

Winter 2014-2015

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Marsh Mailing is also available in full color at www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com

Marsh Awakens With Future Promise

Bill Arrowsmith. Past President

As you can see from this photo taken by Preserve Manager Tracy Drake, Madrona Marsh has once again been brought back to life by winter rains that blessed us in December. Though “normal” for our seasonal marsh, this annual rebirth is particularly satisfying as we struggle through the third year of an historic drought.



Mallard Duck taking flight, or in the bold strut of a Snowy Egret captured by Tracy Drake (see page 2).

As great as those pictures are, they are no substitute for coming to the Preserve and seeing it for yourself. You might want to join Bob Shanman on his second Wednesday morning bird walk or David Moody and Ron Melin on their first and third Tuesday walks to see birds you might

Hope, perhaps, that this year will be different, in spite of predictions to the contrary. And even more satisfying, no—*exciting*—is the host of waterfowl and other avian visitors that arrived within hours of the downpours.

otherwise miss and even learn a few names and interesting habits.

You can almost feel the excitement in the terrific photograph taken by Dinuk Magamma of a female

Or you might just want to stroll the Preserve at your own pace, perhaps with a daughter, nephew or grandchild. *“Future Promise...” continued on page 2.*

2015 Docent Training Sessions About to Begin

Sarah Noddings

We hope you will join our docent training program for school tours. The experience of working with young, eager students is very rewarding. We have a small (hint: we could use more) but wonderful and welcoming group of docents who lead tours for elementary students during the school year, from October through May.

of our docents must be at least 21 and approved by the Marsh Manager.

The tours are on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday morning, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Important classes for docent training are as follow (times and dates could change so if you are interested, please contact the front desk (310-782-3989), let them know you would like to attend and confirm the date and time). If you can't attend all the classes, make-up material usually can be provided.

If you are a new docent you will probably start with pre-school or kindergarten youngsters. All

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
The Annual Meeting of Friends
of Madrona Marsh will be
January 25,
2 p.m. (see page 4 for details.)

2015 training sessions will begin on Jan 20 and run *“Docents...” continued on page 2.*

“Future Promise...” continued from page 1.

Or consider this: The absolute best way to see the Preserve and all it has to offer may be “prowling,” as Friends President Suzan Hubert describes in “Prowling the Preserve—with a Twist” on page 3. It’s a little more challenging, to be sure, but the rewards are much greater as well, as Suzan points out.



Photo courtesy of Dinuk Magamma

As for the challenging part of prowling the Preserve, we can help you with that, too. Sarah Noddings, our Docent Tour Coordinator, and Docent Cindy Reid have arranged an excellent program of Docent Training Sessions (see accompanying article beginning on page 1).

These sessions are guaranteed to not only give



Photo courtesy of Tracy Drake

you the confidence to be one of our docents, but also to expand your appreciation of nature, of history and of our wonderful wetland preserve. And these sessions are free, not \$50, as they are in other docent training programs.

Do sign up now, so you don’t miss any of the sessions! Or attend a few sessions and make your mind up then. As a docent for over 30 years, I can assure you that you’ll never regret it.

We can’t control the promise of future rain, but we can help to build a more promising future by educating our young students. The more they understand about our environment and climate, the better decisions they can make as future voters and citizens. Wouldn’t you like to be part of that future promise?

“Docents...” continued from page 1.

through February 18 - Tuesday and Thursday (and one Monday) mornings.

All sessions are from 10 a.m. - 12 noon. Here’s the schedule:

Tuesday, January 20 - History of Interpretive Learning and Developing Interpretive Techniques - Tracy Drake.

Thursday, January 22 - Sample Tour of Preserve - Daniel Marion.

Tuesday, February 3 - Insects of the Marsh - Jeanne Bellemin.

Thursday, February 5 - History of the Marsh and Upcoming Developments - Bill Arrowsmith.

Tuesday, February 10 - Plants and Trails of the Marsh—where to take your tours and where not to take your tours - Dan Portway.

Thursday, February 12 - Lives of the Tongva/Gabrielino people - Linda Gonzales.

Monday, February 16 - Native Plant Uses and Adaptations - Connie Vadheim. (Yes, it’s Presidents Day.)

Thursday, February 18 - What’s Wiggling in the Water, plus Common Water Plants - Daniel Marion or Bob Carr.

