

Spring 2016

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

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

A Docent's Eyes and Ears - And Some Help From the Marsh

Dave Jamieson

As a docent for Madrona Marsh, I have the honor of leading young children on walks through three aspects of a learning experience (Preserve, Nature Center and Native Garden) and translating that experience into something that makes sense to someone who sees it as foreign and strange.

Recently, I led a tour through the Marsh that was part of a unique group. This was the second day in a row that we had guided the same school (the tours had been divided into two separate days, since the entire 5th grade was to come from Central Los

Angeles). This particular tour was also to include a water lab, which is a fourth aspect of the learning experience and is taught by specialists.

Due to the size of each day's group, it was further divided in half, with one half touring the Preserve while the other was in a water lab. The water lab tours work best this way when we have such large groups. Due to the uniqueness of the tour, as it worked out, I was to lead two consecutive one-hour tours of the Preserve.

The first group was lucky enough to see a Red-tailed Hawk circling overhead, while two crows pestered her. I took advantage of the opportunity to explain how this is normal, and humanized the scene by explaining the three most important things that everything in nature needs to do: 1) Get something to eat, 2) Don't be something to eat, and 3) raise your family. The group

seemed to enjoy and appreciate my input, judging from the questions they asked.



Photo courtesy of Jun Saito

The second group was all boys except for a single girl and their teacher. They were excited about the Preserve and kept forgetting that nature is best enjoyed with an attitude of calm and quiet—with emphasis on not disturbing things. This is not unusual, and I have learned to deal with what is, after all, excited children trying to contain themselves.

I took the kids to the duck pond and pointed out that we would have seen many more ducks, but they had heard us coming and gotten nervous. As we continued, I was explaining the raccoon footprints near the water when one of the boys whispered, "There is the coyote you told us about." I was at the front of the group and facing backwards, so I didn't see it, and wasn't positive of what they had seen, so I was surprised to see the coyote trot within ten feet of us and cross our path.

Immediately, the group froze and stopped talking amongst themselves. They stayed like that for the rest of the tour.

My reaction was to explain to the children that humans are responsible for bringing calm and peace to situations, since we are the apex predators. I also pointed out that coyotes are

"Docent ..." continued on page 3

Western and Cassin's Kingbirds

by Vincent Lloyd

One day back when I first started watching birds, I was astonished to see a big Red-tailed Hawk being harassed by a small grey bird, which, through sheer audaciousness, persuaded the big raptor to go away.

It was a Western Kingbird. The aggressiveness of male kingbirds in defending their territory is legendary; it has inspired both their common name and their scientific name, *Tyrannus*, the tyrant bird. Here at the Marsh we see not only the Western Kingbird but also Cassin's Kingbird.

Kingbirds all look pretty much alike: grey upper parts, yellowish lower parts, and blackish tails (the bizarre Scissor-tailed Flycatcher being an exception). In both species, the male and female look alike. A rite of passage for beginning naturalists in Southern California is to learn to differentiate between the Western and Cassin's Kingbirds. Compared with Cassin's Kingbird, the Western Kingbird is lighter grey on the upper side. If you happen to see the two of them perched in the same tree, the difference is obvious, but otherwise it's a bit tricky to judge, as shades of color are affected by light and shadow.

In my experience, one good way to tell them apart is that the whitish throat of Cassin's contrasts with its head and breast much more than the Western's throat. Another difference is in the tail: the Western has bright white edges to the outer tail feathers which is obvious when it flies; Cassin's has grey or white tail *tips* instead. However, as is often the case with flycatchers, the most obvious difference is the voice: Cassin's has a loud, raucous call, which suggested its scientific name, *Tyrannus vociferans*, the vociferous



Cassin's, left, and Western Kingbirds (Wikipedia)

tyrant. The call of the Western, *T. verticalis*, sounds like a fast squeaky wheel.

Cassin's Kingbird is named after the American ornithologist John Cassin (no, he wasn't French, he was a Quaker) who described 200 new species of birds in the 1800s, many of them birds of western North America. Both kingbirds belong to the genus *Tyrannus*

of the family Tyrannidae. The order of songbirds (Passeriformes) is divided into two groups, the *oscines* and *suboscines*, the family Tyrannidae belonging to the suboscines.

