

Spring 2015

# Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Marsh Mailing is also available in full color at [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com)

## Capturing a Moment

*Suzan Hubert, President*

In the spring, after some rain, the Preserve becomes a canvas on which nature paints. The

Redwing Blackbirds; the females are noticing them too. The distinctive black, grey and brown masked raccoons, colored for camouflage. I have to wonder about those elegant black and white skunks. They definitely stand out in a crowd. All are part of nature's palette and each for a reason. There is another colorful creature in our Preserve that recently attracted my attention. This one usually wears blue denim and flashes a paint brush or a camera. They are our Preserve artists.

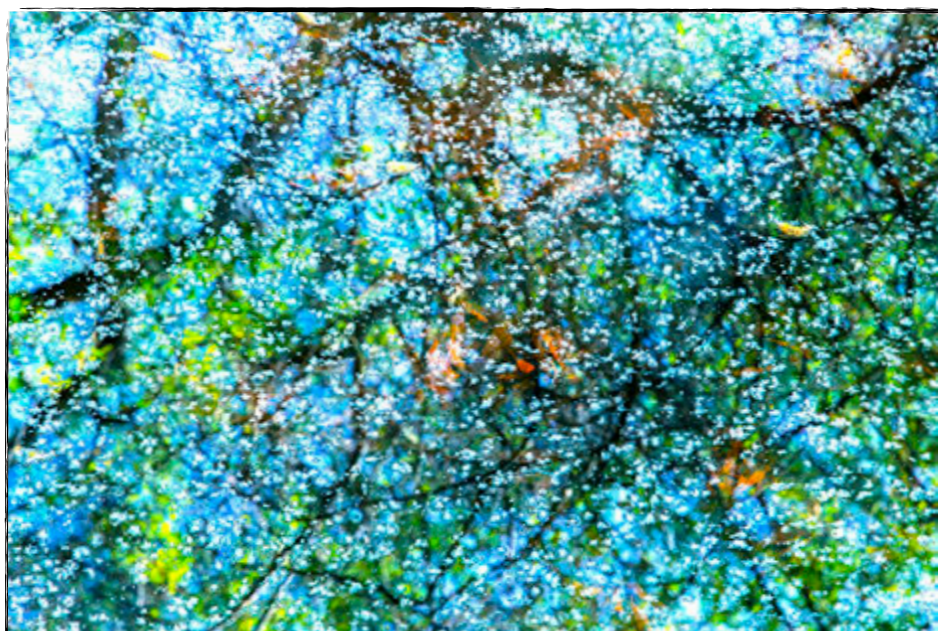
Artists are not strangers to the Preserve; however, they are not as well noticed as our frogs or butterflies. Perhaps they should be, as they are remarkable interpreters of the Preserve. They are generally

*"Moment..." continued on page 2.*

lavender-blue of the Lupine, the brilliant yellow and gold on the dune poppies and sun-flowers; and have you ever tried to count the different colors of green and brown?

As much as we enjoy the colors, Mother Nature isn't painting for our enjoyment. While it may dazzle our eyes, she paints in colors on behalf of procreation. The flowers attract pollinators. The birds are displaying stunning plumage to attract mates and start the next generation.

Observe those dazzling flashes from the male



*“Moment...” continued from page 1.*

quiet creatures, creating their own images on paper or fabric. These images come from their minds to our eyes.

The Nature Center hosts artist shows and receptions several times a year. At the receptions we have the opportunity to see the work and hear directly from the artist. All of the artists have one thing in common: the Preserve. Otherwise, they are widely different. I find it fascinating to view how another person sees the same things I see on the Preserve. I believe this is particularly true of the artist currently exhibiting at the Nature Center: photographer Beth Shibata.

Photography and painting have interwoven histories. Photographic cameras began as Camera Obscura, a device dating back to the ancient Chinese and Greeks, and which used a pinhole or sometimes a lens to project an image upside-down onto a viewing surface. The rise of the modern camera began in 1816. French inventor Nicéphore Niépce created the first partially successful photograph; he captured an image but it faded when exposed to light. In 1837 Louis Daguerre created the first practical photographic process, the Daguerreotype. Photography became readily available in 1888 when George Eastman began manufacturing a simple box camera which he called the Kodak. It had a fixed focus and a single shutter speed. In 1889 Eastman developed celluloid film and photography entered the mainstream.

