

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

"The Times, They Are A-changin'"

Bill Arrowsmith, Past President

Bob Dylan probably wasn't thinking of Madrona Marsh when he penned that song back in 1963, ten years before the Friends of Madrona Marsh Corporation was formed. But the title certainly applies to the Friends and to the Preserve, and to the 2014 plans for each. I can only summarize here what I know of those plans, but your best course of action to find out what really lies in store for this year would be to attend the Friends' Annual Meeting on Sunday afternoon, January 26, 2014. (As usual, that's one week after the last NFL playoff game and one week before the Super Bowl. No excuses. No coincidence.)

Oh, and if you need even more encouragement to attend, consider this: you could easily also come home with a new pair of Vortex Talon HD 8x42 Binoculars, waterproof, fogproof, and with a lifetime guarantee. These superb optics, with a manufacturer's suggested

retail price over \$500, were donated to the Friends by Wild Birds Unlimited, Rolling Hills Plaza, Torrance, for an opportunity drawing at our annual meeting. Bob Shanman, owner of WBU in Torrance, is even throwing in the binocular harness strap so popular now, and a lens-cleaning pen. What a deal! All in return for a suggested donation of \$5 and a wink from Lady Luck.

Most of you know Dan Portway, a past president of the Friends and a long-time supporter. Perhaps Dan's greatest contribution to the Friends and to the Preserve has been to introduce so many of us to native plants and to the concept of restoration. He has been doing that for over 20 years, including the project in the early 90's in which Dan first restored a large area in the northeast quadrant of the Preserve by himself, then sectioned off the remaining

"Changin'" continued on page 2

Annual Meeting Friends of Madrona Marsh

Sunday, January 26, 2014
at Madrona Marsh Nature Center

Tours of Restoration Area and BioFilter from 2-2:45 p.m. Meeting starts at 3 p.m.

- Welcome and Introductions - President Suzan Hubert
- Election of 4 New Board Members
Candidates: Sarah Noddings Bob Shanman
 Connie Vadheim Steve Giffen
- Vote on Increase in Membership Fees
- Annual Report from Preserve Manager and Naturalist, Drake
- FOMM Annual Report: President Hubert
- Program: **The BIG RESTORATION of 2014.**
Dan Portway will describe the largest restoration effort ever attempted at Madrona Marsh, to be conducted this year.
Dan, Tracy, and the FOMM Board of Directors will answer questions from the audience.
- Opportunity Drawing for Vortex Talon HD Binoculars donated to FoMM by Wild Birds Unlimited, Rolling Hills Plaza, Torrance
- Plans for 2014 and Closing Remarks - President Hubert

* * * Light Refreshments Will Be Served * * *

“Changin’” continued from page 1.

perimeter into garden-sized plots and convinced an amazing number of us that we could do likewise.

He showed us which plants were non-native weeds and which were the natives we would be restoring. He provided seeds for all the natives, chosen from the list that naturalist Walt Wright had researched as being historically accurate back-dunes plants.

That project was very successful. Many of those plants or successors still border the northwest corner. And many of the people who tended them are still active in Preserve restoration.

Dan has continued his restoration efforts more recently, supervising for the past two years a group of three to four young men whom he also trained. They have made very impressive progress in restoring the eastern side of the Preserve, as well as sections along the northern edge and an area just east of the center path. The young men were paid an hourly wage by the Friends. Dan donated his time as a volunteer, but was able to do so only on weekends, as he held a full-time job.

And now Dan has made us an offer we couldn't refuse. With financial support from the Friends, Dan will take a leave of absence from his aerospace engineering job and be a full-time supervisor for an intensive restoration effort on the Preserve. This could enable us to finally make some real progress against the weeds that have invaded and multiplied over vast sections of the uplands.

The plan, for which Dan has drawn up specific goals and a detailed schedule, has been approved by the Friends Board of Directors and by Preserve Manager Tracy Drake, and the progress of Dan and his crew will be reviewed monthly by both Ms. Drake and the Board.