Important: All docents should join at least one morning bird walk at the Marsh. Please check the schedule.

Prowling the Preserve--With a Twist

Suzan Hubert, President

Many of us prowl the Preserve; we watch birds, we paint, draw, take photographs or just go there because it's a great place to wander. We listen to the sounds, enjoy the scents and keep an eye out for wildlife. Perhaps we chat with a companion or simply absorb the peace of nature.

Here is a twist on that tranquil vision: Bring a class of school-age children along. Yes, this is one of my shameless plugs to entice new docents, but don't stop reading! If you ever even remotely considered being a docent for the Marsh, now is a good time to take the challenge.

We have a series of docent trainings scheduled for January-February 2015, and we also have experienced docents who will provide encouragement, support and gentle coaxing. You won't ever have to lecture; in fact lecturing is not part of any tour we lead.

To begin, docents learn some basic information—a few stories about the plants and animals of the Preserve and also how to motivate their new young charges to participate. As the leader, it's important to be guided by the interests of the children. Children tune out lectures. Children respond to what they are interested in and if you can respect that, then you can be a docent.

Here at the Marsh, we have some expert, highly knowledgeable docents; I'm not one of them yet, but I am learning. Weirdly enough, I learned that children are fascinated by our Harvester Ants. When I lead a tour, I hunker down with them and we watch the ants' comings and goings. Then I informally chat with the kids about ant society.

They usually have information to share too, and we wind up having a back and forth conversation—each sharing what we know and what we wonder about ants. Sometimes we imagine we are ants and describe what it might be like to live and work in an ant nest. Like the ants, the Harlequin Bugs, gopher burrows, plants and birds all offer similar conversation opportunities.

Children are also usually interested in the holes throughout the Preserve. These are 'front doors' for gophers, mice or voles. Burrowing animals create cozy underground apartments—with food storage

compartments which act as their kitchens, separate rooms used as lavatories (that get covered up when full and a new one dug) and nesting chambers which are the lowest places in the burrow. It is in these chambers that the animals sleep, care for babies and hide from predators, most often snakes. If you are curious to know why this is the safest place from snakes, be sure to ask at your first docent training!

Then there are the worms; oh, gosh, don't get me started! There is much to be said about worms; how they move, how they digest the dirt they eat in order to create their tunnels, and why they have five hearts. Once children understand the complexity of a burrow they are much less likely to kick dirt over all the work that went into its creation.

When I walk along chatting with a tour group we frequently come to a path that diverges. Rather than leading the way, I like to ask the kids which way we should go. They take turns lobbying for why one way and not the other, and afterwards we put it to a vote and always go the way of the vote. I find the kids are more attentive to a tour when the leader shares control.

In addition to active participation, imagination is a big part of my tours. The original residents of this area, the Tongva people, provide a wonderful opportunity for imagination and discussion. We pretend we are a group of Tongva children searching for materials to make a boat, which is a perfect opportunity to explain how the Tongva made boats, cradles, toys and homes from tule plants. We search for food and medicines too, opening up a chance to discuss which plants provide food and which may have been used as natural medicines.

Sometimes we have to crawl around under bushes, or squish in the mud and figure out where the water comes from and where it goes. The kids will have answers and so will you; and sometimes you won't and that's fine, too.

When you don't have an answer, try to find out when you get back to the Nature Center. You can write it down in a back pocket notebook for future reference. It is very important that docents provide accurate answers, so I keep a notebook and I'm not hesitant to say, "I don't know but I'll find out!"

A docent tour isn't about having all the answers. A docent tour is about sharing your wonder, appreciation, knowledge and curiosity with children. Children today are out of touch with nature. It's a sad thing, but most children in this area have never made mud pies, they don't get dirty and never get to play in a wild field. It's rare when an adult will wonder with them and share the excitement of discovery.

One of my simplest and most entrancing moments on a tour is standing under a Cottonwood Tree waiting for a breeze to move the leaves around and hearing

"Prowling..." continued on page 4

Marsh Mailing is a quarterly newsletter designed to provide information about activities and upcoming events at or relating to the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Contributions are welcome and may be e-mailed to Editorial Advisor, Bill Arrowsmith, FrاندBill@att.net or Editor, Diane Gonsalves at gonwild2@yahoo.com or may be dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.

