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# RipariaNews

Winter 1995

Newsletter of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station

Volume 9, No. 4

## How Long Do Birds Live?

by Lynn Cropper and Thomas Goodier

It would be extremely difficult to answer this question without the kind of banding records that long-term banding operations generate. By banding and recapturing birds, CCRS can contribute to the greater understanding of how long birds live.

The data we have collected over the past 10 years helps us measure the life expectancy of individual birds in the wild. This differs from longevity, which refers to the natural or potential life span of a bird if it is not killed

by predation or disease. Life expectancy is, therefore, much shorter than a bird's potential longevity. There are several factors that contribute to a bird's life expectancy. For example, mortality of young, inexperienced birds may be as high as 75% in their first year. However, if a young bird can survive accidents, diseases, predation, migration, and winter starvation, it may live a surprisingly long time.

Small birds, such as warblers and sparrows, probably live only a year or two, but some medium-sized and large birds may live 10, 20, or even 30 years! There have been Laysan Albatrosses with recorded life spans of 37+ years. Recent studies of seabirds in Southern California indicate that Laysan Albatrosses may live 50-70 years in the wild.

Longevity is the term that describes a bird's potential life span. It is often demonstrated by captive birds that have died of old age rather than disease or predation. For example, the average Mallard may survive only a few years in the wild, but may live 20 years in captivity. Several individuals of various eagle species have survived over 50 years in captivity.

Table 1 represents CCRS' most recent longevity records. The oldest bird recovered at CCRS is a **Red-winged Black-bird** that was originally captured

in February 1983. Because it was recaptured in May 1993, we know that this bird was at least 10 years and 2 months old. However, at the original banding, plumage characteristics indicated that this was an After Second Year (ASY) bird. It is possible, therefore, to estimate this individual's age to be at least 11 years and 8 months.

Obviously the age of an individual is measured by more criteria than the specific dates it was banded and recaptured. Banders are able to recognize Hatching Year (HY) birds by a combination of plumage characteristics and by the incomplete ossification of their skulls. Likewise, banders are able to recognize certain third-year birds by the presence of a particular plumage that is not attained until the third year. For example, Black-headed Grosbeaks do not achieve their bold orange-black-and-white plumage until their third year. All of these factors contribute to a clearer and more accurate measure of an individual bird's age.

Table 1 on page 6, includes both resident species, such as **Song Sparrows** and **Common Bushtits**, as well as migratory species such as **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows**. These birds spend only part of the year at CCRS. They spend the remainder of the year traveling between Canada and Latin America. We recapture many of these birds year after year.

Our longevity records will continue to be updated. Some of these birds will be captured yet again, contributing to our understanding of their known life spans.



Song Sparrow (band no. 2051 66770), minimum age 8 years and 1 month

Continued on page 7 

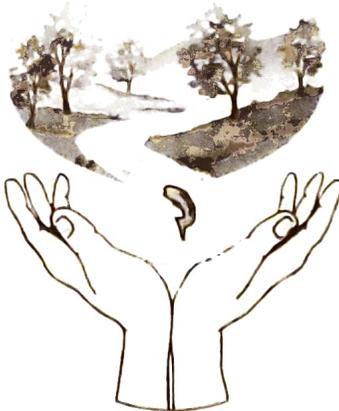
# San Francisquito Creek Status

by Chris Fischer

Stream Inventory Program Manager

The Reptile & Amphibian Survey Team has completed their inventory for the second time (Yes, twice! Once with the old protocol and once with the new version). Highlights include sightings of **Western Pond Turtle**, **Red-legged Frog**, and possibly **San Francisco Garter Snake** (yet to be confirmed by the experts). The Habitat Mapping Team has also completed its inventory, mapping out the vegetation communities from the Bay to the headwaters and locating pollution and other impacts along the length of the creek. The Profiling Survey Team has just started and will be the last of the Stream Inventory groups to gather baseline data on San Francisquito Creek. In March, Chris Fischer and Charles Preuss will present the results of data collected by volunteers on San Francisquito Creek (see Tuesday Talks).

So far, six different teams totaling 80 plus volunteers have put in approximately 2000 hours on San Francisquito Creek. That's an average of 25 hours per volunteer! The following three volunteers logged in at least 50 hours more than the rest and deserve a special note: Robin Poskus with 158 hours, Janet Davis with 150, and Jim



## Community Creek Watch

Pollock with 140. To all the rest of the dedicated volunteers on San Francisquito Creek, thank you for your tremendous efforts and precious time. We hope to see you on the other creeks around the county!

### News Clippings

Unfortunately, we do not have the time or resources to review all the environmental/ecological newspaper articles, newslet-

management for the Stream Inventory and continues to assist the Program Coordinator in volunteer coordination and project management. We are proud to welcome him as a full time member of the staff.



## Meet Charles Preuss

Charles Preuss first joined the Stream Inventory project in October of 1993 as a volunteer on the San Francisquito Fisheries Team. A recent graduate of Dartmouth College in Biology, Charles had returned to his native Atherton and was seeking experience in his field.