This is the largest restoration effort on the Preserve since the earliest days of City ownership, when restoration included the removal of concrete and steel debris from decades of oil recovery operations. Would you like more details? Come to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 26. The meeting starts at 3 p.m., but come at 2 p.m. and take a tour of the restoration areas, past and future. We will also have a tour of the new biofilter, which is now in full operation. And it would be a good time also to check out the new NWS weather station at Madrona Marsh. You can observe current conditions or recent history either on the new monitor at the Nature Center, or on your home computer or smart phone via the links at our website.

As for the Friends' plans for 2014 and beyond, suffice it to say that President Hubert is starting the year off with spirit and zeal, urging her board to re-examine its mission statement and find ways to improve and expand our presence in the community. We will elect four members of the 12-member Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting, but there are still two open positions on the Board. If you would like to participate as a board member, or know someone who would, please email President Suzan Hubert at suzanhubert@sbcglobal.net, or contact any of the other board members.

NOTE: At its December 2013 meeting, the Friends Board of Directors decided that, AFTER 40 YEARS, it is time to raise our membership fees for the first time. The proposed new annual fees, which will be voted on at the Annual Meeting are:

- Individual \$20 [was \$10]
 - Family \$30 [was \$20]
 - Youth/Senior \$10 [was \$5]
 - Patron \$50 [was \$35]
 - Clubs/Orgs. \$75 [was \$50]
 - Business/Industry \$150 [was \$100]
 - Lifetime Membership \$500 [no change]
- B.A.

Winter 2013 Donations of \$100+

Date	Donor	Donation
August	Hermosa Garden Club	\$300
September	Ryoko Mand	\$500
August	F1 Key Foundation	\$200
October	Betty Knapp Family	\$100
October	Georgean Griswold	\$500
October	June Kagdis	\$100
October	Ellen Kircher	\$100
December	Joy Nakano	\$100
December	Stacy Herman	\$100
December	Calif. Native Plant Society	\$800
December	Dale Lincoln	\$200

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 Diane Gonsalves at gonwild2@yahoo.com or Bill Arrowsmith, TheArrowsmiths@sbcglobal.net, or dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.

Just Say "No" to Plastic

Suzan Hubert, President

When I walk through the Preserve I can't help but think how old this land is; it hosted dinosaurs. Before the dinosaurs this land was sea floor. It hosted geologic changes as the sea floor rose to become land. As I stand on the Preserve and think about that I feel so small and so large, too, simply because I am here, now.



Suzan Hubert

Then I see the plastic bags and bottles—against the fence, in the ponds, stuck in the Willow trees and I am worried. Time moves on, evolution happens and our time is now; we are a part of it all.

Cast yourself back, think about personal evolution. Ages 25-35 were possibly great years as we were/are over the "OMG I'm an adult, a college graduate, I have a real job; anything and everything is possible." Then you had maybe 10 years of figuring it all out and into the marriage, children, responsibility phase.

Maybe you got it all together or not. Sooner or later it's work like mad and you are 50 and either wondering or loving where the time went. Then you are 65, in great shape for another 30—or not. What did you do when you were 25 and what will or did you do at 65 or wherever you are in the personal evolution of your life?

As we evolve so does the land, a bit more slowly perhaps yet our choices direct the next evolution of our land. Our choices as people are not always helpful to the land we live on or the other creatures we live with. And our poor choices are calling us to account. Our choices will outlive us and could make the future much happier.

Although I am in my sixties (rock the sixties!) mentally I still think I can change the world by not using single use plastic. Why? Because single use plastic is killing us, it's killing the creatures we live with and it's changing our evolution for the worse. At some point we have to stop and

say NO to single use plastic. We have gotten used to saying no to plastic bags. It isn't hard as we can take our easily washable canvas bags to the market. I take mine to Nordstrom's too.

It isn't so easy to say no to single use plastic containers. I tried for about 5 minutes to stop and found it extremely difficult. Takeout places won't use my containers if I bring them as they have health law issues. There aren't many places that use recyclable or degradable containers; Chipotle is one of the best for environmentally friendly packaging.