Interestingly enough, the Impressionist art movement came to prominence during 1870-1880, coinciding with early experiments in photography. It seems fair to suggest that capturing images using light through photography may have influenced the world of painters. The Impressionists found that they could capture the momentary and transient effects of sunlight by painting ‘en plein air’—loosely translated, “in the air” or “outdoors.” They portrayed overall visual

effects instead of details to achieve an effect of color vibration. Photography opened a new path for painters. Today we have digital photography, and it seems that this medium has opened a new world for painter and photographer alike.

“One Day in March,” by Beth Shibata, currently on display at the Nature Center until April 10th, seems to eliminate any perceived line between painting and photographs. Beth presents us with a series of layered reflections from the surface of the water by the willows.

Beth said, “The pools of water are windows that offer a look at the layers of the past and present—and hint at the future.” As you look through the clear, still water you can see on the bottom last year’s leaves, broken twigs and small bits floating mid-way and seeds lying on the surface. Beth achieves her effects using Adobe Photoshop and by “pushing things where they are not supposed to go—down to pixelation.” Her work is printed on fabric which moves, as the moments she has captured in the water move.

I asked Beth why she chooses the Preserve for her art. She gave me her “duh, are you an idiot?” look, yet patiently explained so beautifully that I was glad I asked. In her words, “the Preserve is wild, less restrained—serene, timeless—never the same. Sometimes something happens when I’m out there; images just seem to come together.” It is true; there really are no dumb questions.

The series of five digital photo “paintings” currently on display is an experiment in process and materials for Beth. She is, in her words, “trying to capture the flow and essence that makes the magic of life within the Preserve.”

It’s well worth your time to stop at the Nature Center and contemplate Beth’s exhibit. Then wander on out to the pools in the willows and capture a moment for yourself.

*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](mailto:FrاندBill@att.net) or Editor, Diane Gonsalves at [gonwild2@yahoo.com](mailto:gonwild2@yahoo.com) or may be dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.



# Bushtits-Bird of the Season

*(Psaltriparus minimus)*

By Bob Shanman

For most of the year, they come in flocks. Fifteen arrive in one of your bushes, then 18 more; ten leave, but eight more arrive. Twittering all the time, they hang upside down or perch upright, gleaning insects off your bushes. Suddenly, they all leave. You have just experienced a flock of Bushtits moving through your yard. These cute little brown birds are a favorite of everybody.

The first thing you notice is the size of the Bushtit. They are so small, you wonder if they

Everywhere you go in the Marsh in April, look for raggedy, long “clumps” of debris hanging down from the willows or eucalyptus trees or other large, dense foliage. Stand for a bit and watch the clump; you may have found a Bushtit nest. You will wonder how the nests hang together. They look so sloppy. Typically in the Marsh, the nests are 3-100 feet off the ground. It is built by both



*Female Bushtit*



*Male Bushtit*

are a windup toy! At about three inches, they are about the smallest of the North American birds. You notice that the tail is as long as, or longer than the body. The sexes look alike, but...if you look closely at the eye, you will see some with pale irises. These are the ladies of the species. But you are so taken with these cute birds that you forget to look for these details. They are the only member of their family found in North America.

At Madrona Marsh, you can often see flocks of 40-50 individuals, maybe more, but because they move around so much, and are so fast, it's often hard to count them. Moving through the winter, these flocks will stay together, flitting through the Mule Fat stands to the Bush Sunflowers, eating insects and seeds. At this time of year (March) the flocks have thinned as the mating season starts. By early April, you will likely find only pairs, sometimes being assisted in nest building by non-breeding individuals.

members of the pair, using spider web silk and vegetation. One member of the pair will sit in the platform that is first built, stretching it out as the other adds more material. This will help shape the nest into a loose sack, large enough to hold 4 to 10 young, plus the adults. It will range from 6 to 12 inches in length, and will be well camouflaged. Oh yes, the entrance will be hidden under a leaf or by a hood. (Dave Moody and the writer once found a nest in the Marsh with about a 12 inch long covered entranceway.)