Within a short period Charles became a very important member of the Stream Inventory team. In addition to the Fisheries team, he could be found helping out each week on Water Chemistry, Vegetation and Bird teams, and even found time to help the Volunteer Coordinator with many administrative tasks. When a little money became available through the expansion of the Stream Inventory project, his dedication was rewarded by the offer of a part time Program Associate position.

A year later, CCRS staff cannot imagine how we ever got along without him. Charles is now in charge of database

ters, magazines, journals, etc. about creeks, riparian habitat and wildlife, and even grant opportunities. We know we have missed some articles out there and therefore welcome any copies you may have come across. Please send info. to Chris Fischer or Charles Preuss at CCRS. And to all of you who have already done so, THANK YOU!

### Volunteer/Intern Opportunities

With the rainy season already here and the fish beginning to migrate along the creeks, Fisheries Teams have embarked on Calero, Guadalupe, Los Gatos, and Stevens Creeks. These teams will learn how to identify fisheries habitats according to California Department of Fish & Game standards and which physical characteristics to record. Profiling Survey Teams have started on San Francisquito, Los Alamitos, and Los Gatos creeks. These teams will learn survey techniques on how to map out creek channel cross-sections, land uses, and setback lengths. Office opportunities include data entry (must be competent with PC Windows applications) database management, and other tasks. Call Chris Fischer or Charles Preuss at CCRS, 408/262-9204, for more information on volunteer/intern opportunities.

### Tuesday Talks

Our informal monthly get-togethers will continue through the winter. Come join us at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino on the second Tuesday of each month. We meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Audubon Offices at 22221 McClellan Road. Call Chris Fischer for more information or to suggest topics for future dates (408) 262-9204.

### February 14, 1995:

#### Backyard Restoration

California Native Plant Society members will discuss the importance of using native vegetation in suburban landscapes, especially in creekside neighborhoods. Simple techniques for propagating and planting some local natives will be presented, as well as tools for creating a "restoration plan" for your own backyard.

### March 14, 1995

**Reptiles and Amphibians in Santa Clara County Creeks.** CCRS herpetologist Mike Westphal will present an overview of the natural history and identification of such local favorites as the California Red Legged Frog, Tiger Salamander and South Western Pond Turtle. A must-see for new volunteers!

# The Birds of Santa Clara County

by Bill Boustan  
(Copyright December 1994)

## Diving Ducks and Scoters

Part two of my summary of duck records deals with the diving ducks in the genus *Aythya*, the politically incorrect Oldsquaw (*Clangula*), and the scoters (*Melanitta*). I show the distribution of these ten species 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. Solid circles are used to represent an accidental or vagrant occurrence. A double asterisk behind the species name indicates that it breeds each year, while a single asterisk shows that breeding has occurred at least once in the last twenty or so years. For the rarer species the distributional information is based on records submitted to me over the last 14 years while I've maintained the county records. Distributional information on the more common species is a bit tenuous as there are few systematic records of the arrivals and departures of our common wintering sea ducks.

For the most part, these are ducks that summer far to the north of us but spend their winters along the coast of California or on saltwater bays, of which, San Francisco Bay is one of the most important. We know that the dabbling ducks are much reduced from their numbers of two centuries ago when the Central Valley was filled with marshes and seasonal wetlands. It is unclear whether these sea ducks have had comparable decreases although they have unques-

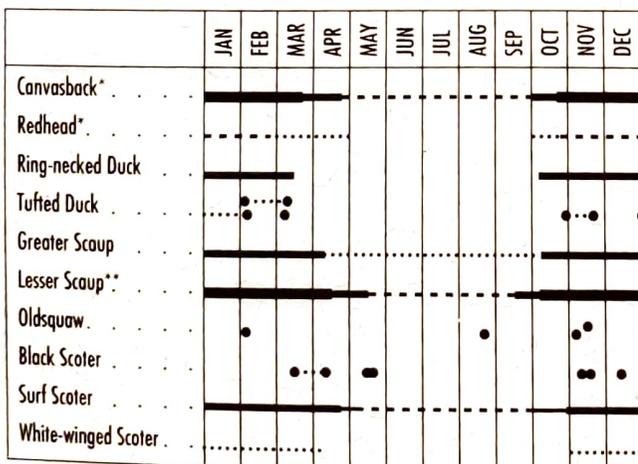


Figure 1. Distribution of diving ducks, Oldsquaw, and scoters in Santa Clara County.

tionably been damaged by the reduced salt marsh around the bay.

Of the ten species covered here we have nesting records for only three: Canvasback, Redhead, and Lesser Scaup. Nesting of Canvasback and Redhead is best considered accidental, but Lesser Scaup, which were first found breeding locally in 1981 now nest regularly in the county in small numbers.

