

Spring 2020

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

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

Due to the State and LA County

**SAFER AT HOME Orders, Madrona
Marsh Preserve is CLOSED until
further notice.**

If you have any questions, please call

The Nature Center at 310-782-3989

Changes at Nature Center and Preserve During Coronavirus Emergency

Recent events surrounding COVID-19 have understandably impacted all of us in our day-to-day lives. With the situation changing every day, Staff at the Madrona Marsh is working diligently to implement protocols as directed by City officials. Needless to say, the situation is as dynamic as the coronavirus itself. Nevertheless, we are taking concrete action based on direction from the City Manager's Office.

As of March 14, 2020, the Madrona Marsh Nature Center is CLOSED to the public until further notice.

Staff will continue on in their regular duties; however, due to the cancellation of

all programs, and by direction of the City, there will be no volunteers working during this time. All programs and events are cancelled during the closure. How long the closure remains in effect is dependent on many factors and of course the situation may change again, but we are hoping to open the Nature Center again within a month or two.

As of March 25, 2020, The Madrona Marsh Preserve is CLOSED until further notice. Staff will continue to perform work on the Preserve as part of their regular duties. Your patience and understanding are appreciated during this stressful time.

Melissa LoebI, Manager/Naturalist
Steve Ash, Assistant Manager
Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Editor's Extended COVID-19 Note:

Bill Arrowsmith, Past FOMM President & Editorial Advisor

This issue of the *Marsh Mailing* was being assembled as more details of the seriousness and possible extent of the Coronavirus pandemic were unfolding. We delayed publication and are now including the latest information as we go to press the first week of April. Our initial intent for this issue was to present Madrona Marsh as a calm, safe place to visit during the Shelter in Place directives from Governor Newsom. Indeed, the first Sunday after the directive, March 15, my wife, Fran, and I did visit the Preserve on one of our first beautiful, warm, late-spring days, along with a few dozen others. People were already observing appropriate social distancing, and still exchanging "Hello's" and avian observations from 6 feet or more. (The photographs on pages 10 and 11 are from that visit.) We had a delightful afternoon, and I couldn't wait to share our "secret" with all of you.

But the next weekend the Preserve had significantly more visitors, as word of this lovely place spread, perhaps aided by that other "social" thing: social media. But many in these groups, unfamiliar with the rules protecting our precious habitat, and apparently unable to read our posted signs, proceeded to ride bikes, have picnics and walk dogs on the Preserve. And they also largely did not observe the six-foot social distancing rule, so Manager Melissa Loebl and Torrance City officials had no choice but to close the Preserve until further notice, as we unhappily joined many other county and state parks, beaches and other wildlife venues.

But you can still enjoy the beauty, birds and butterflies of Madrona Marsh – just as we did forty years ago, when it was still a privately owned, producing oil field: Simply Walk Around It! In the 70's and 80's we didn't have the nice, wide concrete sidewalks we have today, or any sidewalks at all! And we had to peer through a rusty chain-link fence, not today's wrought iron fence bars. (Hint: you can easily position a bar between the object lenses of your binoculars – and *voilà!* It disappears!)

I revisited the Preserve via the sidewalk on Sunday afternoon, March 29, the first weekend of no entry, along with a dozen or so others I saw during a short half-hour visit. BTW, everybody was practicing safe, 6-foot or more distancing, which we all must observe if we are to be allowed to continue even sidewalk viewing.

I was amazed at how much I easily observed in my short walk around the western, Madrona Avenue, border of the Preserve. There is still much water, even in the north pond, and I saw even more waterfowl than I had in an hour 2 weeks earlier: American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler and Mallard ducks, American Coots and Canada Geese (and goslings), as I had seen before. But this time I saw also a beautiful Cinnamon Teal pair and even a male Ring-necked Duck, as well as a cooperative Red-winged Blackbird, posing and singing only ten feet away from me. Who needs to be inside? [The photographs on page 11 were taken "through the fence".]

Yesterday I proudly shared my experience with Elaine Endres, Gift Shop volunteer and long-time organizer of newsletter assembly 'parties'. Elaine, who celebrated her 93rd birthday in March, also strolled outside the Preserve on Sunday, a little earlier in the day than I. She saw not only all the birds I had seen, but also a Western Kingbird and a male Ruddy Duck, in chestnut-colored breeding plumage and sporting a bright blue bill!

Please join us and continue to enjoy the calm and beauty of Madrona Marsh and get some healthy exercise at the same time and take a walk outside the Preserve: you can walk as far or as little as you like. It is about 1.1 miles if you walk the entire perimeter.