The nest is fully enclosed and well-insulated. The average clutch size is about six eggs (ranges from 4 to about 10). Incubation starts with the laying of the last egg, and takes about two weeks. Both parents will feed the brood. A female may have a second clutch later in the breeding season. Young birds fledge about 18 days after hatching. Once they leave the nest, they do not return; however, the parents continue to feed them for

*“Bushtits...” continued on page 4*

# Lawrence's Goldfinch

Stephen Vincent Lloyd

Among the many birds of Madrona Marsh, none are more adorable than the goldfinches. Small, colorful, gregarious, chatty, they can be seen in large numbers in any season, singing in trees or feasting on sunflowers. Four species of goldfinches have been seen here. Most common are the yellow American Goldfinches and the green Lesser Goldfinches. During the past winter, they were joined by a single multi-colored European Goldfinch. This bird was either seriously lost or, more likely, had escaped from captivity.



Photo of Lawrence's Goldfinch courtesy of Jess Morgan

The fourth goldfinch is Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Spinus lawrencei*), a true California native. It was first described by the great mid-nineteenth century American ornithologist John Cassin, who named it after his friend George N. Lawrence. Lawrence was a New York businessman who studied birds in his spare time, but nevertheless himself described more than 400 new bird species, mostly from Central and South America. Together with Spencer Baird, they authored the classic *Birds of North America* (1860), an addendum, as it were, to Audubon's pioneering work.

Intermediate in size between the American and Lesser Goldfinches, Lawrence's Goldfinch is about five inches long. The adults are grey overall with touches of bright yellow on the wings, breast, rump and tail. The male has a black face and crown which accentuate the pink beak. The color contrasts make him particularly handsome. The bird feeds on small seeds, including those of chamise, mistletoe, and buckhorn, but its favorite is the fiddleneck.

Lawrence's Goldfinch breeds in scattered areas from Shasta County in the far north of Upper California to northern Baja California. The Carmel River valley is a favorite place to see them in northern California. In the fall and winter they disperse throughout the Southwest,

sometimes as far east as Texas and down into Chihuahua. During this period they form large flocks with as many as 500 individuals. This author was awed by such a flock, feeding on fiddleneck at

Wind Wolves Preserve in the Tehachapi Mountains in the winter of 2014. Lawrence's Goldfinch has been seen at least ten times at Madrona Marsh in the last five years, usually in the period October to December. Most often the sightings have been of single birds, but in December 2012 Tracy Drake saw a group of ten. If you see goldfinches flying about in the winter, be on the alert for the metallic tinkling flight

call of Lawrence's Goldfinch.

*"Bushtits..." continued from page 3*

about two weeks. The family unit will roost together at night.

Bushtits are found throughout the western United States and as far south as Guatemala. They are absent from the higher elevations of the mountains in California and large portions of the Central Valley. They are, however, found on the high deserts in California during the winter, from where they will have an upward (altitudinal) migration come spring. They are highly adaptable and occupy a wide range of habitats. As a foliage-gleaner, they eat small insects and spiders (about 80 percent of the diet). During the breeding season, this can increase to 100 percent of the diet. At Madrona during the winter, they will eat seeds from the bush sunflowers as well as insects off the trees. During colder months, they will "huddle" to keep warm when roosting.

So look for these little guys in pairs or singles this spring. By the end of April, you should be able to see family groups foraging together. By mid-to-late summer, the flocks will be forming again, foraging for insects and some seeds, twittering happily as they move around the Marsh.

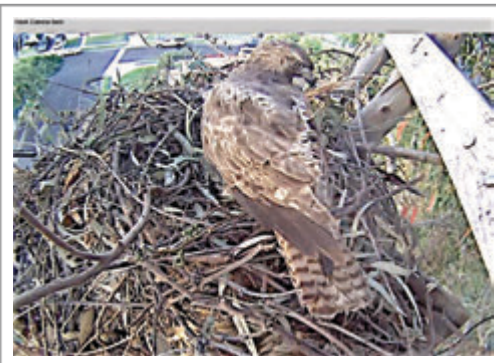
P.S. The oldest known Bushtit lived to just past nine years!-**B.S.**

## Cycles of Beauty and Discovery

By Tracy Drake, Naturalist and Preserve Manager

Through the years, March at Madrona is the month during which the cycles of our education program, our restoration program and nature itself are most evident. It is simply inspirational to be on the land any day of the week, any time of the day. If you were to visit, you too would be swept into a sort of atmosphere of gratitude for life because there is so much beauty. Even the most casual observers go onto the Preserve and come back with stories of the ducks they have seen, the wildflowers they saw bustled by the breeze or their amazement at the amount of lush green foliage. A careful observer will share that she saw more than fifty species of birds during a two hour walk, or another will tell of the emergence of the California (red) Harvester Ant who had been living completely underground since November, 2014.