Canvasback is an abundant wintering duck and we find them widely, both on the bay itself, as well as in salt ponds, impoundments, and inland lakes and ponds. The first movement of birds into our area starts in October and the normal winter flocks are in place by November. Numbers start to dwindle in late March and most are gone by late April. An exceptional lingering concentration was of 500+ recorded in the Palo Alto estuary on Apr 17, 1968 (Dave DeSante; AFN 22:572). Canvasback occasionally overwinter and have been recorded on five of 13 Palo Alto Summer Bird Counts (SBCs).

We have a single record of Canvasback breeding in Santa Clara County. Tom Espersen and Susie Formenti found two half-grown ducklings accompanied by an adult male and female on Guadalupe Slough on Jun 16, 1989 (AB 43:1363) and the ducklings were fully grown by Jul 16. (Mike Mammoser). It may very well be that this pair was, for some reason or another, unable to migrate although there was no such evidence observed.

Redhead is a rare wintering duck in the county although in some years regular concentrations are found in particular areas. The distribution over the year is shown in Figure 2 based on records from the last 14 years and the variation between years is shown in

Figure 3. We find this duck in small numbers from November to February with a few lingering birds through the end of April and some early arrivals in October. We occasionally encounter overwintering birds; noteworthy in this regard is a male that overwintered on Charleston Slough this summer. However, this is more

the exception than the rule and we have only found this species on one of 13 Palo Alto SBCs.

In most winters a flock of Redhead builds up on the North Pond in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin, along the frontage road. In most years this flock grows to 50 to 100 birds, but there is considerable variation between years and during the winter. A peak of 150 was counted on Dec 2, 1985 (Paul Noble), while 132 were tallied last winter on Dec 30, 1993 (Mike Mammoser). For some reason the flock did not appear in the winters of 1988-89 and 1989-90 and this is reflected in the Figure 3 winter totals.

Breeding of Redhead in San Francisco Bay marshes in San Mateo and Alameda Counties is well established (Grinnell and Miller, 1944) and this species probably bred in the marshes in Santa Clara County on at least some occasions in the first part of this century. The only recent records we have are for the early 1970s, when at least one female with young was found in the Palo Alto FCB (Ted Chandik) and 1984, when a female with four young was seen Jun 3 and a different female with seven young was seen on Jun 8, both also in the Palo Alto FCB (Phyllis Browning). A female and nine large young were reported Jul 22, 1989 at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) (AB 43:1363) but later it was concluded that the young were Lesser Scaup (AB 44:156) and the female, probably, as well (pers. comm., Peter Metropulos). Finally, a mixed family of three downy Redheads with four Mallards seen at the Sunnyvale WPCP in a mixed brood May 2, 1993 (AB 47:451) may have been an aberrant Mallard plumage and are considered uncertain (pers. comm., Steve Rottenborn).

In many ways Ring-necked Ducks are the odd-duck out in the diving duck family with their preference for freshwater reservoirs, lakes, and ponds. This species first turns up in numbers in October and, by November, is well established on small ranch ponds in the foothills and mountains and, in recent years, in borrow ponds on the valley floor. It appears to be somewhat sensitive to disturbance and, for this reason, is less frequently found on percolation ponds in large numbers. However, birds sometimes become habituated to disturbance in particular areas

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# The Birds of Santa Clara County

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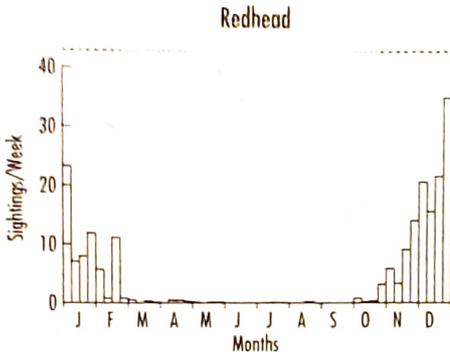


Figure 2. Redhead yearly distribution of sightings (1980-1994).

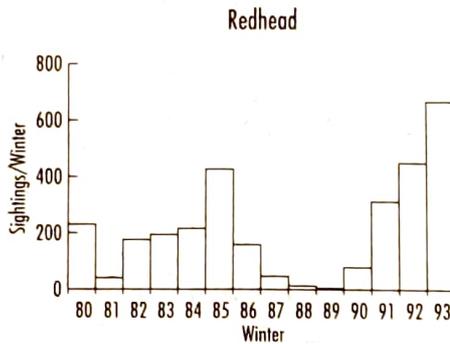


Figure 3. Redhead winter distribution, 1980-94, in sightings.

and are then easily observed. We seldom find this bird along the bay except occasionally in ones and twos. By mid-March the winter flocks have shrunk and the birds are on their way north again. Occasional birds oversummer and there is one record for the Palo Alto SBC. In recent years two to three birds have oversummered on Calaveras Reservoir and at the Ogier Avenue ponds north of Morgan Hill.

