three counties, but the other atlases make no mention of nests in Digger Pines, which constitute perhaps the majority of nest site locations in our Diablo Range. The Marin atlas located only four or five **Golden Eagle** nests, all in trees. In Monterey, nests were found in Digger Pines and oaks, but no cliff nests were found until after the completion of their atlas in 1993. We not only found several cliff nests, but also nests on transmission towers, a man-made location that is apparently not utilized in Marin or Monterey.

The breeding habitat descriptions of some species in the two published atlases apply quite well to Santa Clara County. For example, the somewhat specific descriptions of habitats used by **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** and **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** are in good agreement with what we found in Santa Clara County. On the other hand, some birds show differences in their choice of breeding locations. In Marin County, **Grasshopper Sparrows** were found breeding "primarily within the zone of frequent summer fog toward the immediate coast." In Monterey County most birds were likewise found near the coast, but deep in the interior of the county they were also present. In Santa Clara County, we have a few records from the fog-shrouded Santa Cruz Mountains, but most of our

Grasshopper Sparrows seem to breed in the dry hills along the edges of the Santa Clara Valley and even fairly deep into the Diablo Range. In Marin County, **American Goldfinches** were found in "relatively moist habitats in proximity to permanent water or in areas of high humidity within the influence of coastal summer fog" and in Monterey "all nesting areas are moistened by summer fog." In Santa Clara County we find this bird primarily along the Pajaro River and along the edge of the Bay, which, although close to salt water, is not an area characterized by summer fog.

In all three counties, **Solitary Vireos**, **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, and **Western Tanagers** show similar breeding distributions. In Marin these birds are confined to high elevations or protected ridges that are "out of the zone of persistent summer fog." However, in Marin the **Solitary Vireo** has a more reduced distribution than the other two, whereas in Santa Clara County it is the most widespread of the three. In Monterey it is less widespread than the **Black-throated Gray Warbler** but more widespread than **Western Tanager**. What subtle habitat differences are responsible for this?

These two atlases provide enjoyable reading not only for people who have been involved with a breeding bird atlas, but also for anyone with a desire to learn more about our local avifauna. One may even find a challenge for a future birding trip to Marin or Monterey County. For example, breeding of **California Thrashers** has never been confirmed in Marin County, despite their being found in 15 different blocks during the atlas time period—now there is an opportunity for fame and glory! 🦅

The 1993-94 Winter Season

by Bill Bousman

We banded 15 days in December, 17 in January, and 16 in February which is down a bit from recent years. As expected, the winter season is a slow time and there is not much that is new and exciting. Most of the passerines we band that winter along the creek were caught in typical numbers. Down somewhat were the **Yellow-rumped Warbler** races. We caught only a single **Myrtle** during the period and only six **Audubon's**. Even if we ignore the record numbers found last winter, this is still an indication of fewer wintering birds.



A single **Varied Thrush** was netted 20 Feb; we seem to band a few each winter. The only **Orange-crowned Warbler** captured was on 27 Feb and may have been a spring

arrival. Orange-crowneds are often singing on their territories in the hills by the last week in February, but overwintering birds on the valley floor remain well into March, so the status of this individual is difficult to determine. Our only rarity of the season was a single **White-throated Sparrow** captured 5 Dec. An **Allen's Hummingbird** netted on 15 Feb was the first of the season and a harbinger of spring. Particularly interesting was that this bird was a re-captured bird rather than a new capture. 🦅

CCRS' New Home

 Continued from page 1

decided that we needed to get the building before the staff completely rebelled from lack of space and poor working conditions.

At long last, on April 19, 1994, the first half of our new building arrived—the remaining half was not delivered until the next day. Two agonizing days were spent waiting for the installers to join and level the building. The following week we mustered forces to begin the exciting process of moving furniture and library, and wiring the new telephone system donated to us by Kristin Shields' husband's company. Elsie and Jerry Richey donated the money to add two new bookcases to the Mewaldt Memorial Library. We were also fortunate to acquire inexpensive office equipment for our Community Creek Watch personnel.

We have now been in our new facilities for nearly two months, and it's hard to imagine how we ever managed to function in such tight quarters. We plan to lease the building for one year (to make sure that the roof doesn't leak, etc.) then pay off the lease after a year. The money collected has been tucked away in a restricted fund.

As for the other trailers, the banding trailer will remain virtually unchanged except that the back office will now be used for storage. The small front office in the white trailer

is the new home of our successful reptile and amphibian team of Mike Westphal and Rich Seymour. The main portion of the trailer (after repairing the rotted floor) will be remodeled as a classroom for bander training and other small group classes and training sessions.