"Prowling..." continued from page 3

the tree 'sing' to us. In a breeze a Cottonwood makes the most delightful sound.

My other favorite moment is when we are all trudging back, tired and grubby. A small hand creeps into mine and a soft voice says, "This was really neat!" It's also just fine when five or six of them yell the same sentiments.

Those are favorite moments, but the absolute best is when they are all talking about the pros and cons of living in a burrow, what they would do if they were hunting for food and their own personal stories about their visit. Then I smile for the rest of the day.

The upcoming Docent Training sessions will include: Interpretation of the Marsh, the Nature Center Tour, Native Plant Garden, The Tongva People, Plants and Trails of the Marsh, Birds through the Seasons, and Insects of the Marsh. You can find training details in this *Marsh Mailer*. It's through these training sessions that we docents share our stories about the Preserve and all it holds.

It's an honor to be a docent of the Madrona Marsh. It's a lot of fun, a healthy challenge and you get to wear a cool green Madrona Marsh shirt. What more could you want in 2015?

Hope to meet you at our first training in January and together go prowling on the Preserve—with a twist.



Walser's Is Back!

We have great news: Jack Walser, who with partner Henry Trejo has supported the Friends for many years, generously donating 25 percent of the gross revenue from the Walser's electronics refurbishment and recycling program, tells us that Walser's—with both its Art & Office Supply Store and its electronics recycling program—has finally found a new location. It's right here in Torrance and they are open for business!

Please note the new operating hours below and the new location, and be sure to stop by and congratulate Jack and Henry—and maybe thank them for their many years of support for the Friends of Madrona Marsh.

See website for map of location.

WALSER'S

Creative Store for Art - Office – Digital -
Collectibles

488 Amapola Avenue

Torrance, CA 90501-1474

Telephone: 310-891-3325

Store Hours: Monday – Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-5:30

Recycle Center Hours:

Monday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Homepage: <http://www.walsers.com>

E-mail: service@walsers.com

Annual Meeting Friends of Madrona Marsh

Sunday, January 25, 2015
at Madrona Marsh Nature Center
Meeting starts at 2 p.m. **(NOTE earlier start time!)**

- Welcome and Introductions – President, Suzan Hubert
- Election of 4 Board Members

Candidates:	Suzan Hubert
	Ellen Peterson
	Bill Arrowsmith
	Vincent Lloyd
- FOMM Annual Report: President Hubert
- Program: *The California Phenology Project* – tracking effects of climatic variation and climate change on the seasonal cycles of wild plants, presented by Suzan Mazer, Professor of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at U.C. Santa Barbara

What is Phenology? Why is it important? How is it linked to climate change and the ecological "malfunctions" that can occur when plants and their pollinators or seed dispersers become "out of synch"?
- Plans for 2015 and Closing Remarks – President Hubert

*** *Light Refreshments Will Be Served* ***

Mourning Cloaks in the Marsh

David K. Faulkner

Butterflies are attracted to the Marsh for two reasons. They are either drawn to flowering plants as a potential nectar source, or to appropriate plants that their caterpillars can feed on. They are considered to be regular inhabitants in our Marsh and adjacent neighborhoods.

Our native Mourning Cloak Butterfly (*Nymphalis antiopa*) is definitely a full-time resident, relying both on numerous flowering plants such as composites and mustards for its nectar needs, and on willows for its caterpillars. With its relatively large size (2½-3 inch wingspan) and dark brown to black wings with blue dots and bright yellow borders, it is difficult to ignore as it flits around the trees. It is also one of the few local butterflies that overwinters as an adult, while other species that survive in colder climates have adapted by remaining in the egg or pupal (chrysalis) stage. On days when temperatures reach 50°F or higher, Mourning Cloaks are stirred from their shelters in tree holes or crevices, and search for available flowers.

With consistently warmer days, this butterfly will establish territories on high perches near its preferred host plants and chase away invading butterflies, birds, and bird watchers. If a person stands still, the butterfly will sometimes establish another perch on an outstretched arm.