Another cycle that started again was the reconstruction of their nest by our local Red-tailed Hawk pair. Two years ago they did not breed—but not for lack of trying. On April 24, 2013, the nest and two eggs were blown from their tree in a Santa Ana wind event. Last year, like so many raptors in the state, they again did not breed.



Drought conditions left our area short of their usual food recourses—gophers.

During March there was activity at

the nest 27 of the 31 days of the month. It is unclear if the female will lay eggs, though, because usually red-tails lay eggs in the second or third week of March. According to Peter Bloom, our local raptor expert, while it is true that most pairs lay eggs in mid-March, some pairs will wait until the first week of April or so to lay eggs. Thanks to the \$30,000 grant received from Alcoa, we now have two live cameras watching the nest. These cameras are easily accessible via the internet at [hawkcam.is-a-geek.com](http://hawkcam.is-a-geek.com). The user id is Guest and the password is guest. It is pretty amazing to have an insider look at the nesting habits of these magnificent birds. And it is interesting to see that sparrows, warblers, and even squirrels also use the nest regularly! We

have learned much about our local pair and remain hopeful that we will see eggs soon.

March was also the month our Science Fair student-mentoring program came to an end as our students participated in the local Intel Science Fair hosted by the South Coast Botanic Garden. This year we worked with six students—and all six entered into the fair. And this year there was a significant shift in the topics and number of students participating. In past years there was an average of 70 projects, maybe 10 percent of which were environmentally based. This year 51 of 107 projects, in 6 out of 12 categories, were related to current environmental issues.

Our students were entered in four different categories: Botany, Earth and Space Science, Environmental Science and Microbiology; and they did very well. Four out of the six won awards. Anson Tsai in the Botany category—his project focusing on phytoremediation of marsh water using floating islands, was awarded third place.

Praveen Kuruppu was also awarded third place for his project about understanding the germination timing of the noxious weed *Erharta* in both sun and shade conditions; his project was in the Earth and Space Science category.

Caroline Kim's project, in the Environmental Science category, won the Ricoh Sustainable Development Award for her work in trying to figure out why the soil at Madrona is acidic rather than the expected alkali of normal sandy soils.

Amanda Lee came in second place in the Microbiology category. Through her project, Amanda Lee conclusively proved that one of the common soil bacteria at Madrona, not known to be able to digest oil, actually can! During the Intel fair she also won the Arizona State University Walton Sustainability Award. Because of this interesting discovery, Amanda was invited to display her work at the LA County Science Fair—where she was awarded two more prestigious awards: The Association of Women Geoscientists and the South Bay Businesses' Coalition Awards.

These high school students were very inspirational to work with—and equally so were the staff and volunteers who mentored these kids. This year we had a new volunteer, Bozhena, who worked with Amanda.

*"Cycles..." Continued on page 8.*

## Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center\*

### Schedule of Events for April through July 2015

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

## APRIL

\*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 9. For latest event information, see our newly upgraded website, [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com).