And think about all the kitchen and bathroom products, all in single use plastic containers. It's really daunting if you are of a mind to put a foot in evolution and take a stand against what plastic is doing to our environment and our future. Plastic is daunting, depressing and, much worse, it's convenient so it's everywhere.

If you want to make a difference, if you still believe that you can make a difference, it's going to be like being a part of raising the sea floor to create the South Bay. Think way long term. It has to start somewhere. Why not with us? We can say no to single use plastic. Patronize places that use recyclable, degradable containers, say "no thanks" to plastic bags, and choose glass and metals that recycle. Find out more about the damage plastic is doing. Because of our small decisions today perhaps in 10,000 years someone will walk through the Preserve and think how glad they are that people stopped using all that plastic long ago.

Keep the Faith

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzan Hubert".

A Special "Thank You"

Thank you to everyone who attended *Moonlight Magic* and supported the Preserve and Nature Center. It was another magical evening under the moon. Very grateful thanks go to all our sponsors and donors who helped make the magic happen. Magic Sponsors for 2013 were **ExxonMobil, Toyota, Walser's** and **Supervisor Don Knabe**. --Suzan Hubert

Madrona Marsh Preserve-Species Seen in 2013

Tracy Drake, Preserve Manager

Canada Goose	Wilson's Snipe	Warbling Vireo	Green-tailed Towhee
Wood Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Western Scrub-Jay	Spotted Towhee
Gadwall	Ring-billed Gull	American Crow	California Towhee
American Wigeon	Herring Gull	Common Raven	Chipping Sparrow
Mallard	Western Gull	No. Rough-winged Swallow	Clay-colored Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	California Gull	Tree Swallow	Brewer's Sparrow
Cinnamon Teal	Glaucous-winged Gull	Barn swallow	Lark Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Caspian Tern	Cliff Swallow	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Rock Pigeon	Bushtit	Fox Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Eurasian Collared-Dove	House Wren	Song Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Mourning Dove	Marsh Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Common Poorwill	Bewick's Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Vaux's Swift	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Loon	White-throated Swift	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Black-chinned Hummingbird	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Dark-eyed Junco
Brandt's Cormorant	Anna's Hummingbird	Western Bluebird	Western Tanager
Double-crested Cormorant	Allen's Hummingbird	Swainson's Thrush	Black-headed Grosbeak
Brown Pelican	Belted Kingfisher	Hermit Thrush	Lazuli Bunting
Great Blue Heron	Acorn Woodpecker	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Great Egret	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird	Western Meadowlark
Snowy Egret	Northern Flicker	European Starling	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Green Heron	American Kestrel	American Pipit	Brewer's Blackbird
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Merlin	Cedar Waxwing	Great-tailed Grackle
White-faced Ibis	Peregrine Falcon	Tennessee Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Turkey Vulture	Mitred Parakeet	Orange-crowned Warbler	Hooded Oriole
White-tailed Kite	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Lucy's Warbler	Bullock's Oriole
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Western Wood-Pewee	Nashville Warbler	House Finch
Cooper's Hawk	Willow Flycatcher	Virginia's Warbler	Lesser Goldfinch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Hammond's Flycatcher	MacGillivray's Warbler	Lawrence's Goldfinch
Red-tailed Hawk	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat	American Goldfinch
Sora	Black Phoebe	Northern Parula	European Goldfinch
Common Gallinule	Say's Phoebe	Yellow Warbler	House Sparrow
American Coot	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Palm Warbler	Orange Bishop
Killdeer	Cassin's Kingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Nutmeg Mannikin
Solitary Sandpiper	Western Kingbird	Black-thr. Gray Warbler	
Greater Yellowlegs	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Townsend's Warbler	Bold = unusual sighting
Willet	Plumbeous Vireo	Hermit Warbler	<i>Bold italics = life bird for the Marsh!</i>
Marbled Godwit	Cassin's Vireo	Wilson's Warbler	
Least Sandpiper	Hutton's Vireo	Yellow-breasted Chat	

Butterflies

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

Dragonflies

Common Green Darner	Variiegated Meadowlark	Wandering Glider
Blue-eyed Darner	Flame Skimmer	Spot-Winged Glider
Cardinal Meadowlark	Neon Skimmer	Black Saddlebags
Red Saddlebags	Familiar Bluet	Pacific Forktail
Blue Dasher		

After studying these lists, especially if you're like me, and knowing in which month these species were observed, the weather patterns of the year become clear. In winter, there was enough water to support almost all of the species of ducks we expect to see—though the numbers within each species were fewer.