The most obvious difference between these two groups is that the suboscines, which are mostly birds of the New World tropics, have only simple songs compared with the more musical songs of the oscines. It is thought that the suboscine songs are all innate rather than learned from the parents, as is common among the oscines. Since they are considered to be more primitive, the suboscines are placed at the beginning of the Passeriformes in taxonomic order, and of them the family Tyrannidae appears at the very top of the list, as is befitting a tyrant.

The tyrannids are all flycatchers, with broad flat bills for catching insects in the air. An interesting and poorly understood feature are short bristles that are found at the base of the beak. No one really knows what they are for. The idea that they might aid in catching flying insects has been disproved by experiments in which the bristles were taped down or clipped off entirely; the loss of the bristles didn't noticeably hamper their hunting success.

Eight of the 13 *Tyrannus* species are found north of the Mexican border, but only Western and Cassin's regularly breed in California. The Tropical Kingbird (*T. melancholicus*) is seen every fall and sometimes in the winter. The Thick-billed Kingbird (*T. crassirostris*) is occasionally seen in the winter; believe it or not it has a really thick beak. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*T. forficatus*) is seen every couple of years; one was seen at Madrona Marsh in 2013. The Eastern Kingbird (*T. tyrannus*) has occasionally bred in California.

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.

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“Kingbirds ...” continued from page 2

Kingbirds subsist mostly on flying insects, mainly flies. They perch out in the open and fly into the air when they spot a passing insect, a practice called "hawking" or, more colorfully, "sallying." Picture Sally the Kingbird darting up into the air to get her breakfast. Unlike other tyrannids, who mostly have a very upright posture, kingbirds often perch horizontally. Its specific name, *verticalis*, suggests that the Western perches more upright than other kingbirds.

The breeding range of the Western Kingbird—no surprise here—is the western U.S. as far north as the Canadian border. Its range expanded northward and eastward in the 20th century and now breeds as far east as Iowa, greatly overlapping the breeding range of the Eastern Kingbird. Oddly, the Western Kingbird was originally named the Arkansas Kingbird, until someone noticed that they don't breed in Arkansas.

The Western Kingbird winters in southern Mexico and the Pacific coast of Central America. Its wintering range is separated from its breeding range by hundreds of miles, although occasionally isolated individuals are seen in Southern California in the winter. A small population has been wintering in south Florida since 1915. Cassin's Kingbird breeds from northern Mexico to the southwest U.S.; in California it breeds as far north as the Sacramento Valley. The winter range of Cassin's extends from Southern California to central Mexico, greatly overlapping its breeding range. Any kingbird seen in California in the winter is almost always a Cassin's.

If you see a Western Kingbird fly 50 feet up in the air and then dive wildly down, he's courting a female. Cassin's Kingbird have a strange mating dance where they hover in the air squawking loudly. In both species, the female makes the nest by herself. She makes cup nests of twigs, bark, string, and grass. The Western likes to add animal hair, originally mostly bison, but today more likely to be cattle or sheep.

Cassin's nests in trees, but the Western, which prefers more open country, has found that barns, buildings, and telephone poles are convenient locations which it has taken advantage of to greatly expand its original range. Kingbirds have cream-colored or whitish eggs spotted with brown or grey blotches. The spots on the Cassin's egg may be lavender in color. The female lays two to seven eggs and incubates them for about two weeks. She and her mate then feed them for another two weeks until they fledge.

Western Kingbirds arrive at the Marsh in March and leave in October. Cassin's Kingbirds are here all year round. I like kingbirds because, unlike so many birds, they don't hide in the bushes, but are out in the open soaking up the sunshine. And they are plucky; they don't let anyone push them around. I hope you like them too.—V. L.

