CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2010 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s)
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Project Number
S2404

Project Title
Birds of Quail Hollow Ranch: A Study of Avian Diversity

Abstract

Objectives/Goals
Quail Hollow Ranch County Park, nestled in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, is well-known for its natural diversity. Among the most understudied, however, is the park's avian life. This project was designed to provide an insight to the birds of the park, as limited information is known and no other documented, scientific study of birds has been performed at this biologically important area. From the 1920s, Quail Hollow Ranch's landscape has changed dramatically. Formerly an open grassland surrounded by sand chaparral and sand parkland, mixed evergreen forest and riparian associated habitats have become dominant through secondary succession. As habitats appear and disappear, avian species do as well. This led us to ask "What bird species are habitat specialists and what is their abundance?"

Methods/Materials
Through a process of weekly monitoring using point-counts, we are able to analyze and interpret which species occur in the park, and determine their habitat associations, as well as the relationship between the birds and ecological succession.

Conclusions/Discussion
This will provide a #guide# to the park#s present avifauna, and how it may change as ecological succession proceeds.

Summary Statement
The project is about how ecological succession affects the avian diversity at Quail Hollow Ranch.

Help Received
David Suddjian (mentor) and Jane Orbuch (project advisor) provided much guidance.