There are more water birds that are possible visitors like eared grebes, but they come in the wettest years only. In looking at the shorebird part of the list, it is clear that the wetlands did not dry down very quickly.

There were mudflats long enough to support the good diversity and number of species. The numbers of, and unusually high diversity of, the flycatchers, warblers, and sparrows reflect the long blooming season we had—the hot parts of the year were few, allowing the plants to produce a lot of seeds and attract a lot of insects.

The number of species of butterflies, especially considering that we saw many of these well into December, reflects the long blooming season and also reflects the restoration work completed by Tony Baker and Dan Portway. Between these two, plus staff and others who have worked with them, the entire entrance, upland areas along Plaza del Amo and Maple, and the Chevron Corner have recently been planted. Because new plantings need to be consistently watered, and because of the ebb and flow of the warm and cool weather, many plants are blooming even now as the year comes to a close.

The dragonflies were the big indicator species of the year. They show evidence of a lack of water in the wetlands and a very short rainy season. Less than five inches of rain fell last winter and spring—not enough to allow for the

reproduction of many of our usual dragonfly and damselfly species. The numbers were very low—lower than I can recall. Some species, like the Black-fronted Green, were completely absent.

On a larger scale, one can see the Santa Ana winds were less than normal as there were fewer migrating visitors from the east in all three categories. And it becomes clear that the fire season was not too bad as we did not have any mountain species late in the year.

It is interesting to pay attention to the species that visit, even those that visit your gardens. They are all dependent on seasonal weather patterns – and other variables not yet clearly understood.

In 2014, notice the butterflies, dragonflies and birds that are a part of your life. Notice, too, that your garden and your support of the Preserve matter to these individuals. I am not saying they matter just for the sake of saying they matter, but because their importance is supported by observations.

If you participated in any of the local Christmas Bird Counts this season, an interesting pattern emerged. There was an abundance of species near water and near irrigated areas such as wetlands, gardens and golf courses—but, in those areas that are strictly rain dependent, species were very low in both number and diversity.

So, reading and studying this list makes me grateful. There are many who support the Preserve both financially and with their hard work on the Preserve. The individual birds, butterflies and dragonflies likely feel some sort of gratitude too—you helped their world as much as you supported the programs, classes and events. Thank you—from all of us . . . -T.D.

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center*
Schedule of Events for January through April 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 am-Adult Weeders	2 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	3 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun**	4 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 9am-1pm-Earth Mobil Exhibit 10 am-12 n-"Accent on Annuals"-Dr. Vadheim
5	6 CLOSED	7 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30- pm, "Accent on Annuals"-Dr. Vadheim Ragimov Exhib.Begins	8 8 am-Bird Walk/ 10 am-Adult Weeders 1 pm-Sr.Naturalist	9 10:30--12:30-Propagation Society	10 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun**	11 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10am-Art,Nature Story Time for Kids (fee)
12 2-4 pm-2nd Sunday Science-"What's All the Buzz?" 10am-Kids Watercolor(fee)	13 CLOSED	14 10 am-Adult Weeders	15 10 am-Adult Weeders	16 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	17 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun**	18 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 9-11am-Bird Stories 10am-Origami Class 10am-Botan.& Zoo. Illustrations Class(fee)
19	20 CLOSED	21 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	22 10 am-Adult Weeders	23 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	24 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun** 6:30-Ragimov Reception	25 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 2-4 pm-Birds & Dinosaurs 10 am-Nature Walk
26 2 pm-Annual FoMM Mtg. 10 am-Nature Walk	27 CLOSED	28 10am-Home School Nature Class(fee) 10 am-Adult Weeders	29 10am-Home School Nature Class(fee) 10 am-Adult Weeders	30	31	