Donations of \$100 Or More Spring 2016

Date	Donor	Donation	Comment
December	Frank Miles	\$200	
December	George & Kathleen Tendick	\$200	
December	Mark & Sharon Angelos	\$100	
December	Rebecca Moore	\$200	
December	Native Plant Society	\$800	In appreciation for Friends' help with plant sale
December	Bob and Roberta Shanman	\$500	
January	Torrance Woman's Club	\$300	
January	Gertrude Moriguchi	\$110	
January	Paul De Alleaume	\$100	
January	Norman & Suzanne George	\$200	
January	Ted Kotzin	\$150	
January	James Justiss	\$200	Boeing Gift-Match Program
February	Clark Mitchell	\$924	Raytheon Gift-Match Program
March	Chris & Ellen Velline	\$100	
March	Renee Glass	\$100	In memory of Gloria Jacobs
March	William & Barbara Ailor	\$500	In honor of Martin & Eileen Byhower. – Martin retired June 22

“Docents ...” continued from page 1

native to the area, and the term “invasive” that some people use really doesn't apply.

I avoided getting into a rant about how successful hunters like bears, wolves, puma and coyotes are misunderstood due to fear, but I felt like maybe I was able to instill a respect for the beautiful coyote that wasn't there before.

In retrospect, I sometimes feel like my skills for adapting to different groups and their respective attention spans are pretty well honed, but today I was grateful to the Preserve for stepping in at just the right time to make the experience as valuable—and memorable—as possible. -D.J.

If You Build It, They Will Come . . .

Suzan Hubert, President, FOMM

. . . A statement of faith, which worked out well for baseball in the movies. Hopefully it will work as well for Burrowing Owls on the Preserve. The Preserve was once a home of choice for these unique little owls and we hope to entice their return.



Image credit: Alan and Elaine Wilson, [Nature's Pics Online](#)

Burrowing owls are the size of a robin—with long legs for an owl. They are the most diurnal of all the owls. They have white eyebrows, large eyes, brown and white feathers with white spots. Their under parts are light-colored with brown spots.

Their choice of home is an underground burrow; thus the name. I am told they are capable of digging their own burrows, but they prefer to move into abandoned burrows left by gophers, badgers, foxes, prairie dogs or squirrels. Sadly, the burrowing owl population has been in sharp decline over the past fifty years. They have a lot of enemies: snakes, other owls, hawks, skunks, cats and dogs—all eat the young birds and or their eggs.

Humans are a major enemy because people destroy the owls' nesting areas. In Torrance, the unfortunate effort to eradicate native ground squirrels drastically reduced the squirrel population and consequently, available burrows for the owls.

The Friends, the State of California and the staff at the Preserve are hopeful that we can entice these unusual owls to once again choose the Preserve as a home, by creating and installing Artificial Burrow Systems (ABS). Each system consists of a nesting chamber, two tunnels leading from the underground chamber to the surface, a rock entrance and a perch -- all in a prairie like area with low grass. We used heavy-duty plastic barrels cut in half, with flexible tunnels attached to each side. The tunnels have to be angled in such a way that no light can penetrate the nesting chamber. We have constructed three so far and plan on several more at the Entradero Sump.

I was fortunate to be invited to help Steven, Ed and Dave create these habitats and am pleased to share these photos of the experience with you:

Below, this is me using the backhoe to dig out one burrow space; standing next to me is Ed Vandever, who is a wonderful instructor in the operation of excavating equipment.



Below, here is part of the crew back-filling the excavation. We had to use shovels for the back fill so as not to disturb the placement of the ABS.



On the following page, one of the entrance/exit tunnels that curve down to the nesting chamber. It's not quite finished. We have to add rocks around the entrance for camouflage, and the most important part, a perch for the owls to sit on and guard their home.

"Owls ..." continued on page 5

Spring 2016 - A Season of Beauty, A Season of Growth

Tracy Drake, Naturalist & Preserve Manager

The last few months have been incredible. Though the rains have not been as much as we hoped for, it may have been just enough for the Preserve. It seems like there will be some breeding of ducks—that is, if the Canada Geese do not chase them away first. The ducks are aware though, and are staying away from their giant cousins.

Maybe the best part of the last few months on the Preserve is the wildflower bloom. Yes, we have a significant bloom this year. Why? Because of your (the Friends) support, large areas of the Preserve have been restored completely enough to include annual wildflowers. I can recall my first years at the Preserve and have longed ever since to see a bloom at Madrona. But restoration occurs in stages. The first plants that need to be returned, after the weeds have been somewhat suppressed, are the anchor plants—the perennial trees and shrubs that are the majestic backdrop to a foreground landscape of smaller perennials, like deer vetch and rattlepod. Finally, once

all of those are established and thriving, the annuals can be introduced.