Small groups of whitish eggs are deposited by the females directly on larval host plants, either native willow or poplar, or introduced elm trees. Caterpillars hatch in about two weeks and stay clumped together as they begin to feed on the plant's tender leaves. This behavior protects the larvae from predators by compounding the number of spines arrayed on their collective body. When mature, the 1½ inch long caterpillars, with their black spines and rows of reddish spots down the back, disperse from each other and search out pupation sites elsewhere on the tree, nearby fences, or the eaves of buildings, eventually forming a grayish chrysalis that hangs down from a single attachment point. Depending on weather conditions, the developing butterfly will require a few weeks or months before emerging from

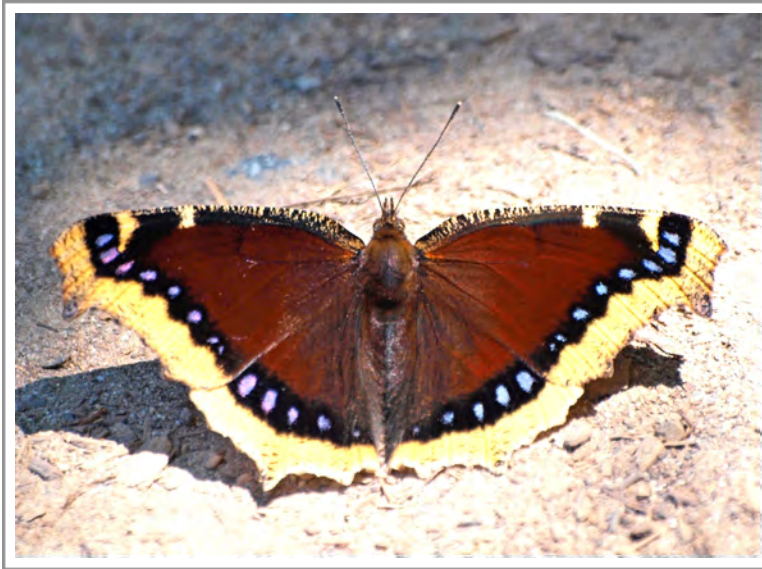


Photo courtesy of Kim Moore

the chrysalis, expanding and drying its wings, and beginning the adult stage of life.

Mortality from many factors greatly reduces the number of potential butterflies that are actually present in the Marsh. Some eggs may be removed by ants, often introduced or invasive species of ants; while parasitic wasps may infest others.

The caterpillars are preyed upon by birds and rodents, while the pupal stage may again be parasitized by wasps. In the past, urban elm trees were defoliated by the larvae, called the "spiny elm



Photo courtesy of Kim Moore

caterpillar," sometimes requiring chemical sprays to control the insect. What is often overlooked is that if you enjoy and want butterflies to establish in your yard, you have to expect some thinning of the vegetation from larval feeding. Plants usually recover very quickly from the temporary damage. From a batch of 100 eggs, only four or five will ever make it to the adult stage.

Population size varies greatly from year to year and generation to generation. However, on warm days among the willows, there is a good chance that a Mourning Cloak Butterfly is nearby and watching you.

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center*

Schedule of Events for January through April 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<u>1</u> CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY	<u>2</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- dation**	<u>3</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-12 n- "Capture the Rain,"-Dr. Vadheim
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> CLOSED	<u>6</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>7</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>8</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30Prop.Soc. 1pm-Nature 35+ 6:30-"... Rain..." Dr.Vadheim	<u>9</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- dation** DeRidder Exhibit Ends***	<u>10</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> CLOSED	<u>13</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 1-2 pm-Naturalists Program Hines Exhibit Begins***	<u>14</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>15</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>16</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- dation**	<u>17</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am-Art in Nature (fee)
<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> CLOSED	<u>20</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>21</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>22</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>23</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- dation**	<u>24</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk 6:30 pm-Star Party
<u>25</u> 10 am. Nature Walk 2 pm-FOMM ANNUAL MEETING	<u>26</u> CLOSED	<u>27</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10 am-Home School Nature Class	<u>28</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10 1m-Home School Nature Class	<u>29</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>30</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- dation** Hines Reception***	<u>31</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service

JANUARY

*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. **Reservations are required for Friday Fun.