| Sunday                   | Monday              | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday   | Saturday  |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--|--|--|--|---|
|                          |                     |  |  |  | 10 am--12 n-<br>Friday Fun-<br>donation** 1                                      | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.<br>& Student.Service<br>10 am-12 n- "Alice<br>Eastwood,"-Dr. Vadheim 2                   |
| 3                        | 4<br><b>CLOSED</b>  | 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 5<br>10 am-Adult Weeders                           | 10 am-Adult Weeders 6  | 10 am-Tyke 7<br>Hike -donation<br>10:30 Prop.Soc.<br>1pm-Nature 35+<br>6:30-"Alice..."<br>Dr.Vadheim | 10 am--12 n- 8<br>Friday Fun-<br>donation**<br>7:30 pm-Night<br>Life on Preserve | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.<br>& Student.Service<br>1-3 pm-Origami<br>2 pm-FOMM Ice Cream<br>Social & Garden Party 9 |
| 10                       | 11<br><b>CLOSED</b> | 10 am-Adult Weeders 12   | 8 am-Bird Walk/<br>Bob Shanman 13<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM<br>Board Meeting | 10:30-12:30-<br>Propagation<br>Society 14<br>1pm-Sr.Natur-<br>alists- 35+                            | 10 am--12n-<br>Friday Fun-<br>donation** 15                                      | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.<br>& Student.Service 16  |
| 17                       | 18<br><b>CLOSED</b> | 8:30 am-Tour d' 19<br>Torrance<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>7 pm-Audubon Mtg. | 10 am-Adult Weeders 20   | 10:30-12:30-<br>Propagation<br>Society 21  | 10 am--12 n-<br>Friday Fun-<br>donation** 22                                     | 8:30 am-Bird Walk/Dinuk 23<br>8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.<br>& Student Service<br>10 am.Nature Walk                  |
| 10 am.<br>Nature Walk 24 | 25<br><b>CLOSED</b> | 10 am-Adult Weeders 26   | 10 am-Adult Weeders 27   | 10:30-12:30-<br>Propagation<br>Society 28  | 10 am--12 n-<br>Friday Fun-<br>donation** 29<br>Mark Comon<br>Exhibit Ends***    | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- 30<br>stor. & Student Service   |

## MAY

# Nature Center & Gift Shop

(310)782-3989

| Sunday   | Monday                  | Tuesday  | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday   |
|--|-------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
|  | <u>1</u>                | 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>Art Exhibit Begins*** <u>2</u> | 10 am-Adult Weeders <u>3</u>  | 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation<br>10:30-Prop. Society. <u>4</u>                                     | 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation** <u>5</u>                      | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service<br>10 am-"Let the Rain Sink In," Dr. Vadheim<br>7 pm-Bugs of Night-fee <u>6</u> |
| <u>7</u>   | <b>CLOSED</b> <u>8</u>  | 10 am-Adult Weeders <u>9</u>   | 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting <u>10</u> | 10:30 a.m.- Prop.Society<br>1pm-Sr.Naturalists- 35+<br>6:30pm-"Rain..." Dr. Vadheim <u>11</u> | 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation** <u>12</u>                     | 8:45am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service<br>10 am-Watercolors in Nature - fee <u>13</u>                                   |
| 2-4 pm-2nd Sun.Science, "What's All the Buzz"- fee <u>14</u> | <b>CLOSED</b> <u>15</u> | 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>7 pm-Audubon Mtg. <u>16</u>    | 10 am-Adult Weeders <u>17</u>   | 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>18</u>  | 10 am--12n-Friday Fun-donation**<br>Artists Recept*** <u>19</u> | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service<br>8:30-10:30 pm-Star Party <u>20</u>   |
| <u>21</u>  | <b>CLOSED</b> <u>22</u> | 10 am-Adult Weeders <u>23</u>  | 10 am-Adult Weeders <u>24</u>   | 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>25</u>  | 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation** <u>26</u>                     | 8:30 am-Bird Walk/Dinuk<br>8:45 am-Hab.Restor.<br>10 am-Nature Walk <u>27</u>  |
| 10 am-Nature Walk <u>28</u>                                  | <b>CLOSED</b> <u>29</u> | 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance<br>10 am-Adult Weeders <u>30</u>                         |   |   |   |  |

## JUNE

\*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 9. For latest event information, see our newly updated website, [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com).