We would like to thank all of the generous people who donated to our building fund. Without you, we would still be cramped in our dusty old trailers.

Building fund contributors include: Dorothy Hunt, Syndie Meyer, Suzanne Van Stee, Lou Young, Cecelia Craig, Cin Grayraven, Richard Kust, William Danielson, Wanda Goodier, Marlys Domeier, Constance Crawford, Edward Gustafson, Sue & Jim Liskovec, Rigdon Currie, Karen Cotter, William Groll, Geoff Brousseau, Arleen Feng, Humberto Manriquez, Alan Thomas, Kay Loughman, Chris Lonowski, Bill Bousman, Douglas Hohbach, John McLemore & Clysta Seney, Chris Otahal, Joe Otahal, Jerry & Elsie Richey, Elizabeth Bryant, Carl Barrentine, Dana Millican, Irene Brown, Maryann Danielson, Robert Elliott, Carolyn Hammond, Madeleine Stovel, William Lundgren, Lloyd Thompson, Elaine Hatfield, Trish Mulvey, Roberta Handen, Robert & Joan Tweit, Jean Dubois, Hans Ernst, Mike Marangio, Joyce Sweibut, Eric Johnson, Harriet Gerson, Jeffrey Dumas, Joseph Pasqua, Joelle Buffa, John Delevoryas, The San Francisco Foundation, West San Jose Kiwanis Club, Viola Nosinger, Kendric

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The Birds of Santa Clara County

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San Francisquito Spring

by Chris Fischer, Stream Inventory Coordinator

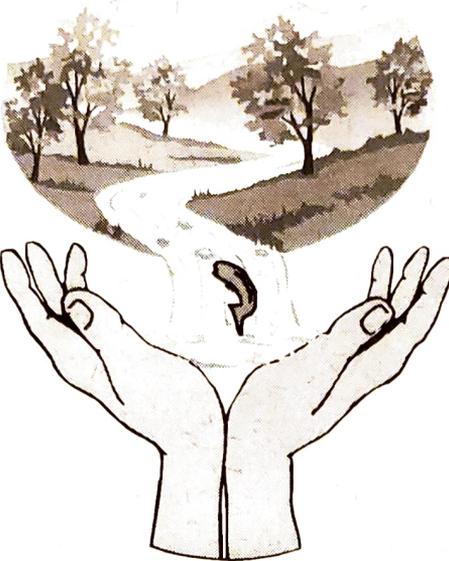
It's early morning on a streambank, not far from an elementary school. Two people stand quietly in the middle of the blackberry patch. They are quite still. One appears to be scrutinizing a bush mere feet in front of him with a pair of binoculars. The other holds a clipboard and watch, eyes half-closed and head cocked. "WEFL" intones the man with the glasses, quiet satisfaction in his tone. "WAVI!" responds his partner, writing quickly on her clipboard. "MODO." "BEKI!" "HUVI!" Suddenly, with a small electronic beep, the glasses drop and the pen is capped. The pair move sedately out of the brush, discussing breakfast in quite normal tones. What on earth is going on here?!

It's the Spring season for Community Creek Watch Point Count volunteers, and scenes such as this are taking place along streams all over Santa Clara County. The completion of this season will mark the end of the first year of data collection on San Francisquito Creek, where so much new data has come in on the birds, reptiles and amphibians, fisheries habitat, vegetation and water chemistry that we really have our hands full sorting it out and entering it in the computer.

*WEFL: Western Flycatcher; WAVI: Warbling Vireo; MODO: Mourning Dove; BEKI: Belted Kingfisher; HUVI: Hutton's Vireo.



The die-hard members of the S.F.C. vegetation teams, Bert Manriquez, Rosanne Specter, Charles Preuss, as they inventory the final points on the creek.



Community Creek Watch

Some early returns: in 80 hours of data collection over the last three seasons, San Francisquito Creek birders turned in 1,133 records of bird observations, including the riparian-endemic **Green Heron** and **Belted Kingfisher**, as well as the seldom seen **Black-chinned Hummingbird** and **Townsend's Warbler**.

The San Francisquito Creek Water Chemistry Team has devoted an unparalleled 480 hours to collecting water quality information every week, rain or shine, providing us with exciting new information on the annual ranges of temperature, conductivity, pH, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity (as well as ammonia, nitrate, nitrite, and orthophosphate for the first year). Quality control sessions consisting of side-by-side analysis with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board showed that well-trained volunteers provide reliable, accurate data which can be used by agencies for watershed level planning.