JANUARY

*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. **No charge for Friday Fun, but reservations are required. For the latest event information, consult website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 10 am-12 n-"Botany Intro."-Dr. Vadheim
2	3 CLOSED	4 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30- pm, "Botany Intro"-Dr. Vadheim	5 10 am-Adult Weeders	6 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-Prop. Society.	7 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	8 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 10 am-Origami
9 2-4 pm-2nd Sun. Science, 'Nature's Treasures"-fee	10 CLOSED	11 10 am-Adult Weeders	12 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 1 pm-Sr.Naturalist 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	13 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	14 10 am--12n-Friday Fun**	15 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 9-11am-Bird Stories
16	17 CLOSED	18 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	19 10 am-Adult Weeders	20 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	21 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun** Ragimov Exhibit Ends	22 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk 7-9pm-Night Hike (fee)
23 10 am-Nature Walk	24 CLOSED	25 10am-Home School Nature Class(fee) 10 am-Adult Weeders Stansbury Exhibit Begins	26 10am-Home School Nature Class(fee) 10 am-Adult Weeders	27 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	28 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	

FEBRUARY

Nature Center & Gift Shop

(310)782-3989

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. <u>1</u> & Student.Service 10 am-12 n-"Climate Change"-Dr. Vadheim
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> CLOSED	<u>4</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30- pm, "Climate Change"-Dr. Vadheim	<u>5</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 1 pm-Sr.Naturalist	<u>6</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-Prop. Society.	<u>7</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	8:30am-Birding by Ear(fee <u>8</u>) 8:45am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9-11am-Bird Stories 10 am-Origami 6:30pm-Star Party-Jupiter
2-4 pm-2nd <u>9</u> Sun. Science, "Exotic Birds"-fee	<u>10</u> CLOSED	<u>11</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>12</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 1 pm-Sr.Naturalist 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>13</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>14</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun**	<u>15</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> CLOSED	<u>18</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>19</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>20</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	10 am--12 n <u>21</u> Friday Fun** 6:30-Stansbury Reception	<u>22</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk
10 am- <u>23</u> Nature Walk	<u>24</u> CLOSED	<u>25</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>26</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>27</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>28</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. <u>29</u> & Student.Service 9am-Binocular Seminar
<u>30</u>	<u>31</u> CLOSED					

MARCH

All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, **located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street.** **No charge for Friday Fun, but **reservations are required.** For the latest event information, consult website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	CLOSED	<u>1</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>2</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>3</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>4</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun** Stansbury Exhibit Ends	<u>5</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am-12 n-"Fabulous Fruits"-Dr. Vadheim 7:30-9:30 pm-Star Party
2-4pm- <u>6</u> 2nd Sunday Science- "Winter Weather" -fee	<u>7</u> CLOSED	<u>8</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30- pm, "Fabulous Fruits"-Dr. Vadheim Estelle DeRidder Exhibit Begins	<u>9</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ 1-pm-Sr. Naturalist 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30 pm-FOMM Mtg.	<u>10</u> 10:30--12:30-Propagation Society	<u>11</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	<u>12</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10am-Kids Story Time (fee) 1-3pm-Annual Tea Party hosted by FOMM
<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> CLOSED	<u>15</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 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--12 n-Friday Fun**	<u>19</u> 8:30am-12n-Earth Day 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 9-11am-Bird Stories
<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> CLOSED	<u>22</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>23</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>24</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	10 am--12 n <u>25</u> Friday Fun** Estelle DeRidder Exhibit Ends	<u>26</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk
10 am- <u>27</u> Nature Walk	<u>28</u> CLOSED	<u>29</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>30</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders			

APRIL

Hummingbirds--A Miracle of Nature

Bob Shanman, Wild Birds Unlimited

All you hear is “HMMMMMM” as a flash of red whizzes past you in the garden. “BZZZZ BZZZZ BZZZZ.” You look up where the sound is coming from to see a tiny bird. Gray chest, green wings, black head and...no...fiery hot pink and black....no-now all hot pink on the head and throat. “Wow!” you say. “That’s some color.”