| Sunday                       | Monday  | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday  |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|---|
|                              |   |  | <u>1</u>   | 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation<br>10:30Prop.Soc. <u>2</u>   | 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-dontion** <u>3</u>                           | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Rest. & Student.Service<br>10 am-Butterfly Count Class (fee) <u>4</u>  |
| <u>5</u>                     | <b>CLOSED</b> <u>6</u>                          | 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance<br>10 am-Adult Weeders <u>7</u>  | 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman<br>10 am-Adult Weeders <u>8</u>              | 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society<br>1pm-Sr. Nature- alists 35+<br>6:30 "Butterfly..." Dr. Vadheim <u>9</u> | 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**<br>Art Exhibit Ends*** <u>10</u>  | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service<br>ALL DAY-Butterfly Count<br>10 am-12 n- "Butterfly Rancher"-Dr. Vadheim <u>11</u>      |
| <u>12</u>                    | 9 am-Jr. Naturalists<br><b>CLOSED</b> <u>13</u> | 9 am-Jr. Naturalists<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>Blieden Ex. Begins*** <u>14</u>                       | 9 am-Jr. Naturalists<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>6:30pm-FOMM Mtg <u>15</u> | 9 am-Jr. Naturalists<br>10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>16</u>                                   | 9 am-Jr. Naturalists<br>10 am--12n-Friday Fun-donation** <u>17</u>  | 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service <u>18</u>  |
| <u>19</u>                    | <b>CLOSED</b> <u>20</u>                         | 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance<br>9am-Insects...Camp<br>10 am-Adult Weeders<br>7 pm-Audubon Mtg. <u>21</u> | 9 am-Insects...Camp<br>10 am-Adult Weeders <u>22</u>                     | 9 am- Insects...Camp<br>10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>23</u>                                   | 9 am- Insects...Camp<br>10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation** <u>24</u> | 8:30 am-Bird Walk/Dinuk<br>8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service<br>10 am-Nature Walk<br>7:30 pm-Preserve Night Life <u>25</u> |
| 10 am. Nature Walk <u>26</u> | <b>CLOSED</b> <u>27</u>                         | 10 am-Adult Weeders <u>28</u>  | 10 am-Adult Weeders <u>29</u>  | 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>30</u>   | 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**<br>Blieden Recept*** <u>31</u>    |   |

## JULY

“Cycles...” Continued from page 5.

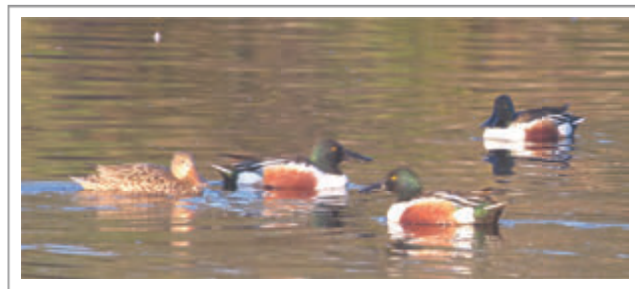
As usual, Bob Carr mentored all of the students and Mark Christiansen assisted in mentoring all of the students and worked most closely with Praveen.

It is always a little bit difficult on our staff as the Science Fair season comes to an end. We work closely with these kids for over six months, and in the case of Praveen, for four years. We miss them, are very proud of them and wish them well.

March is traditionally the first month of the busy tour season, and this year is no exception. The docent-training program that spanned January and February have bolstered the ranks of volunteer tour guides. It has strengthened the abilities of current docents, and even added one or two promising new prospects. This month, Madrona hosted 16 tours, including mostly Torrance elementary schools, scout groups and guided monthly nature walks, which totaled almost 700 people.

Nature Center staff and volunteers also participated in three outreach opportunities, during which over 1,000 people were given the opportunity to learn about the programs available at Madrona. Seventeen education and recreation programs were held in the Nature Center—more than 400 people attending. The programs’ visitors attended regular monthly programs such as Friday Fun for kids and Connected to Nature for seniors, and also special programs like Music of the Tongva, Nature Origami, a Night Hike, a California Naturalist class and the South Bay Wild Animal Rehab’s live raptor program.

Because we had about another inch of rain in March, we were able to pump more of the rainwater that collected in the Sump up into the



wetlands. This greatly expanded the wetlands waterfowl. The Preserve has been bursting with various shades of green growth, and wildflowers now dot the landscape with purple, pink, yellow and orange flowers. With the images of the dry season fresh on one’s mind, it is easy to be filled with gratitude that there was enough rain to cause this complete metamorphosis of the land.

Tony Baker’s Native Plant garden is also putting on quite a show this spring and is also attracting dozens of visitors daily. I walk through every day and witness the changes—sweet smelling lupines are in bloom, delicate Mariposa Lilies sway gently in the daily breeze—and California lilacs attract dozens of pollinators. If you have a chance, visit the garden and Preserve—it is very beautiful.-T.D.