Now, thanks to the work of Tony Baker and Dan Portway (and Dan's crew of now-trained native plant tenders), walking along the entrance path is a very pleasant experience. Tansy mustard plants, with their delicate cream-yellow flowers and lacy leaves, cover much of the landscape. Large swaths of Truncated Lupine—standing tall and looking refined—lean into equally large swaths of brilliant yellow and orange Dune Poppies. One with a careful eye can spot a few Owl's Clovers, a half dozen Cream Cups and tall, but limited stands of purple and white flowered Arroyo Lupine. The dainty Larkspur, whose numbers are still small, can be seen throughout the restored areas of the Preserve; and in smaller numbers still, Goldfields and Tidy Tips can be found. Perhaps it's just me but as I walk through the fields of color, I am a little overwhelmed as I realize—restoration in its entirety is happening; is successful; and is really beautiful.

“Owls...” continued from page 4



We won't be advertising where these burrows are placed, because the best thing humans can do to welcome and support these little owls is leave them alone and watch from a distance.

We built it. Now we wait. Sometime around May you might see them on a perch in the coastal prairie area. Have faith, they will come!

Other projects are also moving forward. Last summer and fall we applied for four grants to fund projects. In late winter and early spring we were notified that we will be awarded two, and get partial funding for a third. We are reapplying for the fourth. Additionally, we are now in the process of implementing projects funded by the Proposition 84 Grant we were awarded in 2009 and the Alcoa grant we received in 2014. On page 8 is a chart showing the status of the grants now in process.

I realize that you may have questions regarding the specific details of these grants; please feel free to call Tracy at the Nature Center. 310-782-3989.

One project that I'd like to share with you is last year's Alcoa grant Hawk Camera Project. This one has been quite a journey; one that has taken us through many technical issues and has helped us understand the challenges Red-tailed Hawks face in an urban environment. Basically life is hard and uncertain for our hawks as habitat is (sadly) lost, and drought results in further loss of food resources.

The last time a local pair bred was in 2013, but that year wind threw their nest and eggs from the tree. Drought and habitat loss caused them to avoid breeding in 2014 and 2015, though the hawks did consider it—working on the nest in the breeding seasons. By means of the newly installed cameras

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Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center*

Schedule of Events for April through July 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<u>1</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>2</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am -Dr. Vadheim
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> CLOSED	<u>5</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance 10am-Adult Weeders	<u>6</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>7</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc. 6:30- Dr.Vadheim	<u>8</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>9</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9 am-12-Illum.Nature-fee
<u>10</u> 1-3pm- Native Plant Teas-fee	<u>11</u> CLOSED	<u>12</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>13</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>14</u> 1pm-Sr. Naturalists 35+ 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	<u>15</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>16</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9-11am-Guided Tour- Henrietta.Basin 8-10 pm-Star Party
<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> CLOSED	<u>19</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>20</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>21</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>22</u> 10 am--12 Friday Fun- donation** Hines Exhibit Ends***	<u>23</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk 6:30 pm-Night Hike-fee Harwood Exhibit begins***
<u>24</u> 10 am. Nature Walk	<u>25</u> CLOSED	<u>26</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid	<u>27</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid	<u>28</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>29</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>30</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service

A P R I L

*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 11. 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-Prop. Society.	<u>6</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>7</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor & Student.Service 10am-Dr.Vadheim 7-9 pm-Night Hike-fee
<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 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>12</u> 10:30 a.m.- Prop.Society 1pm-Sr.Natur- alists- 35+ 6:30pm- Dr.Vadheim	<u>13</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** 6:30-Harwood Reception***	<u>14</u> 8:45am-12 n-Hab.Restor. Student.Service
<u>15</u> 1-pm-FOMM Ice Cream Social & Garder Tea Party	<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--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>21</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Rest. & Student.Service 9-11 am-Guided Tour 1:30 pm-Nature's Origami
<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> CLOSED	<u>24</u> 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>25</u> 10 am - Home School Nature Class/Reid 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> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-Hab.Restor. 9 am-12-Illum.Nature-fee 10 am-Nature Walk 7-9 pm-"Bugs of Night"-fee
<u>29</u> 10 am- Nature Walk	<u>30</u> CLOSED	<u>31</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders				