You have just encountered a male Anna’s Hummingbird (named after a French lady). As you watch, he zips off his perch to start making shallow “u’s” in the air. Suddenly, he heads high into the sky, hangs for a second and then goes into a steep (you think supersonic) dive, pulls out and goes almost as high as he started. Another hummer flies up from the same bush he was perched in, and they fly happily away. What you have just seen was the mating display of the Anna’s male for his lady. Once they mate though, he’s off to the next lady in “his” territory, leaving the mate you just saw to build the nest, incubate her eggs and raise/fledge her young. Hummers give truth to the saying that a woman’s work is never done.

The easily-seen local resident hummers are the Allen’s and the Anna’s. You can tell one from the other by size, shape and coloration (males and females). Anna’s are the larger of the two, being about 4 inches long. From the front, their bodies are slender, tapering almost to a point at the tail (when perched). Both sexes have gray breasts and emerald green backs. The female will have sparkles of red in her throat (black if the light is not right); the male’s throat, or gorget, and the top of his head

will typically be black, or hot fiery red to pink. He is the only male hummer we have whose head will turn color. The head and gorget feathers of male hummers have little or no pigment in them. The feather structure is like a prism. When light strikes the feathers at the right angle, those wonderful colors are what we see!

Other hummers found in Southern California include the Costa’s, Calliope, Black-chinned and Rufous (primarily spring migration). Occasionally, a Broad-billed hummer will be found, and there is one record of a female Xantu’s hummer that nested (sterile eggs) in Ventura from the mid 1980’s.

In contrast, the Allen’s (see photo) is shorter (3-1/2 inches), and more squat. From the front, they look teardrop or pear shaped. Both male and female have rufous (rust-orange) coloring on the flanks and back; the male’s chest will be all rust. He will have a white collar under his gorget. The gorget will be fire-engine red when the light is at the right angle.

Both species begin mating in mid-December. The males, notoriously territorial, are even more so now. They dominate feeders, allowing only females of their species to share. It is very important to keep the feeders clean (change nectar every 3-4 days, washing the feeder prior to each filling), and to provide a 4 part water to one part cane sugar mixture (the closest we can come to nature’s nectar, and significantly less expensive than store-bought “nectars”). Unless there are many hummers around, the males will dominate any feeder they can see from their favored territorial perch.

To the surprise of many, hummers eat insects along with nectar. Insects are protein they must have. Avoid the use of pesticides in gardens as the hummers will eat many of the small flying insects in your yard. If you have plants with tubular flowers, they will favor those over feeders, but feeders must still be changed regularly as the nectar will spoil in three to four days. In her companion article on page 10, Connie Vadheim describes what you can plant to help attract hummers to the yard.

Hummer nests, like so much about these birds, are fascinating. The female often builds the nest in the open, but it is camouflaged so well that it is hard to see. They are most easily found by watching where she goes. She uses plant down to build up and line the nest. To give

it strength and elasticity, she wraps the nests with spider web silk. She covers the outside with plant bits to help hide it. When the young hatch (14-17 day incubation), the nest will expand as they grow.

When the first young fledges (14-17 days after hatching) out of the nest, the elastic silk makes the nest shrink in size so he/she can't get back in. When the second (if there are two) fledges, the nest shrinks back to near its original size (the interior is about the diameter of a quarter). The young hang with mom for about two more weeks as she teaches them to feed and hunt insects. Then they are off on their own. They are ready to breed themselves at about age 1 year.