Park your car in the Nature Center Parking Lot or in a Ralph's or Target lot on the west side of Madrona, carefully cross the street, and – we cannot stress this too much: MAINTAIN AT LEAST A SAFE, SIX FOOT DISTANCE FROM OTHERS – and enjoy your walk! Oh, and to guarantee you'll see a lot of birds, try to schedule your walk with

-2- Elaine Endres!

Better Safe Now than Sorry When It's Too Late

Suzan Hubert, FOMM President

Due to the COVID-19 virus the Friends Board of Directors, after much discussion, decided to cancel all of our docent-led student study tours through the end of May for this year. Tyke Hikes and Nature Storytime are also canceled. Following the Board meeting, this decision became a moot point as the City Manager determined that the Nature Center should close to all visitors and volunteers.

Watch our website:

www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com, for re-opening dates.

Our best defense during this time to protect ourselves and our families and friends is to follow these oft-repeated guidelines -- with a few new thoughts:

- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Wash your hands often.
- Use hand sanitizer.

• Don't hug or shake hands. Perhaps a greeting, smile or a bow would be sufficient

• Don't wear your shoes in your house. We are so worried about what germs our hands may pick up, but think about what germs your shoes have walked in; don't bring that into your house. Leave your shoes at the door.

• Be patient, be kind, and be thoughtful of others.

The bottom line is be sensible, be safe and (continue to) be well.

See you on the Preserve, it's a healthy place with plenty of space...



Suzan

The Great Backyard Butterfly Count



Friends of butterflies:

The annual July Butterfly Count is coming up on Saturday, July 11.

Because butterfly populations change rapidly from month to month, the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) encourages members to do a Spring Butterfly Count as well (spring is defined as before June). So this year we are going to see what we can find on Sunday, April 19. The count area and procedure are the same as for the July Count.

This is an opportunity to get out into nature in small groups (such as one) and make an important contribution. In the event of a local lockdown, the count will be conducted in our backyards.

Let me know if you're interested and where you would like to count.—Vincent Lloyd
stephenvincentlloyd@gmail.com

Donations of \$100.00 or More Fall 2019

(Editor's Note: the list on this page, which includes many of our most faithful donors, was inadvertently omitted from the Fall issue. We regret the error.)

Date	Donor	Amount	Comment
November	Ellen & Chris Velline	\$100.00	
December	Lyn & Michael Russell	\$1,000.00	In Memory of Jean Custer
December	Beth & Jim Shibata	\$500.00	
December	Roger Potter	\$100.00	
December	Rebecca Moore	\$100.00	
December	James & Yoko Justiss	\$600.00	
December	Frank Miles	\$200.00	
December	Brian Currie	\$500.00	
December	Anne Bellemin	\$250.00	Acknowledgement of Jeanne Bellemin
December	Elizabeth Lanzer	\$100.00	
December	Georgian Griswold	\$500.00	
December	Norman & Suzanne George	\$100.00	
December	Nat Bhaskar	\$100.00	

Donations of \$100.00 or More Winter 2020

December	Joan Sontag	\$100.00	
December	Stettenheim Foundation	\$500.00	
January	Michele & David Wilson	\$500.00	
January	Rebecca Moore	\$200.00	
January	Barbara & James Whitman	\$100.00	
January	Gerald & Lynn Cantu	\$500.00	
January	Nancy Baker	\$500.00	
January	Mary Ann Meyers	\$100.00	
January	Ann Bellemin	\$150.00	Honoring Jeanne Bellemin Birthday
January	Maxine Trevethen	\$500.00	
January	Ray and Anna Randall	\$100.00	
February	Claudia Kazachinsky	\$100.00	
February	Douglas and Alice Thomas	\$100.00	
February	Torrance Woman's Club	\$300.00	
February	Ashok & Geeta Gupta	\$100.00	Scholarship

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Schedule of Events for April through July 2020*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike- donation 10:30 Prop.Soc	<u>3</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>4</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am-Eggstravaganza
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> CLOSED	<u>7</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>8</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>9</u> 10:30 Prop.Soc. 10:30am-Nature Stories	<u>10</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>11</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk
<u>12</u> 10 am- Nature Walk	<u>13</u> CLOSED	<u>14</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance West Exhibit Ends 7pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	<u>17</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation** 8:45-1EarthDay Restoration	<u>18</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor 9am-H.B.Nature Walk
<u>19</u> Butterfly Count see p.3	<u>20</u> CLOSED	<u>21</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance Wolfram Exhib.Begins	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	<u>24</u> 10 am- Friday Fun- Ellsberry Ex. 10am-Turtle/ TortoiseDay	<u>25</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor 1-2 pm-Wolfram Recept.
<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> CLOSED	<u>28</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society		