***See Artists Corner, page 10 For latest event information, see our newly upgraded website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> CLOSED	<u>3</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>4</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>5</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>6</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- dation**	<u>7</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am- "...Like an Ecologist"...-Dr. Vadheim
<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> CLOSED	<u>10</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>11</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30 pm-FOMM Mtg.	<u>12</u> 10:30 am-- Prop.Society 1pm-Nature35+ 6:30 pm-- "...Ecologist" Dr. Vadheim	<u>13</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun*- dation*	<u>14</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service
<u>15</u> Flavored Teas Workshop/ Dr.Vadheim-fee	<u>16</u> CLOSED	<u>17</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>18</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>19</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>20</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- dation**	<u>21</u> 8:45 am--Hab. Restor. 10 am-Water Colors in Nature-fee 1 pm-Charismatic Megafauna
<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> CLOSED	<u>24</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>25</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>26</u> 10:30-12:30 Propagation Society	<u>27</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- dation** Hines Exhibit ends	<u>28</u> 8:45 am-Hab. Restor. 6:30 pm-Star Party 10 am-Nature Walk 10 am-Meet the Author, Carol Bornstein

FEBRUARY

Nature Center & Gift Shop

(310)782-3989

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u> 10 am- Nature Walk	<u>2</u> CLOSED	<u>3</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders Shibata Exhibit Begins***	<u>4</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>5</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>6</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>7</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am-"Bounty of Birds," Dr. Vadheim 10 am-Music of Tongva
<u>8</u> 2-4pm-2nd Sunday Sci.- "Discovery Day"- fee	<u>9</u> CLOSED	<u>10</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>11</u> 8 am-Bird Walk /Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30 pm-FOMM Mtg.	<u>12</u> 10:30--Prop. Society 1pm-Nature35+ 6:30-"... Birds" Dr. Vadheim	<u>13</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>14</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am-"Raptors, a Closer Look,"-fee 1pm-Origami
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> CLOSED	<u>17</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>18</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>19</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>20</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** 6:30pm-Shibata Reception***	<u>21</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service
<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> CLOSED	<u>24</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>25</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>26</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>27</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>28</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk 10 am-Building a Birdhouse-fee 6:30-Preserve Nightlife
<u>29</u> 10 am- Nature Walk	<u>30</u> CLOSED	<u>31</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders				

MARCH

*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. **Reservations are required for Friday Fun. ***See Artists Corner, page 10. For latest event information, see our newly updated website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<u>1</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>2</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-Prop. Society.	<u>3</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>4</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-"Useful Garden," Dr. Vadheim
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> CLOSED	<u>7</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>8</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>9</u> 10:30 a.m.- Prop.Society 1pm-Nature 35+ 6:30pm-"Useful Garden," Dr. Vadheim	<u>10</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** Shibata Exhibit Ends***	<u>11</u> 8:45am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 1-2 pm-Storytime for kids with Shibata/Chakrabortyi
<u>12</u> 2-4 pm-2nd Sun.Science, "About Opos- sums"- fee	<u>13</u> CLOSED	<u>14</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders Mark Comon Photo Exhibit Begins***	<u>15</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>16</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society 1-2 Naturalists	<u>17</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>18</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> CLOSED	<u>21</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>22</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>23</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>24</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>25</u> 8:45 am-Hab.Restor. 9 am-2 pm-Madrona Marsh Earth Day Fair 2015 10 am-Nature Walk 7 pm-Star Party
<u>26</u> 10 am- Nature Walk	<u>27</u> CLOSED	<u>28</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>29</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>30</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society		

APRIL

Amazing Visitors Come to the Marsh

Article and Photos by Tracy Drake, *Naturalist and Preserve Manager*

One of the best parts of my job is interacting with visitors. I think about them both as a group and as individuals often—wondering if the work we do on the Preserve enhances their experience. I love to observe their interactions with nature and hear their experiences and share some stories of our Preserve.



Recently, two visitors made a big impact on me—and now, nearly a month later, with fondness, I relive those two events:

Early one morning I saw a man leaning over and carefully looking at one of our milkweed plants. This was not too unusual as milkweed is the host plant for Monarch butterfly adults and caterpillars.

Many grandparents show their grandkids the caterpillars and together they marvel at the beauty of these little insects. When asked, the man explained with gentle concern that the caterpillars at his house had already eaten all the leaves off his plants, so he was bringing the baby caterpillars to our garden so that they would survive. He said that he'd already brought seven!

I watched as he tenderly extracted the caterpillar from the tiny branch he brought from his home and carefully put in on our milkweed. It was a moving interaction, and heartwarming that someone cared enough to hand-carry these little caterpillars to a safe environment.