We find Ring-necked Ducks in surprising concentrations on occasion. A count of 327 was obtained on the Ogier Avenue ponds on Feb 28, 1994 (Steve Rottenborn). Nearly as high was the tally of 304 birds on Lexington Reservoir Jan 6, 1988 (David Suddjian). A total of 143 counted on the Los Capitancillos Groundwater Recharge Facility Nov 22, 1989 (David Suddjian) shows the use of a percolation pond. For sheer density of birds, however, the count of 108 on the pond at Arastradero Preserve on Dec 26, 1990 (Grant Hoyt) is the hands-down winner.

Until last winter the Tufted Duck, an old world species, remained one of our rarest ducks. The first record for the county was a male found on Felt Lake on Feb 4, 1971 (Jack Nisbet; AB 25:621) that remained until Mar 7, 1971 to the delight of many observers. However, for the next 22 winters we did not

encounter this elegant diving duck. All that changed when, on Oct 30, 1993, Steve Rottenborn and Mike Rogers found a male Tufted Duck on Salt Pond A10 in Alviso and this bird was found regularly through Nov 21, 1993. It was not found on the San Jose CBC, but possibly this same bird was found again on Mar 6, 1994 on Salt Pond A9 (Mike Rogers). Even more surprising were two males found on the western pond at the Sunnyvale WPCP Dec 30, 1993 (Steve Rottenborn) and, in addition, a female found there on Jan 1, 1994 (Mike Mammoser, Steve and Heather Rottenborn). One male remained through Feb 5, the other at least through Jan 22, and the female was last seen Jan 28. It is not clear how many ducks were involved in these observations, but this winter we have already found multiple Tufted Ducks on both the Alviso salt ponds and the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds, so it may be that separate birds wintered in both areas. Are Tufted Ducks becoming more common like Eurasian Wigeon?

Sibley (1952) commented that the degree of abundance of Greater Scaup was difficult to determine because of the difficulty in separating this species from Lesser Scaup. This is as much a problem today as in Sibley's time as the differences between these sibling species are subtle and require some study. On the Christmas Counts we encourage observers to record scaup as "scaup species" unless they obtain a close look at the distinguishing characteristics and have the time to study each bird. For the most recent five years of the Palo Alto CBC we have averaged 3119 scaup per year and 7% have been identified as Greater and 4% as Lessers. It seems likely that there are far fewer Greater than Lessers in our scaup flocks, and this shows one of the situations where CBC data are unsuitable for providing us reliable measures of abundance. A few Greater Scaup appear in October and they are fairly common along the bay by November. We find this species in fairly good numbers until March or early April when they once again move north. A few birds oversummer along the bay — we've recorded them in the Palo Alto count circle on five out of thirteen summer counts.

Lesser Scaup is an abundant wintering duck along the bay and is found more widely on inland waters than Greater Scaup. The winter flocks first start to build in September and by October this species is found in sizable numbers in many locations. The winter flocks

are found well into April and then begin to decline. Small groups are still noted into summer in favored locations — some remain to breed, but most appear to be nonbreeders. On thirteen Palo Alto SBCs we've averaged 24 birds with as few as 4 and as many as 65.

This species has nested in the bay area on Lake Merced and in Berkeley (Grinnell and Miller, 1944); both incidents believed to be a consequence of crippled birds. The first record I have of nesting in the county is from the outer Palo Alto FCB where, on Jul 17, 1981, Ted Chandik reported seeing two females, one with eight young and one with two. This was reported in *American Birds* as "A [female] Lesser Scaup with young at Adobe Cr., Santa Clara Co., July 17 (TC) apparently indicated the second year of nesting at this locality. This is the first Regional nesting w. of the Sierra-Cascade ranges." (AB 35:974). I don't know the reason for the difference in the *American Birds* report and what Ted reported to me nor do I have any information on nesting of this species nesting in 1980. Following the 1981 record nesting apparently was irregular with a female and two young in the outer flood control basin on Jul 30, 1982 (Ted Chandik; AB 36:1012) and a female with a single duckling in the same location on Jul 20, 1986 (Phyllis Browning). Since 1988, however, precocious young have been regularly observed either in the flood control basin, Charleston Slough, or the Sunnyvale WPCP ponds. The Sunnyvale ponds are now clearly the preferred breeding location for this species. Peter Metropulos, who regularly covers these ponds, has counted as many as 45 downy young in seven broods at this location (Aug 5, 1991). On the basis of these records I consider Lesser Scaup to be part of our regular breeding avifauna. However, species invasions sometimes show an initial growth period followed by collapse so the health of this local population will continue to be of interest.

Most winters both Greater and Lesser Scaup are resident in the Palo Alto Duck Pond and can be studied at quite close range and in relative comfort. This presents a good opportunity to observe the wider nail on the Greater's bill and the differences in size and head shape on the two species.