A P R I L

***NOTE: ALL EVENTS ARE POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. SEE PAGE 1. CHECK THE FRIENDS WEBSITE, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com FOR THE LATEST STATUS.** (Normally 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.)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<u>1</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>2</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> CLOSED	<u>5</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>6</u> 10-10:45-am-Senior Stroll	<u>7</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc	<u>8</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>9</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am-Nature Walk
<u>10</u> 10am- Nature Walk	<u>11</u> CLOSED	<u>12</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>13</u> 6:30-8:30 pm- FOMM Bd. Mtg. 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman	<u>14</u> 10:30 Prop.Soc. 10:30 am- Nature Stories	<u>15</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>16</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. 9am-H.B.Nature Walk
<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> CLOSED	<u>19</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	<u>22</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>23</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.
<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> CLOSED	<u>26</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** Wolfram Ex. Ends	<u>30</u> 8:45 am-12 Hab.Restor.
<u>31</u>						

M A Y

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<u>1</u> CLOSED	<u>2</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike	<u>5</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>6</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 6:30pm-Night Hike\$\$
<u>7</u>	<u>8</u> CLOSED	<u>9</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>10</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>11</u> 10:30 Prop.Soc 10:30am-Nature Stories	<u>12</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>13</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk
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<u>21</u>	<u>22</u> CLOSED	<u>23</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> 10:30 PropSoc	<u>26</u> 10 am-12n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>27</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.
<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> CLOSED	<u>30</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance				

JUNE

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<u>12</u> 10 am-Nature Walk	<u>13</u> CLOSED	<u>14</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>15</u> 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>16</u> 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>17</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>18</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 9am-H.B.Nature Walk
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JULY

The Western Bluebird

Sialia mexicana

by Vincent Lloyd

Nothing evokes the sound of the Sierra quite like the soft chur-lee of the Western Bluebird. Fortunately, you don't have to go to the mountains to see this beautiful bird, as it has adapted to city parks with a little help from bird-lovers putting up nesting boxes for them. And it's been a winter-spring (breeding) resident at Madrona Marsh since the first nesting box was put up here in 2012, as an Eagle Scout project.

The male Bluebird is unmistakable, its upperparts and wings are a deep metallic blue and on its chest is a red "vest" that wraps around onto the back. It has a thin, dark bill and a short tail, and likes to perch upright. The female and immature male are much duller, grey overall with hints of red on the chest and blue in the wings and tail. The juveniles have spotted breasts.

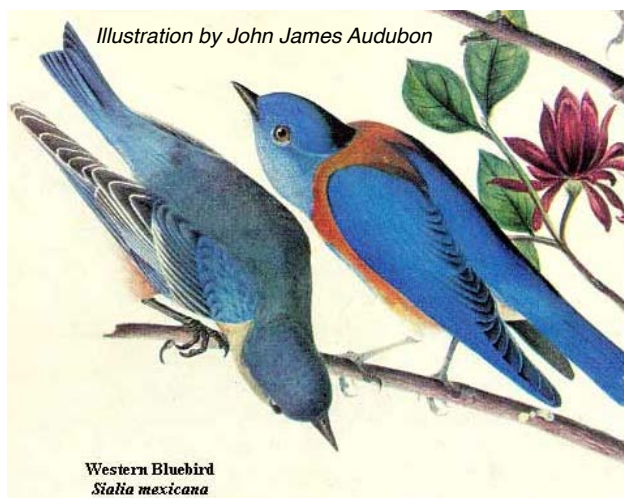
Bluebirds are social and are usually found in flocks outside the breeding season. They often hunt for insects by dropping onto the ground from low perches.

Western Bluebirds are found only in North America west of the Great Plains. The breeding range extends from the Canadian border south to about Mexico City. In winter, birds at the northern parts of the range may move south a bit, while other populations may move to lower elevations. Their preferred habitat is open woodlands and forest edges.

Bluebirds belong to the thrush family, Turdidae, which includes such familiar birds as the American Robin and the European Robin, not to mention the Hermit Thrush. The Western Bluebird, *Sialia mexicana*, is one of three species in the genus *Sialia*. Its counterpart, the Eastern Bluebird, is nearly identical in appearance, although if you look closely, the western male has a red throat instead of a blue throat. The Eastern Bluebird is common in the eastern U.S. and Canada, but also occurs in Mexico and southern Arizona, where its range overlaps the

Western Bluebird. The third member of the genus, the Mountain Bluebird, is a bird of the Great Basin. Small numbers can be found in Antelope Valley in winter, and occasionally, with great excitement, on Madrona Marsh. The male Mountain Bluebird is all blue.