Equally touching was the man who came to the Center wanting to learn about the decline in the number of Scrub Jays locally. I explained how West Nile Virus has caused a massive decline in all the birds in the Corvid family—not just the crows. This big, burly man, talking about a beautiful little bird, was amazing.

As it turns out, the man and a Scrub Jay had, over the past several years, become close friends. First thing in the morning and then again in the afternoon, whenever the man was working in the garage, “Bird”

would come and visit and watch him work. The man would occasionally give him a peanut as a treat. In time Bird grew to trust the man enough to take a peanut from his hand.

This went on four-to-five times a week for about four years, and the man grew to rely on seeing the bird and looked forward to his visits. One morning the bird did not look good—and stayed for only a few moments. Later that afternoon, when the man was working in the garage, Bird came and instead of sitting on his normal perch by the garage door he landed right near the man's feet. Stunned, the man squatted down; he and the bird looked at each other eye-to-eye for several moments—a silent communication passing between them. Slowly the bird sat down, rested his head on the ground and passed away.



Tears welled in this man's eyes as he told me the story—and even now, writing this, tears well in mine too. The connection the man had with that little bird was special and tender and one that taught the man a lot.

Prior to the bird coming into his life, he was not too aware of nature, and not at all aware that a wild thing and he could become friends—but that's what happened.

Just before he left my office he asked, “Are there still jays out there? Will another one ever come to visit my house?”

Barely audible, because the words caught in my heart and in my throat, I replied, “I hope so”

People who come to Madrona are amazing.

Madrona Marsh Preserve 2014 Species List

Compiled by Tracy Drake, Mark Rubke, Anthony Strangarity, Ron Melin and David Moody

Birds

Canada Goose	Herring Gull	Common Raven	Spotted Towhee
Wood Duck	Rock Pigeon	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	California Towhee
Gadwall	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Tree Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
American Wigeon	Mourning Dove	Barn Swallow	Clay-colored Sparrow
Mallard	Common Poorwill	Cliff Swallow	Brewer's Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Vaux's Swift	Bushtit	Lark Sparrow
Cinnamon Teal	White-throated Swift	House Wren	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Black-chinned Hummingbird	Marsh Wren	Fox Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Anna's Hummingbird	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Song Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Allen's Hummingbird	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Lincoln's Sparrow
Redhead	Belted Kingfisher	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	White-throated Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Acorn Woodpecker	Western Bluebird	White-crowned Sparrow
Bufflehead	Downy Woodpecker	Swainson's Thrush	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Northern Flicker	Hermit Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Double-crested Cormorant	American Kestrel	American Robin	Western Tanager
Great Blue Heron	Merlin	Varied Thrush	Black-headed Grosbeak
Great Egret	Peregrine Falcon	Northern Mockingbird	Blue Grosbeak
Snowy Egret	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	European Starling	Lazuli Bunting
Green Heron	Mitred Parakeet	American Pipit	Dickcissel
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing	Red-winged Blackbird
White-faced Ibis	Western Wood-Pewee	Phainopepla	Western Meadowlark
Turkey Vulture	Willow Flycatcher	Black-and-White Warbler	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Osprey	Hammond's Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler	Great-tailed Grackle
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Gray Flycatcher	Lucy's Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Cooper's Hawk	Dusky Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler	Hooded Oriole
Red-shouldered Hawk	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Virginia's Warbler	Bullock's Oriole
Red-tailed Hawk	Black Phoebe	MacGillivray's Warbler	Baltimore Oriole

"Species List" continued from page 9

Sora	Eastern Phoebe	Common Yellowthroat	House Finch
American Coot	Say's Phoebe	Yellow Warbler	Pine Siskin
Killdeer	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Blackpoll Warbler	Lesser Goldfinch
Spotted Sandpiper	Cassin's Kingbird	Palm Warbler	American Goldfinch
Solitary Sandpiper	Western Kingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler	European Goldfinch
Whimbrel	Loggerhead Shrike	Prairie Warbler	House Sparrow
Long-billed Dowitcher	Cassin's Vireo	Black-throated Gray Warbler	Northern Red Bishop
Wilson's Snipe	Hutton's Vireo	Townsend's Warbler	Scaly-breasted Munia
Ring-billed Gull	Warbling Vireo	Hermit Warbler	Pin-tailed Whydah
Western Gull	Western Scrub-Jay	Wilson's Warbler	
California Gull	American Crow	Green-tailed Towhee	Bold = rare birds