Although records of Oldsquaw in the county go back to the last century it remains one of the rarest of the sea ducks in the local area. The first record, of a winter-plumaged female, was a specimen taken in Alviso in the

first week in February 1899 (Holmes; Bull. C.O.C., 1:51). Another specimen was obtained on the bay "near Palo Alto" on Nov 11, 1908 (Grinnell and Miller, 1944) and is included here although anyone who has looked at the San Mateo/Santa Clara County boundary off Palo Alto will have noted that only near shore birds are within the county. A Jan 18-Mar 18, 1970 record of a bird on the "west side of the Dumbarton Bridge, Santa Clara Co." (AFN 24:534) is clearly in error and belongs in San Mateo County. Bob Gill found a single bird on the Alviso salt ponds in November 1973, but the actual date is unknown as his field notes were lost in the Alviso flood during the winter of 1982-83. There have been no further records until this fall when a bird was found on the levee between Salt Ponds A9 and A10 in Alviso on Aug 19, 1994 (Leora Feeney *vide* Joe Morlan) and a male was observed in flight off Palo Alto on Nov 4, 1994 (Steve Rottenborn). The latter bird was clearly within the county.

Black Scoters are rare along the California coast and are considered occasional or accidental in the south bay. However, if there were anyway to clearly see the thousands of scaup and scoters that winter offshore south of Dumbarton and Ravenswood Points we might change our opinions on their rarity. A beach-cast Black Scoter at the mouth of Guadalupe Slough in September 1974 (Bob Gill) may be the first record of this species in the county although, as with the Oldsquaw record mentioned above, the original field notes are lost. A female Black Scoter showed up on Shoreline Lake Nov 12, 1989 and remained at least through Nov 16. Shoreline Lake has continued to be the best magnet we have for this species with a female found on Mar 16, 1991 (James Yurchenco, Amy Lauterbach) which remained until Apr 9 and delighted many observers. A month later, on May 15, 1991, a first-summer male appeared there as well (Ann Verdi) and remained until May 17. Our fifth county record was of a male and three females found off the mouth of the Palo Alto estuary on Dec 12, 1993 (Steve Rottenborn).

Surf Scoters are abundant coastal birds in the winter and even at the south end of San Francisco Bay they are still fairly common. However, they are a bird of open water and avoid the salt ponds for the most part. They are found nearly every winter on the Palo Alto CBC, where the bay waters are deeper, but on only 9 of 21 recent San Jose

CBCs. Winter birds start to show up in October and, as with most of our diving ducks, are well established by November. Sizable numbers are still found into April, but then decline. In the last ten or so years a few birds have remained to oversummer on Shoreline Lake. Birds sometime oversummer on the South Bay as well and we have counted as many as 96 on the Palo Alto SBC.

White-winged Scoters are common along the coast in winter but decidedly more rare inland. In Santa Clara County they are best described as very rare or occasional as they are not found every winter. Figure 4 shows the yearly distribution of sightings over a year's period based on records from 1980-94, while Figure 5 shows the number of birds recorded over the last 14 winters. Our earliest arrival is of a single female on Shoreline Lake on Nov 8, 1992 (Peter Metropulos) while our latest departure is also of a single female seen in the Stevens Creek Mitigation Area Apr 1, 1989 (Mike Mammoser). Most of the birds we encounter are in ones and twos, but a total of 17 found on Shoreline Lake on Jan 8, 1985 (David Suddjian) is the greatest concentration I have records for.

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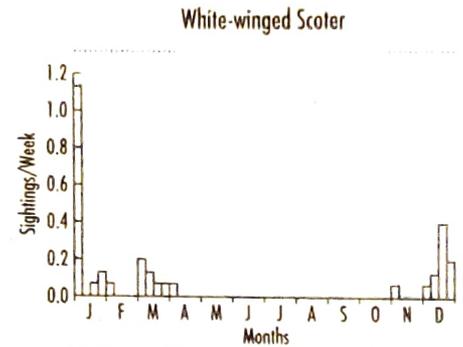


Figure 4. White-winged Scoter yearly distribution of sightings (1980-1994).

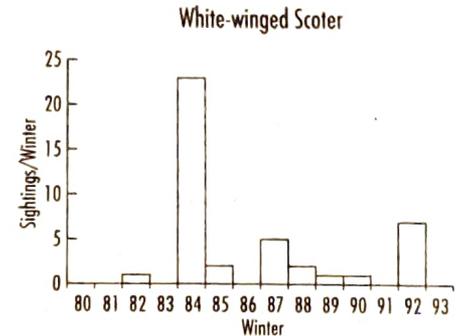


Figure 5. White-winged Scoter winter distribution, 1980-94, in sightings.

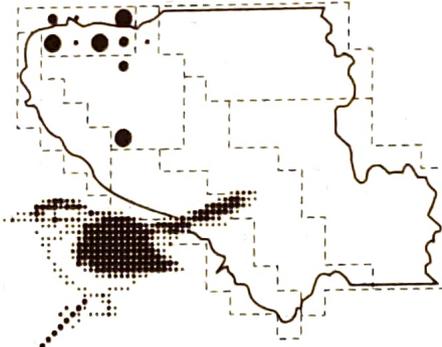
# Examples of Range Expansion

by Michael M. Rogers

Now that our atlas coverage is complete we can make comparisons between historical breeding distributions in the county and the current distributions as determined by our data. Our final published atlas will be full of such comparisons. In order to get a flavor for the interesting changes that have occurred over the years, the apparent range expansions of two well-known species, **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** and **Brown Creeper**, are highlighted here.