Bluebirds eat mainly insects in the summer, mostly ground-dwelling insects such as caterpillars, grasshoppers, and ants. In winter, they like berries such as elderberries, blackberries, and even poison oak (!).



Bluebirds are cavity nesters, but their bill is too small to excavate the cavity, so they look for abandoned woodpecker holes or cavities in dead trees. Unfortunately, the introduced House Sparrows and Starlings also want these desirable nesting sites. Consequently, bluebird populations went down in the last century. Recent efforts to put up nesting boxes for the bluebirds have led to a modest recovery in numbers.

The female will make a loose nest of grass and straw in the cavity and lay 2 to 8 blue eggs. Incubation lasts two weeks. Nesting lasts three to four weeks. Sometimes, young from a previous clutch help the parents feed the nestlings. Genetic studies have revealed that many of the nestlings were not fathered by the female's mate.

"Western Bluebird" continued on page 11

Community, Compassion, Coexistence

Editor's Note: The following is a letter to Suzan Hubert, FOMM President, from the Project Coyote Pack. But, as Suzan points out, "This is a valuable message for everyone. It's not really about coyotes."

Dear Suzan,

These are turbulent times.

As our main office has been shuttered with the San Francisco Bay area lockdown, we are reminded of what matters:

- Community.
- Compassion.
- Coexistence.

These "Three C's" have defined Project Coyote since our inception—and now have heightened significance.

What does it mean to live in community at a time when deep fears and a scarcity mentality define our days? What does compassionate coexistence look like when we are told to maintain a distance of six feet between one another?

As our lives are turned upside down, perhaps this is the time to examine our priorities; what really matters? It is the time to look inward ... to find refuge from a world seemingly spinning out of control by centering our strengths and finding our individual balance.

Now is the time to express compassion, gratitude, kindness and goodwill; to express our common humanity—our humane-ness—

with each other and with the nonhuman animals who share our planet.

Can we step out of our fear bubbles, expand our circle of compassion, and focus on what brings us together?

Will we rise to the occasion? For yourself and for all others, Be Kind.

As our team regroups and works remotely, we understand more acutely and more deeply what the three C's mean—Community, Compassion and Coexistence—and we will be sharing our thoughts with you in upcoming newsletters. If your own stories might help us during these difficult weeks and months, please send them along so that we can include them in our missives.

With gratitude for our community,

Camilla & Caleigh & The Project Coyote Pack

Contact Us: info@projectcoyote.org
415-945-3232

Project Coyote is a fiscally sponsored project of Earth Island Institute, which has received a 4-Star rating from Charity Navigator.

Artists Corner

View the works of local artists portraying the beauty of the Madrona Marsh. **To be rescheduled when Nature Center Reopens. Check website for latest status.**

Through April 14 - **"Nature's Wings,"** - Stephen West Exhibit.

April 21 - May 29 - **"My Favorite Marshin' II"** - Dave Wolfram Exhibit. Artist's Reception, April 25, 1 - 3 p.m.



A Dune Lupine vies with Lilac Verbena to be the prettiest purple in our Native Plant Garden



Red Fairy Dusters frame a Shaw Agave cactus



Mariposa Lilies stand guard and adorn a lucky succulent.

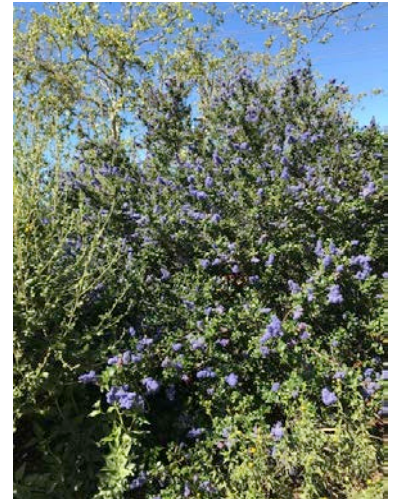
In the Native Plant Garden (top 6)



A Silver Bush Lupine provides color beside a comfortable bench.



Flannel Bush ends its winter dormancy in a blaze of yellow blooms.