Some fascinating facts about hummers:

- There are over 320 species of hummers in the world, and they are found only in the Americas.
 - As a family, they are the smallest birds in the world (the Bee Hummingbird of Cuba is about 2 inches long). They have about 1000-1500 feathers.
 - They metabolize their food in about 15 minutes; if humans ate the equivalent calorie load, it's been said we would have to eat about 250 Big Macs per day. Our bodies would vaporize trying to metabolize all that food.
 - In cold weather, they can lower their metabolism and go into a state of torpor to conserve energy
 - Heart rates can be as high as 1200 beats per minute.
 - Wing beat rates can be as high as 80 beats per second
 - Hummers can't walk; their feet are too weak. That is why you will see them fly up, turn around and set right back down on a branch!
 - They are the only bird that hovers at flowers to feed.
 - Migrating Ruby-throated hummers arrive along the Gulf Coast in the fall weighing about 1 gram (a dime). They nearly double their weight and then make a non-stop, 500-mile flight to the Yucatan Peninsula.
 - They typically live three to four years; longer lives have been recorded, up to 11 years (see Longevity Records of North American Birds—http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/longevity/Longevity_main.cfm for a fascinating list of bird life length from banding records.)
- Hummers can fly up, down, forward and backward.

The Rufous Hummingbird is the only hummer to breed in Alaska, and may winter as far south as northern South America. Most winter in Mexico.--B.S.

The American Society of Botanical Artists/Madrona Marsh Joint Venture



*Red Fairy Duster
(Calliandra) &
Allen's Hummingbird*



*California Live Oak
(Quercus agrifolia)*

Estelle DeRidder

Grants for the betterment of public knowledge and understanding of botanical illustration and art, are made available for members of The American Society of Botanical Artists, based at the New York Botanic Gardens in The Bronx, NY.

One of the grants was awarded to me last year after consulting and collaborating with Tracy Drake. We decided on a series of illustrations that would feature the flora of the Marsh to be used as flashcards by the docents. In addition to the academic use of the illustrations,

these will also be produced as greeting cards and art prints to be sold in the gift shop.

At this stage, the halfway mark, I am happy to report that I am on target with the information gathering, specimen preservation, color charts and first-stage compositions for most of the subjects we've decided to portray.



*Bladderpod (Isomeris
arborea)*

South Bay Native Plant Corner

—Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



White-flowered Currant *Ribes indecorum*

Welcome to winter. The days are short, nights are cold and not much is blooming; that can be a problem for animals dependent on nectar. Providing food for hummingbirds and insect pollinators in winter and early spring requires a little planning. Among the best sources of nectar right now are Bladderpod (*Cleome isomeris*) and the native currants (genus *Ribes*).

White-flowered currant, seen in the native plant gardens surrounding the Nature Center, grows in chaparral and coastal sage scrub communities from Santa Barbara County to Baja California. It often grows in the shade of trees or on north—or east-facing slopes or canyons. See it wild on Catalina Island and in the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains.

Ribes indecorum is a medium-sized shrub, growing three to seven feet tall and about as wide. Its many erect branches provide a rounded shape that needs little pruning except in very shady locations. The foliage provides cover and perches for birds. But the main attractions for birds and insects are the flowers and fruit.

Typical for the Gooseberry family (*Grossulariaceae*), White-flowered Currant

produces numerous tiny blossoms in winter and early spring. As seen in the photo, the bell-shaped flowers are arranged along hanging flower stems, providing easy access for hummingbirds. The flowers have a mildly sweet fragrance and attract hummingbirds like a magnet. In my garden, the hummers are very protective of *their* White-flowered Currant bush this time of year.



White-flowered Currant is fairly easy to grow. It likes some afternoon shade and does best with only occasional (perhaps monthly) summer water. Locate any currant in an area with good air circulation and don't over-water—they all are susceptible to fungal infections.

Native *Ribes* are drought-deciduous. Hold off watering in autumn to allow the leaves fall normally; they will quickly be replaced with new, fuzzy leaves after the first rain. White-flowered Currant makes a nice, all-purpose shrub in home gardens. Unlike the Gooseberries, Currants have no prickles ('thorns').

The fruits (currants) are edible fresh, dried or cooked. In my garden, the birds quickly gobble them up in late summer. You'll likely have to net your shrub if you want the fruit for yourself.