According to Grinnell and Miller's *The Distribution of the Birds of California*, which describes the known status of California's birds through January 1, 1944, the "Santa Cruz" Chestnut-backed Chickadee (our local subspecies) ranges down the peninsula from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo County. It is confined to a narrow area along the immediate coast and the "eastward margin of (its) range scarcely reaches (the) western shore of (the) south arm of San Francisco Bay near San Mateo and Palo Alto; in later years (it has been) seen regularly in and about San Jose where they breed." Thus there is evidence that this species was expanding its distribution even in the first half of this century. Grinnell and Miller further state that "only vagrants have been reported from the East Bay District (e.g. Berkeley and Hayward)" and a record from Gilroy is also ascribed "vagrant" status. The habitat used by this species is listed as "coniferous forest and intermixed or adjacent woodland" although it is also cited as breeding in "planted groves of eucalyptus and cypress at Stanford University."

## Santa Clara County



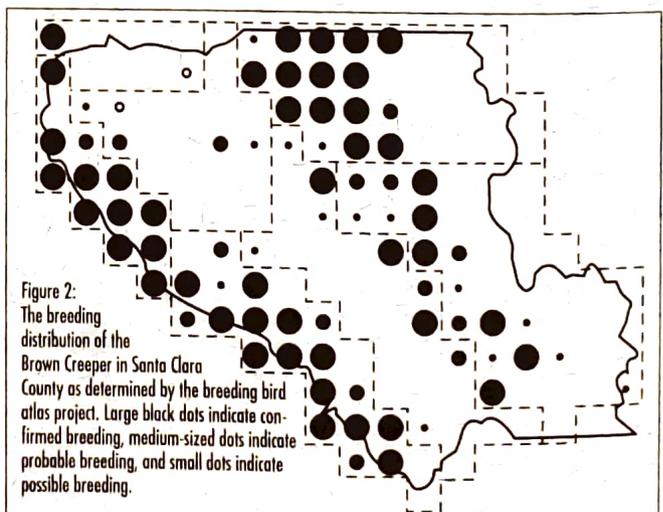
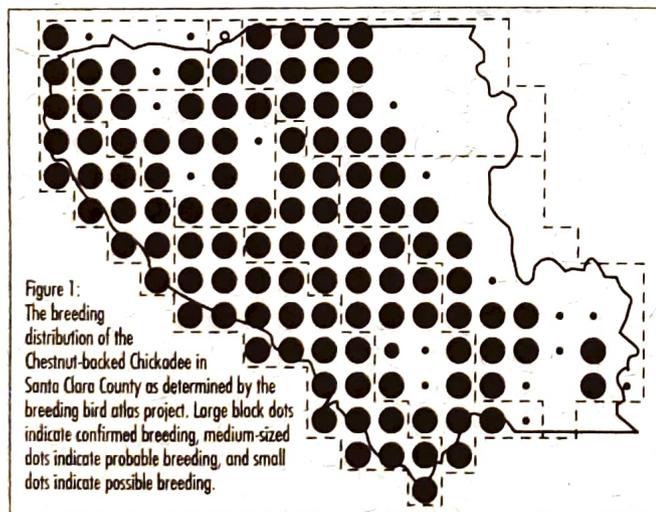
## Breeding Bird Atlas

Figure 1 contains the breeding distribution of Chestnut-backed Chickadee as determined by our breeding bird atlas. Large black circles indicate confirmed breeding, medium-sized circles denote probable breeding, and small circles represent possible breeding. It is immediately apparent that the current breeding range of this species is much more extensive than that delineated by Grinnell and Miller. The chickadee now breeds (fairly commonly given the number of breeding confirmations) throughout the Santa Clara Valley south to San Benito County, east significantly into the Diablo Range, and throughout the Pacheco Pass area in the southeast corner of the county as well as throughout its historical range in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Grinnell and Miller cite recent breeding of the chickadee in San Jose and the chickadee has apparently followed the sprawl of urban development southward throughout the Santa Clara Valley. This has

brought breeding birds to appropriate breeding habitat in the Diablo Range, where they now inhabit moist woodland along north facing slopes and permanent waterways (often in bay laurel). In urban areas they are often found in association with ornamental conifers and orchards, man-made habitats that were not present historically and may explain the former absence of this species from the Santa Clara Valley.