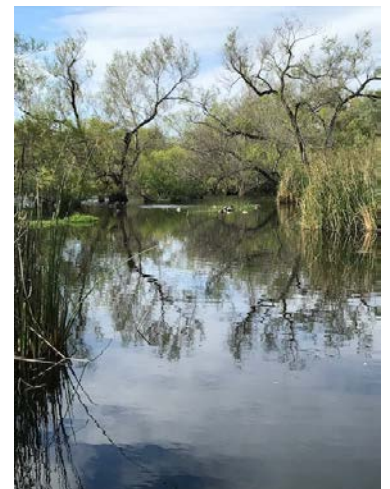
Several types of ceanothus add striking purple blossoms to the panoply of color.



Fresh rainwater fills the north pond.



A willow arch frames two distant Northern Shoveler ducks.

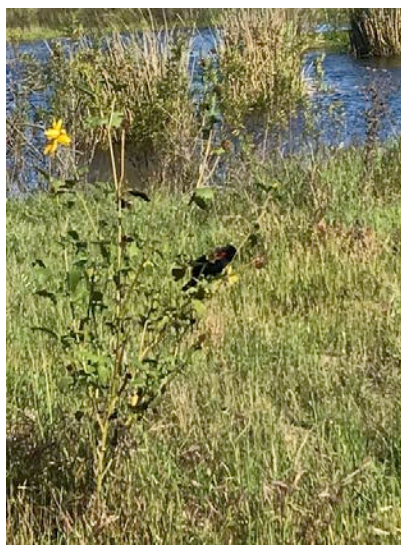


Northern Shovelers and American Wigeons feed near the willow

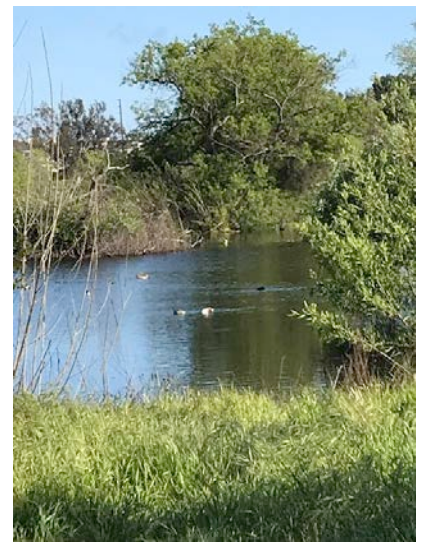
On Preserve Before Closure (bottom 3)



Some nice sitting logs go unused for now.



A male Red-winged Blackbird poses and sings within 10 feet of west fence.

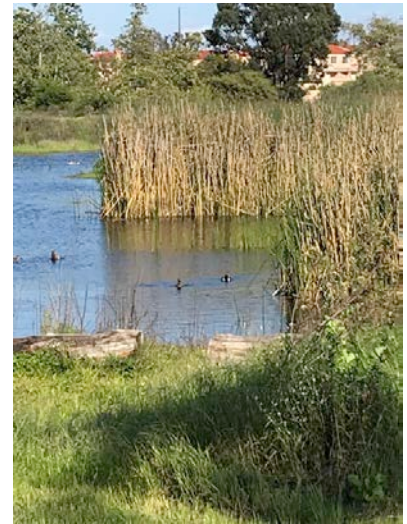


Northern Shovelers and a coot share large pond



Male Mallard & mate (in shade) have south pond to themselves.

Photos Taken Through Fence AFTER Preserve Closure (top 5)



Two dabbling shovelers grab a bite while a third swims nearby.

“Western Bluebird” continued from page 8

Western Bluebirds are often seen at the Marsh. The Native Plant Garden and the eucalyptus grove near the weather station are two good spots. You may have noticed the nest boxes that have been erected on the Preserve. If you are lucky, you may come upon one that is occupied by a breeding pair of Bluebirds, although more often they are taken over by honey bees. The box near the berm, however, was intended for kestrels, yet last year a pair of Bluebirds moved in!—**Vincent Lloyd**



A nearly full parking lot on March 15, the first Sunday after Nature Center closure.

Friends of Madrona Marsh

a non-profit organization est. 1972

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Torrance, CA 90510

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Membership Application

We appreciate your support. Thank you! ***Your donations are tax deductible. Please consider a donation to FOMM in your will or trust!***

Annual Membership: _____ New _____ Renewal

Individual _____\$20 Family _____\$30 Youth (under 18)/Senior (over 65) _____\$10

Patron _____\$50 Club/Organization _____\$75 Business/Industry _____\$150

Lifetime Membership _____\$500 Amount Enclosed _____

Please send your donation or offer of services to:

Friends of Madrona Marsh, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510

FOMM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

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Address _____

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I will volunteer for: (Gift Shop, Reception Desk, other) _____