Butterflies

Monarch	West Coast Lady	Cabbage White	Umber Skipper
Queen	Buckeye	Orange Sulphur	Eufala Skipper
Gulf Fritillary	Anise Swallowtail	Cloudless Sulphur	Fiery Skipper
Mourning Cloak	Western Swallowtail	Gray Hairstreak	Sandhill Skipper
Red Admiral	Giant Swallowtail	Western Pygmy-Blue	Funereal Duskywing
Painted Lady	Dainty Sulphur	Marine Blue	Northern White-Skipper
American Lady	Checkered White	Acmon Blue	Common Checkered-Skipper

Dragonflies

Common Green Darner	Flame Skimmer	Black Saddlebags	Pacific Forktail
Blue-Eyed Darner	Neon Skimmer	Red Saddlebags	Blue Dasher
Cardinal Meadowhawk	Wandering Glider	Familiar Bluet	
Variegated Meadowhawk	Spot-winged Glider	Black-fronted Forktail	

Artists Corner

View the works of local artists portraying the beauty of the Madrona Marsh. Artists and photographers inspired by the beauty of the Madrona Marsh are regularly on display at the Nature Center.

January 13 - February 27 - **"Impressions of Life,"** a *Photography Exhibit* by **Altha Hines**. Artist Reception, Friday, January 30, 6:30 p.m.

March 3 - April 10 - **"One Day in March"** A *Photography Exhibit* by **Beth Shibata**. Artist Reception Friday, March 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

April 14 - May 29 - **A Photography Exhibit** by **Mark Comon** Artist Reception, Friday, May 8, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



Coast live oak
Quercus agrifolia

The last three years underscore the importance of habitat. In the Preserve and in gardens, native trees like *Quercus agrifolia* provide shade and critical habitat, all while using very little water.

Coast live oak grows primarily in coastal foothills from central California to Baja, generally on well-drained slopes below 5000 ft. Oak sites receive a little extra winter water, but are often very dry in summer. The trees have several deep roots and lots of shallow ones to maximize water use in wet and dry years.

Quercus agrifolia ultimately becomes a majestic evergreen tree, with height and spread of 70 feet or more. It is relatively slow growing (the trees on the Preserve are 35-40 years old) and, like many slow-growing trees, is long-lived. In the wild, most trees live hundreds of years.

Coast live oak blooms in spring—generally February to April, depending on the rains. Look for both male flowers (in dangling catkins typical of wind-pollinated plants) and the less showy female flowers (produce the acorns). Acorns are one to one-and-a-half inches long, with a scaly cap covering only one quarter to one third. Acorns mature in fall, but may remain on the tree until spring.

Native trees and large shrubs are among our best habitat plants, because they provide a wide range of services. Most people think of Scrub Jays and acorns when they think of oaks. But native oaks provide habitat for many other creatures.

Coast live oak is host plant for the California sister and mournful duskywing butterflies. In fact, live oaks provide habitat for a wide diversity of insect species—and the birds and insects that feed on them. It's not unusual to see flocks of Bushtits busily

hunting for insects this time of year, while Towhees and White-crowned sparrows forage in the oak leaf litter.



Many birds use mature oaks as nesting and wintering sites including Jays, Pigeons, Finches, Quail, Thrushes, Chickadees, Towhees, Grosbeaks, and Nuthatches. Oak woodlands have some of the highest biodiversity of any plant community in California.

So encourage your school, church, local park, community center or business to provide for the future by planting an oak.

Learn more about local native plants at our “Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden” series (first Saturday of each month, 10 a.m., repeated the following Thursday, 6:30 p.m.). For more information see the Native Plants Gallery at: <http://nativeplantscsudh.blogspot.com/>

Donations of \$100 or More

Date	Donor	Amount	Comments
October	Allen Watt	\$500	Donation to the Preserve via Mr. Watt's will
October	The Chudy's	\$3,000	
November	The Bailey's	\$200	
November	James Justiss	\$400	
November	Elaine Endres	\$500	

Ellen Peterson

Friends of Madrona Marsh

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