M A Y

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.Soc.	<u>3</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation** Harwood Ex. Ends***	<u>4</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.&StudentServ. 10am--"Rainy Delights," Dr. Vadheim
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> CLOSED	<u>7</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders West Exhibit Begins***	<u>8</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30pm-FOMM Mtg	<u>9</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society 1pm-Sr. Naturalists 35+ 6:30- "Rainy..." Dr. Vadheim	<u>10</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>11</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9am-12-Illuminating Nature Through Art--fee 12-3-West Reception*** 8 pm-Star Party
<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> CLOSED	<u>14</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>15</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>16</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>17</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>18</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9-11 am-Guided Tour 1:30-Nature's Origami
<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> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk
10 am. <u>26</u> 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		

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.*

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					<u>1</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>2</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am - "Butterfly Container," Dr. Vadheim
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> CLOSED	<u>5</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>6</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>7</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc. 6:30-"Butterfly Container," Dr. Vadheim	<u>8</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>9</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 7- 9 pm-Night Hike
<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> CLOSED	<u>12</u> 10 am-Jr.Naturalists-fee 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>13</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Jr.Naturalist-fee 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>14</u> 1pm-Sr. Naturalists 35+ 10 am Jr.Naturalist-fee 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	<u>15</u> 10 am--Friday Fun-donation** 10 am-Jr.Naturalists-fee WestEx/Ends***	<u>16</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9-11 am-Guided Tour/ Henrietta Basin
<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> CLOSED	<u>19</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>20</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>21</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>22</u> 10 am-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>23</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9am-12-Illuminating Nature Through Art--fee 2-4 pm"Sunsations,"/Livio
10 am. <u>24</u> Nature Walk	<u>25</u> CLOSED	<u>26</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10am-Wildlife Kids Camp-fee	<u>27</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10am-Wildlife Kids Camp-fee	<u>28</u> 10:30-12:30 Propagation Society 10am-Wildlife Kids Camp-fee	<u>29</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation** 10am-Wildlife Kids Camp-fee	<u>30</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am - Nature Walk
<u>31</u>						

JULY

Grants Now in Process*

Funder		Amount	Project Detail	Grant Status
Alcoa	Alcoa	\$30,000	Upgrade hawk camera and install critter cameras. Track young hawks' migration in their first two years.	All the cameras are installed and are running. Hawk cam is on the internet now and the mama hawk is incubating two eggs
Proposition 84	State of California California State Parks	\$710,000	Classroom upgrades, historical mural, Tongva exhibit, Nature Calls exhibit, habitat related exhibits, a roof-like covering for the Atrium and an exhibit explaining the use and purpose of the Sump	Being worked on as two projects - 1. Construction, and 2. Exhibits. We have reviewed the architect plans for construction and are going to have a kick-off meeting for with the exhibit designer in Early April.
Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Project (EEMP) - Urban Trees Grant	State of California - California Natural Resources Agency	~\$30,000 (budget is under negotiation)	Native landscaping and maintenance of the Maple-Sepulveda Corner	Under budget review with the State
EEMP - Tar Plant Preserve Grant	State of California - California Natural Resources Agency	~ \$500,000 (budget is under negotiation)	Development and restoration of the RTC site at Crenshaw and 208 th St.; vernal areas that will mitigate for the Southern Tar Plant being impacted by development of the transit center.	Under budget review with the State
Habitat Conservation Fund - Education Grant	California Coastal Commission	\$147,473	Upgrade docent tours at Madrona and Henrietta Basin to meet State Educational Core Standards for all grade levels, plus purchase supplies for Henrietta and publish a book on the history of Madrona and the South Bay that will be given to third-and-fourth grade teachers to use as study guide.	Award notice was received, awaiting official documentation.
Proposition 1	California Coastal Commission	~\$468,000	Restoration of vernal pools 1, 3 and 5 and their surrounding watersheds	Application will be submitted 3/31/16

*See story beginning on page 5.