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| December | Gene M. Hassan                   | \$150  |         |
| December | The Sattler's                    | \$150  |         |
| December | The Miles                        | \$200  |         |
| December | Rebecca Moore                    | \$200  |         |
| December | Beth Shibata                     | \$250  |         |
| December | Andrea Morgan                    | \$100  |         |
| December | Paul DeAlleaume                  | \$100  |         |
| January  | Lenore Bloss                     | \$100  |         |
| January  | The Laguna Hills Audubon Society | \$150  |         |
| January  | Nancy Ingraham                   | \$100  |         |
| January  | Stettenheim Foundation Inc       | \$500  |         |

| Date     | Who                     | Amount | Comment              |
|----------|-------------------------|--------|----------------------|
| January  | Darryl & Venora Lee     | \$100  |                      |
| January  | The Hilder's            | \$100  |                      |
| January  | Norman & Suzanne George | \$200  |                      |
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| February | Torrance Women's Club   | \$300  |                      |
| February | The Ensminger's         | \$200  |                      |
| February | James Justiss           | \$200  | Boeing Gift Matching |
| February | Timothy Goodrich        | \$100  |                      |

## 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.

Through April 10 - **"One Day in March,"** A Photography Exhibit by **Beth Shibata**.

April 14 - May 29 - A Photography Exhibit by **Mark Comon**.

June 2 - July 10 - **"Pieces of the Marsh,"** an Exhibit of Various Mediums by the **Pacific Arts Group**. Artist Reception, Friday, June 19, 6:30 p.m.

July 14 through August 21 - **"Flowers, Bugs and Birds,"** A Photography Exhibit by **Paul Blieden**. Artist Reception, Friday, July 31, 6:30 pm.

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## Madrona Marsh Preserve Species List

*As of April 1, 2015*

It is because we have very dedicated staff and volunteers that we can provide this comprehensive and frankly, very impressive, list. Approximately six days a week, one of the following people takes about two hours out of their day to do a bird survey—noting the dragonflies and butterflies they see along the way.

Each sighting is logged by hand first, then entered into the Cornell database—ebird. While ebird does not track butterfly and dragonfly data, we enter this data into the notes section so we have a permanent record day-by-day. So far we have seen an amazing 107 species of bird this year. Last year, all year, we observed 150 bird species. Our observers are, from the most

number of species turned in to the least: Tracy Drake, Mark Rubke, Dinuk Magamma, Ron Melin and the Tour de Torrance group, David Moody, Tony Strangarity, Jun Saito, Michael Lowery, Hilary Jamieson, Manuel and Alejandra Duran and Kento Fleder—who also is the person who enters most of the data into ebird. This is quite a group. Because of them, we have the opportunity to understand the intricate behavior of many birds, butterflies and dragonflies, as well as what parts of the Preserve they use.

Thank you to all who participated in these surveys—those who are listed and those who are not; you all help make Madrona a destination for hundreds of nature enthusiasts.