According to Grinnell and Miller the range of the Brown Creeper was even more limited in Santa Clara County in 1944 than that of the chickadee. Their distribution map for this species shows it confined to the extreme northwest corner of Santa Clara County, "rarely reaching interiorly of (the) belt of heavy summer fogs with their influence on character of tree growth." The habitat listed for this species is "densest and oldest forests available, typically original stands of coast redwood." Grinnell and Miller list no records further east in Santa Clara County and the scarcity of this species is confirmed by other sources. In Linsdale and Rodgers' "Frequency of Occurrence of Birds in Alum Rock Park, Santa Clara County, California" (*The Condor*, Vol. 39, 1937) only a single Brown Creeper record was noted from 138 field trips in Alum Rock Park between 1929 and 1936 (an area where they are now fairly common). This species was found on November 17, 1935, a date that suggests a dispersant rather than a breeding bird. In contrast, Chestnut-backed Chickadees were found on 61% of the field trips and was one of the more dependable species to be found in the park

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# The 1994 Summer Season

by Bill Boustan

The station operated on 17 days in June and 18 in July which is about normal for the last few years. The information that follows is from the Summary Board and is based on new captures.

Hummingbirds are always a source of interest as three species breed regularly along the creek. We banded 15 **Black-chinned Hummingbirds**, 49 **Anna's**, and 26 **Allen's**; these are all about typical numbers. The 1:3 ratio of Black-chins to Anna's may seem surprising, but based on Steve Rottenborn's census work along our urban creeks this spring a 1:2 ratio may be more appropriate for creeks with permanent water and a mature cottonwood forest. Coyote Creek at CCRS is probably not as good a habitat as some stretches of Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek in San Jose. Two **Rufous Hummingbirds** were also banded which is typical of the summer months.

Our only "spring" **Willow Flycatcher** was a bird captured Jun 15. The 17 **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** we banded probably included some late migrants but were mostly dispersing birds. In past years **House Wrens** have shown a small spring movement in April and a slightly larger and more protracted movement in August and September. Eight were banded in July this summer where the previous high was two, and it is tempting to believe that this represents an early movement although the numbers are very slight.

## How Long to Birds Live?

 Continued from page 1

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Our last **Swainson's Thrushes** of the spring passage were three on Jun 8. A single bird on Jul 3 was probably a dispersant from local breeding areas or a nonbreeding bird. The most unusual captures of the season were probably the individual **Hermit Thrushes**

banded on Jun 28 and Jul 23. A total of four **Warbling Vireos** was a high banding count for the summer season and, again, probably represents dispersing or nonbreeding birds. A **Yellow Warbler** on Jun 8 was the last of the spring movement.

We banded only three **Black-headed Grosbeaks** this summer, which is fewer than we've banded in recent years. Two **Lazuli Buntings**, netted in July, repeated last year's late summer incursion. A **Dark-eyed Junco**, banded on Jul 5, is surprising for this valley floor location. We captured 70 **Northern Orioles** this summer for a new record. This species is far more plentiful than five years ago, perhaps because of the revegetation activities. 

Table 1. Longevity Records at CCRS—September 1994

| Species                           | Band Number | Date Banded | Banding Age | Date Recaptured | Minimum Age |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Red-winged Blackbird              | 0912 05872  | 2/26/83     | ASY         | 5/12/93         | 10 Yrs 2 Mo |
| Downy Woodpecker                  | 1341 54737  | 4/28/85     | AHY         | 7/17/94         | 9 Yrs 2 Mo  |
| Myrtle Warbler                    | 1650 69083  | 1/22/84     | AHY         | 3/22/92         | 8 Yrs 2 Mo  |
| Song Sparrow                      | 2051 66770  | 7/2/86      | HY          | 9/3/94          | 8 Yrs 1 Mo  |
| Scrub Jay                         | 1053 23122  | 5/20/83     | AHY         | 5/20/91         | 8 Yrs       |
| Brown Towhee                      | 0912 06319  | 3/9/85      | AHY         | 11/29/92        | 7 Yrs 8 Mo  |
| Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow | 1341 55651  | 12/27/85    | HY          | 3/14/93         | 7 Yrs 3 Mo  |
| Golden-crowned Sparrow            | 0971 14831  | 1/22/86     | AHY         | 1/23/93         | 7 Yrs       |
| Black-headed Grosbeak             | 0912 81335  | 6/22/86     | AHY         | 5/8/93          | 6 Yrs 10 Mo |
| House Finch                       | 0990 25707  | 9/22/84     | HY          | 7/10/91         | 6 Yrs 10 Mo |
| Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow    | 1341 55526  | 10/31/85    | HY          | 3/27/92         | 6 Yrs 5 Mo  |
| Lincoln's Sparrow                 | 0990 25388  | 3/17/84     | AHY         | 3/31/90         | 6 Yrs       |
| Audubon's Warbler                 | 1810 09947  | 12/17/88    | HY          | 2/27/94         | 5 Yrs 3 Mo  |
| Northern Mockingbird              | 0912 05713  | 4/9/83      | AHY         | 6/11/88         | 5 Yrs 2 Mo  |
| American Goldfinch                | 1810 10140  | 5/4/89      | AHY         | 6/12/94         | 5 Yrs 1 Mo  |
| Black Phoebe                      | 2001 09898  | 5/3/87      | NESTLING    | 5/21/92         | 5 Yrs       |
| Hermit Thrush                     | 2011 67704  | 10/26/87    | HY          | 10/18/92        | 5 Yrs       |
| Loggerhead Shrike                 | 0942 21695  | 6/10/87     | HY          | 6/3/92          | 4 Yrs 11 Mo |
| Black-chinned Hummingbird         | 7000 51160  | 5/31/87     | AHY         | 5/11/91         | 4 Yrs 11 Mo |
| Common Yellowthroat               | 1680 24202  | 7/6/85      | HY          | 6/8/94          | 4 Yrs 11 Mo |
| Anna's Hummingbird                | 7000 51199  | 9/10/87     | HY          | 5/13/92         | 4 Yrs 8 Mo  |
| Chestnut-backed Chickadee         | 1860 30893  | 10/10/89    | HY          | 4/25/94         | 4 Yrs 6 Mo  |
| Fox Sparrow                       | 8001 10403  | 10/25/87    | AHY         | 4/15/92         | 4 Yrs 5 Mo  |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet              | 1860 30669  | 11/22/89    | UNKNOWN     | 12/25/93        | 4 Yrs 1 Mo  |
| Oregon Junco                      | 1650 69125  | 4/8/83      | AHY         | 3/7/87          | 3 Yrs 11 Mo |
| Common Bushtit                    | 1540 43839  | 1/28/88     | AHY         | 10/27/91        | 3 Yrs 9 Mo  |
| Barn Swallow                      | 2000 64425  | 5/19/85     | AHY         | 7/27/88         | 3 Yrs 2 Mo  |
| Yellow Warbler                    | 1860 31365  | 6/4/90      | AHY         | 8/11/93         | 3 Yrs 2 Mo  |
| Allen's Hummingbird               | 7000 51344  | 3/22/89     | AHY         | 4/29/92         | 3 Yrs 1 Mo  |
| Lesser Goldfinch                  | 1770 19635  | 8/5/87      | HY          | 11/5/89         | 2 Yrs 3 Mo  |