“Spring...” continued from page 5

we were able to witness these spectacular but sad events live. Now though, in 2016, a female hawk, leg-banded with the number 227, has selected the nest to raise a family. Number 227, a hawk that was born near LAX in 2013, then captured at LAX and released in Silverado Canyon in late January 2014, arrived at our local nest late February of last year. She actually supplanted the female that was originally working on the nest! As is normal, the newly-paired hawks migrated out of Southern California in July 2015 and returned sometime in September. We were quite surprised to see 227 had returned!

When she returned, her new red tail feathers indicated she was now old enough to lay eggs. She and her mate worked hard on cleaning up the nest and making it suitable for both of them—and their brood. The first eggs were laid successfully on March 19 at about 11:40 a.m. Two were laid but one egg was crushed in the process. For five days the young female carefully sat on the remaining egg and turned it every one to one-and-a-half hours. Then, sometime between 1:30 and 3:30 a.m., 227 laid another egg! Needless to say, we were all elated. We are running this viewing program on a shoestring. Chris Wendel is the technical genius who created a system through which we can view the nest 24/7 via the Internet. Access to the live view can be reached by going to hawkcam.is-a-geek.com and using the word **guest** as both the login and the password. The signal drops occasionally, as the system is mostly green—running on solar and transmitting wirelessly to the Internet.


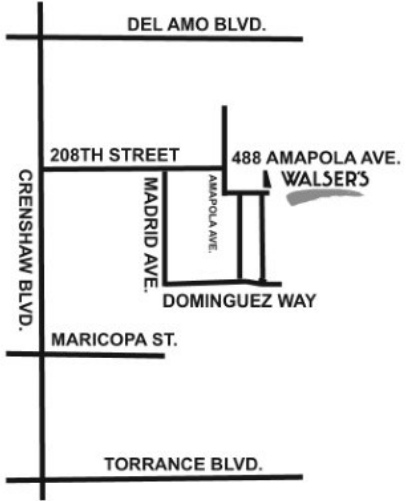
Every day watching becomes an adventure. To be able to see interactions between the male and female and the relationship between the female and the eggs—it's incredible. Already we have learned things we never knew; for example, we now know the female spends most of her time on the nest, but the

male will sit for several hours to give her a break. Also, by means of a microphone in the camera unit, we know there is a Great Horned Owl who visits occasionally. We even saw it sit on the nest on February 7! We are looking at the possibility of seeing the hawk eggs hatch close to Earth Day, and perhaps seeing the young birds take their first flight sometime between June 25 and July 1, 2016. After that they will probably learn to fly and hunt at Madrona in July and then migrate north in August. These are reasonable predictions, but subject to change. Keep watching; you will be able to share in the adventure.

Even as we are watching our pair this season, we have an eye on the future. We have learned a lot about how to best broadcast live to the Internet and are looking forward to upgrading our system. We look at these hawks with a deep sense of appreciation and wonder. To us they represent both accomplishment and hope. This pair would not be on nest today if the original folks who fought to set aside the Preserve had not been so incredibly persistent—if our restoration attempts were not successful, or even if the City tree-trimming policy had not been altered to respect breeding birds.

We hope this family will live for generations, and that people who have shared in this learning experience continue to support local hawk preservation. With these efforts we will continue to see Red-tails glide across the Torrance sky for years to come.

There is so much more to share, new wonderful Staff, the success of our Science Fair students, the growing of plants for the enhancement of habitats at Entradero, Henrietta and Amie Basins; and the first ever school tours led at Henrietta. But space and time are short—please come by the Nature Center and chat with us about all that is going on!—T.D.