The Fisheries Survey Team has spent over 300 volunteer hours, collecting critical depth, substrate, and shelter information on over 250 habitat units on San Francisquito and Los Trancos Creeks. They discovered a population of rare **California Red-Legged Frogs** in the upper watershed, and have observed many rainbow trout and other native fishes in both streams.

The Reptile and Amphibian Census Team has scoured over 25 kilometers of streambed (360 hours), methodically searching for frogs, salamanders, turtles and snakes. Some of the species they documented include **Black Salamander**, **California Newt**, **Western Toad** and delicate **Slender Salamander**.

Continued on facing page 

Volunteers for San Francisquito Creek Inventory

Fisheries	Joseph K. Green	Mitch Matheu	Charles Preuss
Tom Canning	Rosanne Specter		Red and Chris
Ann Turner	Sara Timby	Birds	Pendleton
Jim Pollock	Matt Slavik	Jane Becker-Haven	Elizabeth and
Cliff Pierce	Thomas Forrest	Chip Haven	Leonard Rush
Ellen Macneale	Nick Brisbois	Julianne Frizzell	
Nancy Hardesty	Charles Preuss	Ruth and Gene	Water Chemistry
Evan Parker		Troetschler	Theresa Rigney
Mitch Matheu	Reptiles and Amphibians	William and Jean	Robin Poskus
Linda Wagner	Mike Westphal	Clark	Janet Davis
Scott McCarthy	Lynn Peters	Joseph Green	Dave Elsner
David Wenrick	Mary Kenny	David Weber	Chris Bloxam
	John Rogers	Robert Elliot	Tom Forrest
Vegetation	Tom Moutoux	Bob Buell	
Gale Rankin	Jim Pollock	Winkie Lennihan	Invertebrates
Bert Manriquez	Charles Preuss	Sunyia Yang	Doug Herman
Al Huber	Barbara Holden	Bill and Celeste	
Robert Elliot	Leland Baxter	Kirscher	

The Vegetation Team was the first to complete all 41 study points on San Francisquito Creek, providing species, height and diameter information on over 950 trees in some 215 volunteer hours. The largest tree they reported was a eucalyptus tree 38 meters in height, with a diameter of 233 centimeters. Many of these team members have now gone on to form a new team called Mapping, which is collecting qualitative data on the condition of the streambed and the presence of pollution impacts.

The data collection on San Francisquito Creek will be complete early this summer, and soon we will begin compiling our report on the presence and condition of wildlife and habitat along this now-familiar stream. The report, with computerized habitat maps and database, will provide a new level of information to the many people whose lives and jobs bring them into contact with the creek.

Meanwhile, the inventory continues. Each of these teams has counterparts on other streams in the County, including Stevens, Saratoga, Alamos, Guadalupe, and others. Care to join us? ✨

New Employee

Our newest employee is Elizabeth Sawyer, who began in March as Administrative Director. In addition to general administrative work, she will be increasing the funding base of CCRS. She has nearly finished a Masters in Environmental Planning from Cleveland State University, where she also coordinated the develop-



ment of an Environmental Studies program. In addition to the academic component, her work there involved outreach to area environmental non-profits and governmental agencies. She was involved in land conservation efforts, riparian corridor planning, and also coordinated area high schools in water quality monitoring on the Cuyahoga River watershed. ✨

Announcing the "Tuesday Talks"!

In response to many requests from the volunteers for additional opportunities to get together and learn about creeks, Community Creek Watch would like to announce a monthly series of informal presentations at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino. These events will take place every second Tuesday of the month from 7 to 9 p.m. The subject matter and speakers will be selected based on the interests of the volunteers, so please direct your ideas to Chris Fischer at CCRS.

July 12 7 to 9 p.m. **Implication of Riparian Habitat Loss on Biodiversity in Santa Clara County**

Steve Rottenborn will discuss some of the primary causes of riparian habitat degradation and the impacts that this degradation has and will have on biodiversity. The importance of riparian systems in the preservation of biodiversity, the continuing threats of anthropogenic disturbance to riparian habitats, and the promise of riparian revegetation efforts will also be discussed.

August 9 7 to 9 p.m. **Native Fishes in Santa Clara County Streams**

Fisheries biologists will present information and identification techniques on the fish we find in our streams. Dress for the field, as we will spend some time in Stevens Creek as part of the session.