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 available at the Nature Center and at: <http://mother-natures-backyard.blogspot.com/p/learn-more-about-native-plants.html>

An Incredible Experience with David Narins

Introduction by Tracy Drake

The sounds of people in the Center echoed around me as I struggled to listen to the two men who had just entered the Center and were signing the guest book. I had been called out of the Audubon Planning meeting to meet them. The room was noisy because restoration was ending, and kids were pouring into the Center to sign out for the day. Additionally, two classes were in session and the day was very busy with visitors. The men came in, like so many birders had in the past few weeks, to see the Lucy's Warbler and, if it was still around—the Golden-crowned Kinglet. These two birds had become harder to find so I wanted to escort our visitors on the Preserve because I knew where the birds tended to be. But there was too much going on. "If anyone can find them for you Dinuk can," I explained, and quickly staff member Dinuk Magamma and the men were on their way. What happened on that walk was an incredible experience for Dinuk and was monumental for the Preserve.

In Dinuk's words:

Today I was asked to lead a short walk for two gentlemen. They introduced themselves as David and Peter Narins. They were interested in finding Lucy's Warbler! With much excitement I showed them the Preserve. They explained that they were brothers and that David was from Florida. Peter seemed very proud of his brother. As we continued along the path, he continued to talk about David's accomplishments. He explained that his brother has been birding since the 1980s. At one point in the conversation, Peter said, "My brother is number one." I was rather confused by what he meant. Then he explained that his brother had seen all of the North American bird species, and was officially recognized as the number one bird lister in the United

States by the American Birding Association. He had seen more than 7,600 bird species, and visited more than 100 countries. At the moment I learned this, I did not know how to even talk to him. I was amazed and humbled to be in his presence. Although I was feeling a lot of emotions and thoughts in those moments, I came to the conclusion that truly, David was a very humble person. He never bragged. He always spoke with passion and dignity and showed genuine interest in finding the Lucy's and any other birds along the way.

It was very enjoyable to be in his presence. He made me feel comfortable because he tended to make funny comments. I am sad to say that I was unable to locate the Lucy's Warbler for him. But I know, to be as great a naturalist as he is, one must endure the struggles of missing that "Golden Bird." He and his brother had only a short time to look for the bird because they were on their way back to the airport to catch a flight. Knowing they had only limited time made it more difficult for me to try to locate the rare bird.

On the way back to the Nature Center, David and his brother expressed their gratitude for my time and company. But really, I was the one who was thankful.

Later in the afternoon when reflecting on the experience, I was amazed by David's ability to be humble considering his incredible achievements. There was so much for him to brag about, but he didn't. I was honored when he asked my opinion on the birds we were seeing and identifying. For such a great birder to ask my opinion and who valued my time, considering I have only birded for 4 years and have only 306 birds on my life list I was very touched by his kindness.

David Narins depicted a great image of what I think a birder should be: humble, honest, kind, helpful and lastly have a genuine interest in the natural world. —Dinuk Magamma

Jack Walser Seeking Relocation

WALSER'S has been performing valuable services for the South Bay community for over thirty-eight years. Since 2006 the store has also collected electronic waste and other materials for recycling, diverting over 500,000 pounds from landfills each year. Jack Walser partnered with Henry Trejo of Salient Computers in San Pedro to refurbish materials that would otherwise have been hazardous electronic waste into useable, tested electronics at more affordable prices. As regular readers know, Jack and Henry are also strong supporters of the Friends of Madrona Marsh, and have donated 25 percent of their gross revenue from these items to the Friends for the last five years—thousands of dollars for our programs. Unfortunately the recession has not been kind to WALSER'S, and the art supply and digital store is being forced to relocate, or perhaps close.

Jack and Henry would like to continue their community service program, hopefully with the help of a

corporate benefactor. All they need is a location with about 10,000 square feet of space, provided either gratis or at a reasonable rent from a local business interested in helping them to help keep our environment safe and clean. If you are that business, or know of one, please contact Jack at 310-891-3325, or stop by 23145 Kashiwa Court during their Relocation Sale, going on now.

Thank you, Jack and Henry, for all that you have done for Torrance and for the Friends!

**RECYCLE TO HELP THE
ENVIRONMENT AND KEEP
THINGS OUT OF LANDFILLS!**

WALSER'S

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