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Birds of 2016 thus far		
Contributors to this list are many, including: Mark Rubke, Tracy Drake, Ron Melin, Tommye Hite, Jun Saito, Manuel and Alejandro Duran, Jeanne Bellemin and Eric Hansen.		
Canada Goose	Glaucous-winged Gull	European Starling
Gadwall	Rock Pigeon	American Pipit
<i>Eurasian Wigeon</i>	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Cedar Waxwing
American Wigeon	Mourning Dove	Orange-crowned Warbler
Mallard	White-throated Swift	Common Yellowthroat
Blue-winged Teal	Anna's Hummingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Cinnamon Teal	Allen's Hummingbird	Townsend's Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Downy Woodpecker	<i>Grasshopper Sparrow</i>
Northern Pintail	Northern Flicker	Chipping Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	American Kestrel	<i>Clay-colored Sparrow</i>
Ring-necked Duck	Merlin	Lark Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Peregrine Falcon	Fox Sparrow
Bufflehead	Mitred Parakeet	Dark-eyed Junco
Ruddy Duck	Black Phoebe	White-crowned Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	Say's Phoebe	Savannah Sparrow
Great Egret	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Song Sparrow
Snowy Egret	Cassin's Kingbird	Lincoln's Sparrow
Green Heron	Hutton's Vireo	California Towhee
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Western Scrub-Jay	Spotted Towhee
Turkey Vulture	American Crow	<i>Lazuli Bunting</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Common Raven	Red-winged Blackbird
Cooper's Hawk	No. Rough-winged Swallow	Western Meadowlark
Red-shouldered Hawk	Tree Swallow	Great-tailed Grackle
Red-tailed Hawk	Bushtit	House Finch
Sora	House Wren	Purple Finch
American Coot	Bewick's Wren	<i>Pine Siskin</i>
Black-necked Stilt	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Lesser Goldfinch
Killdeer	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	American Goldfinch
Wilson's Snipe	Western Bluebird	House Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Mountain Bluebird	Northern Red Bishop
Western Gull	Hermit Thrush	Scaly-breasted Munia
California Gull	American Robin	
Herring Gull	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Italic = unusual sighting</i>
	Butterflies	
Monarch	Red Admiral	Western Tiger Swallowtail
Gulf Fritillary	Lady sp.	Funereal Duskywing
Cabbage White	Acmon Blue	Fiery Skipper
Cloudless Sulphur	Gray Hairstreak	Umber skipper
Western Pygmy Blue	Mourning Cloak	Checkered Skipper
	Dragonflies	
Common Green Darner	Variegated Meadowhawk	Pacific Forktail
Wandering Glider		

South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



Pale spikerush *Eleocharis macrostachya*

Conserving the water that falls on our gardens just makes sense, particularly in times of drought. One idea is to drain the water into a rain garden (a shallow percolation depression). You can learn more at: <http://mother-natures-backyard.blogspot.com/2013/03/harvesting-rain-rain-gardens-and.html>.

Rain gardens often include plants that like a little extra winter/spring water. One such plant—which does well in the wild and in local gardens—is the Pale spikerush.

Eleocharis macrostachya is a small, grass-like plant, one to two feet tall. It once was common in the South Bay wetlands and can still be seen growing luxuriantly on the Preserve. It is well adapted to seasonal wetlands, beginning to grow in moist soils (even under water) and becoming dormant with the dry season.

Like many wetland species, Pale spikerush is a spreader. On the Preserve, it looks like an unmowed lawn in wet years. In fact, it's sometimes used as a seasonal ornamental grass in wet areas of the garden. Its bright green color is a welcome spring sight. But contain it if you don't want it to spread.

Like the grasses, rushes and sedges, the spikerushes are wind pollinated. They don't need fancy flowers to attract pollinators, just simple ones that dangle in the breeze.

Spikerushes are fine in just about any soil. They can grow in sun to part-shade, and they love their winter-spring water. You can even grow Pale spikerush in a pot in a garden pond!

Along with other wetland species, Pale spikerush performs several important services. It provides seeds, greens and cover for birds and small creatures. Its roots bind the soil, preventing soil erosion; and they help clean the water.



In the old days, the stems were used to stuff pillows and for basketry. They were also used to treat an upset stomach.

For more on this plant see: <http://mother-natures-backyard.blogspot.com/2015/12/plant-of-month-december-pale-spikerush.html>

Learn more about local native plants at our "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" series on the first Saturday of each month.

Plant Information Sheets and Plant Lists are also available at the Nature Center.

Artists Corner

Through April 22 - Photography Exhibit by **Altha Hines**.

April 23 - June 3 - "**Our Feathered Friends**," a Photography Exhibit by **Randy Harwood**. Artist's reception Friday, May 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

June 7 - July 15 - "**A Ten Year Reflection on the Marsh**," An Exhibit of Paintings by **Stephen West**. Artist's Reception, Saturday, June 11, 12 noon - 3 p.m. will include special guests from the South Bay Wildlife Rehab with live raptors.

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