September 13 7 to 9 p.m. **Mapping the Data**

Charles Preuss will demonstrate the GIS database and computer habitat mapping techniques CCRS is using to register, analyze, and present the Stream Inventory data.

October 1 8 to 10 a.m. **Special Saturday Session: Birding By Ear—Winter Calls**

Area experts will review winter bird calls in the field in preparation for the Inventory's Winter season. Dress for the field. Some previous bird identification experience recommended. ✨

Annual Meeting a Success

by Michael Rigney

About 50 CCRS members attended the 8th Annual CCRS General Membership meeting held on a beautiful Saturday morning June 11. After some official business was transacted (electing three Directors to the Board and approving some Bylaws changes), tours were led to the Waterbird Management Area, Pilot Revegetation Site, and our new Headquarters Building. Cindy Roessler, an assistant environmental specialist for the Santa Clara Valley Water District and CCRS member conducted a tour of the new revege-

tation sites, and our stream inventory crew gave a demonstration of water quality monitoring techniques.

After the tours and project demonstrations we were treated to a sumptuous luncheon prepared by Elsie and Jerry Richey with help from Lloyd Thompson, Karen Cotter, Craig Edgerton and Dave and Kindel Blau. This makes the eighth year in a row that Elsie and Jerry have spent many hours coordinating and preparing our lunch. THANK YOU one and all for making this year's meeting a great success! ✨

Volunteer Opportunities at CCRS

Office Help: Now that our classy new trailer is ensconced on the levee, we have space to accommodate much needed volunteers to help in the office. If helping with basic office work such as answering phones, filing, copying, and miscellaneous other tasks would appeal to you, please give Elizabeth a call at 408-262-9204.

Bird Banding: CCRS is offering its biannual banding class beginning the evening of Thursday July 14. This combination lecture/field

class will provide sufficient hands-on experience to qualify graduates for participation in the ongoing biomonitoring program at CCRS. The cost of the class is \$45 (\$25 for current CCRS members). Participants must be able to identify common Bay Area birds as a prerequisite. Persons completing the class should expect to commit to at least two mornings a month to banding at CCRS. We are particularly interested in persons able to volunteer Mondays through Fridays. Please call the Station to reserve a spot at 408-262-9204. Enrollment limited to 10 persons.

Groundskeeping: As the grounds keep expanding at CCRS we find ourselves in critical need of some help in upkeep. Join a team of handy people and help us maintain the net lanes and trails, refurbish the trailers, landscape the native plant garden, and participate in many miscellaneous construction projects.

Carpentry: CCRS is looking for the donation of materials, design, and labor for a small deck connecting the banding and administrative trailers. Please call Chris Fischer if you can help! All donations of materials are tax deductible. ✨

Board of Directors

William G. Bousman, President
 Maryann Danielson, Vice-President
 Elinor Spellman, Treasurer
 Elsie Richey, Secretary
 Craige Edgerton, Member
 Dr. Michael Rogers, Member
 Dr. Lloyd Thompson, Member
 Dr. Scott Terrill, Member
 David Blau, Member
 Kindel Blau, Member
 Steve Rottenborn, Member

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Michael Rigney, Managing Director
 Bruce Katano, Biologist
 Christopher Otahal, Biologist
 Rita Colwell, Data Coordinator
 Maryann Danielson, Training Director (vol.)
 Dr. Scott Terrill, Research Director (vol.)
 Chris Fischer, Community Creek Watch Coordinator
 Karen Cotter, StreamKeeper Coordinator
 Grant Hoyt, RipariaNews Editor (vol.)

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. Design and layout courtesy of Aplin, Uno & Chibana, Mountain View, CA.

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

New Members

We thank the following new Life members:

Juanita Heinemann Elsie & Jerry Richey

We welcome the following new members:

Jeanette Bilodeau	Gerard Kettman
Lisa Brown	Cynthia Lipford
Roseanne Catalano	Megan More
Jayne Di Candio	Saelon Renkes
David Drake	Jim Rosso
Andria Erzberger	William Scroggins
Mary Force	Maggie Seely
Earl Ford	Hildegard Spautz
Edward Fryer	Louisa Squires
Shirley Gordon	Steve Waldron
Leda Gray	Russell & Dorothy Wilson
Jeremy & Barbara Holden	John Working

CCRS Membership

Member	\$20 annually
Senior or Student	\$15 annually
Family	\$25 annually
Supporting	\$35 annually
Sustaining	\$90 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.