*"Species List" continued on page 10.*

| <b>Madrona Marsh Preserve - 2015 Species List (as of 4-1-15)</b> |                               |                             |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Birds</b>   |                               |                             |
| Canada Goose   | Glaucous-winged Gull          | Hermit Thrush               |
| Wood Duck  | Rock Pigeon                   | American Robin              |
| Gadwall  | Eurasian Collared-Dove        | Sage Thrasher               |
| American Wigeon  | Mourning Dove                 | Northern Mockingbird        |
| Mallard  | White-throated Swift          | European Starling           |
| Blue-winged Teal   | Anna's Hummingbird            | Cedar Waxwing               |
| Cinnamon Teal  | Allen's Hummingbird           | Orange-crowned Warbler      |
| Northern Shoveler  | Belted Kingfisher             | Common Yellowthroat         |
| Northern Pintail   | Nuttall's Woodpecker          | Yellow-rumped Warbler       |
| Green-winged Teal  | Downy Woodpecker              | Black-throated Gray Warbler |
| Canvasback   | Northern Flicker              | Townsend's Warbler          |
| Redhead  | American Kestrel              | Spotted Towhee              |
| Ring-necked Duck   | Merlin                        | California Towhee           |
| Lesser Scaup   | Peregrine Falcon              | Chipping Sparrow            |
| Bufflehead   | Yellow-chevroned Parakeet     | Lark Sparrow                |
| Ruddy Duck   | Mitred Parakeet               | Savannah Sparrow            |
| Pied-billed Grebe  | Red-masked Parakeet           | Fox Sparrow                 |
| Double-crested Cormorant   | Black Phoebe                  | Song Sparrow                |
| Great Blue Heron   | Say's Phoebe                  | Lincoln's Sparrow           |
| Great Egret  | Ash-throated Flycatcher       | Swamp Sparrow               |
| Snowy Egret  | Tropical Kingbird             | White-throated Sparrow      |
| Green Heron  | Cassin's Kingbird             | White-crowned Sparrow       |
| Black-crowned Night-heron  | Western Kingbird              | Golden-crowned Sparrow      |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk   | Western Scrub-Jay             | Dark-eyed Junco             |
| Cooper's Hawk  | American Crow                 | Red-winged Blackbird        |
| Red-shouldered Hawk  | Common Raven                  | Western Meadowlark          |
| Red-tailed Hawk  | Northern Rough-winged Swallow | Brown-headed Cowbird        |
| Sora   | Tree Swallow                  | Hooded Oriole               |
| American Coot  | Barn Swallow                  | House Finch                 |
| Killdeer   | Cliff Swallow                 | Lesser Goldfinch            |
| Willet   | Bushtit                       | American Goldfinch          |
| Long-billed Dowitcher  | House Wren                    | European Goldfinch          |
| Wilson's Snipe   | Marsh Wren                    | House Sparrow               |
| Ring-billed Gull   | Blue-gray Gnatcatcher         | Northern Red Bishop         |
| Western Gull   | Ruby-crowned Kinglet          | Scaly-breasted Munia        |
| California Gull  | Western Bluebird              |                             |
| <b>Butterflies</b>   |                               |                             |
| Monarch  | Buckeye                       | Western Pygmy-Blue          |
| Gulf Fritillary  | Western Swallowtail           | Marine Blue                 |
| Mourning Cloak   | Giant Swallowtail             | Acmon Blue                  |
| Painted Lady   | Cabbage White                 | Umber Skipper               |
| American Lady  | Cloudless Sulfur              | Fiery Skipper               |
| West Coast Lady  | Gray Hairstreak               | Funereal Duskywing          |
| <b>Dragonflies</b>   |                               |                             |
| Common Green Darner  | Variegated Meadowhawk         | Western Pondhawk            |
| Blue-eyed Darner   | Flame Skimmer                 | Red Saddlebags              |

# South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



**Mock Heather**  
*Ericameria ericoides*

April may seem an unusual time to talk about summer and fall blooming plants. But the hot, dry weather reminds us of the role that gardens and preserves play during these difficult drought years. When the wildlands are dry, our gardens provide essential resources for insects, birds and other creatures. Particularly important are the late-blooming ‘sunflowers’ like our native Mock Heather.

*Ericameria ericoides* is native to the California coast from northern California to Los Angeles County, where it grows in sandy areas including coastal dunes, coastal strand and coastal sage scrub. Several specimens grow on the Preserve and in the Native Plant Garden. This shrubby plant, which grows to 5 feet tall and perhaps a little wider, has short, dark green needle-like leaves reminiscent of heather. The leaves also hint that it is a water-conserving plant.

Like other native ‘goldenbushes,’ Mock heather normally blooms from late summer into fall—from August to as late as November. The flowers are arranged in small ‘sunflower’ heads containing the central disk flowers and the petal-like ray flowers. Both types of flowers are a bright, buttery yellow.

A blooming Mock Heather bush will attract quite a crowd of pollinators—including butterflies, bees, flies and others. The seeds provide important food for seed-eating birds like the Goldfinches. Even insect-eating birds—like Bushtits—can be seen gleaning food from the foliage.

Mock Heather is fairly easy to grow, particularly in well-drained soils. It even thrives in clays (if not over-watered). It likes full sun on the coast; a bit of afternoon shade further inland. It needs adequate winter moisture; once established it does well with very infrequent summer water (at most 1-2 times per summer) or none at all on the coast.



Mock Heather makes a nice accent shrub, a hedge—even a container plant. It is easy to start from seed and may even re-seed in your garden. Consider planting one for the sake of the creatures it supports—and the cheery yellow blooms!

Learn more about local native plants at our “Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden” series on the first Saturday of each month or at [http://nativeplantscsudh.blogspot.com/p/gallery-of-native-plants\\_17.html](http://nativeplantscsudh.blogspot.com/p/gallery-of-native-plants_17.html)

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