HY= A bird in its first calendar year  
 AHY= A bird in at least its second calendar year  
 ASY= A bird in at least its third calendar year

## Examples of Range Expansion

 Continued from page 6

(the park is at the eastern edge of the chickadee distribution plotted by Grinnell and Miller).

Again, our atlas data (Figure 2) show a remarkable range expansion. In addition to extensive breeding in the Santa Cruz Mountains, we now have an apparently fairly large breeding population in the western half of the Diablo Range. Like the chickadee, the creeper is found in moist woodland along north-facing slopes and permanent waterways, often together with chickadees. They also like denser stands of mature Digger and Coulter pines. This similarity in habitat preference has resulted in a remarkably similar eastern edge of breeding for these two species in the county, with the chickadee being found slightly further east in the southeast corner of the county.

Unlike the chickadee, the creeper is absent as a breeding bird from the Santa Clara Valley. Occasional dispersants can be found in mature vegetation along our urban creeks, but creepers have apparently not been able to find suitable breeding habitat in the valley.

This then suggests the questions "Where did the Diablo Range birds come from?" and "Why are they found in areas where there are no redwoods?" The information in Grinnell and Miller offers a possible explanation for this as well. Two subspecies of Brown Creeper breed in California. In addition to the "Tawny" Brown Creeper, whose range and habitat choice are described above, there is also the "Sierra Nevada" Brown Creeper, which breeds in the Sierra Nevada and the inner coast ranges south to Solano County. This bird is more numerous, less of a habitat specialist (using oaks, cottonwoods, and alders as well as conifers), and is more prone to dispersal in autumn, resulting in "sporadic occurrences well out on deserts and plains where a few trees offer refuge." This subspecies has been recorded in winter in Hayward and Berkeley even in Grinnell and Miller's time and presumably accounts for the Alum Rock Park record noted above. Perhaps our Diablo Range birds represent a southward expansion of this more mobile subspecies that is less dependent on coast redwoods. Breeding bird atlas work in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties may show

that our Diablo Range creepers now breed continuously north to the other "Sierra Nevada" birds in Solano and Napa Counties.

Our knowledge of local breeding distributions continues to increase as a result of other county atlases. Field work last summer for the Alameda County atlas in the "edge" blocks along the Santa Clara/Alameda County line resulted in both chickadees and creepers being found further east than during our atlas. Chestnut-backed Chickadees were confirmed breeding in block "2045," which is one block further east along the top row of the map in Figure 1 (note breeding of Brown Creeper in this block was already confirmed during our atlas) and Brown Creepers were found "possibly" breeding in block "2545" one block further east yet! To add credence to this "possible" breeding record, Brown Creeper was confirmed breeding just outside of our atlas area in the block north of block "2545," less than a mile west of Mines Road! Are these two species still expanding their breeding ranges? Perhaps another atlas 25 years from now will tell us. ✨

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### Coming in the March issue

## An in-depth look at the Pilot Stream Inventory of San Francisquito Creek.



### CCRS Membership

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