February General Meeting

NATURAL HISTORY OF
THE GRAY WHALE

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Social 7 p.m. - Lecture 7:30 p.m.

Hear a naturalist from the Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography introduce us to these 30-40 ton leviathans that migrate along our coast each winter. During the summer months Gray Whales are found in the cold arctic waters of the Bering and Chukchi Seas, feeding on crustaceans and tube worms dredged and filtered from the ocean floor. In October they begin one of the longest of all mammalian migrations - a two to three months’ journey of 10,000 to 14,000 miles - to the lagoons of Baja California where they breed and give birth. Remaining in the lagoons for another two to three months, the Gray Whale calves nurse on milk that is 53% fat (human milk is only 2% fat) so that they can build a thick layer of blubber to sustain them during the northward migration and keep them warm in the cold waters. The return trip north takes still another two to three months, past pods of predatory killer whales. Mothers and their calves travel very near shore on the northbound migration. Hunted almost to extinction in the Nineteenth Century after their calving lagoons were discovered and floating flensing factories were introduced, the eastern North Pacific population of Gray Whales has been fully protected for the past sixty years. Their numbers - now about 20,000 - are probably close to their original population size.

As part of this presentation on the natural history of Gray Whales, the Scripps naturalist will include pictures of the whales, show biofacts such as baleen, discuss population trends and inform us of current research into the life histories of these denizens of the deep.

Join us at the Nature Center on February 28th to learn more about *Eschrichtius robustus*. Then come down to Oceanside Harbor on March 10th and join us on a BVAS-chartered whalewatching boat trip.

On our boat trip, we'll go out to sea (but not very far—the whales are just offshore) in search of wildlife. While the primary focus of the trip will be on marine mammals, BVAS has arranged to have several pelagic bird experts onboard to help us add some of these special species to our life lists. Find more information about the boat trip on page 3. Bring your family, friends and out-of-town visitors to both events!

—Dennis Huckabay

Oceanside Christmas Bird Count — 181 Species and Counting!

A lot of people had a lot of fun as they recorded a lot of birds during this season’s Oceanside Christmas Bird Count. Dave Povey was singled out for recognition for his 30th year as the “sea observer” for the count. From his boat just off the Oceanside coastline, Dave added Cassin’s Auklet and two species of jaegers to the list, along with a number of other ocean species. Back on land, an enthusiastic crowd of over 40 beginning birders notched their first Christmas Count when they joined Tom Troy’s team to look for birds at the Buena Vista Lagoon Landing. Almost 100 people dropped by the Nature Center that day to report their results, share stories, and enjoy a bowl of Annette’s chili. We’ll see you all again during this April’s Bird-a-Thon!
A Date with Nature on Valentine’s Day

Restoration or development?

Threatened land  Buena Vista Audubon Society and residents of South Oceanside are very concerned about the hotel, restaurant and condominium complex proposed on Buena Vista Lagoon across Coast Highway from the Nature Center. Already rejected once This project was rejected by a 6-1 vote of the Oceanside Planning Commission last October. The developer has made a few cosmetic changes in his proposed development, but four residential condos, a restaurant, and 82 timeshares remain. He has now bypassed the Planning Commission and will bring his project directly to the City Council at their meeting at 6 p.m., February 14, 2007.

Lights, cement, and traffic

Our primary concerns are the negative impact all the lights, concrete, paving and non-native landscaping will have on the more than 200 species of birds to be found in and around the lagoon. The lagoon restoration plan identified the importance of keeping this parcel open space for the long-term health of the lagoon. We do not want to see the lagoon sacrificed for more development. Other concerns include traffic, parking, visual impact, and an inadequate buffer between the lagoon ecological reserve and the complex.

CalTrans wants to buy it for open space

There is an alternative. This land can be purchased for permanent open space. CalTrans has included this purchase as mitigation for the widening of I-5 across Buena Vista Lagoon. Funds are available. The purchase would be supported by the Coastal Conservancy, the California Department of Fish and Game who manages the lagoon reserve, and numerous other organizations. The landowner would be fully compensated, and would receive tax credits. This would be a win-win for us all.

This is likely a once in a lifetime opportunity

We can preserve this open space across the highway from our Nature Center, and see it return to a healthy wetlands—but we can’t do it without your help and involvement.

—Dennis Huckabay and C.J. DiMento

What can you do to help?

1. Sign the petition — Volunteers will be circulating a petition door-to-door in some neighborhoods. The petition is also available for signing at the Nature Center, and at certain grocery stores and other retail establishments in the community. We hope to take more than a thousand signatures to the City Council on February 14th, saying we don’t want this development on this site. The quickest way to sign the petition is online at http://www.PetitionOnline.com/7369/petition.html.

2. Circulate a petition — After signing the petition online, use the simple links to forward it on to your friends and neighbors. Extra petitions are also available at the Nature Center for circulation in your neighborhood.

3. Contact our City Council — Phone, email or write Oceanside City Council members expressing your opposition to this project at 760-435-3065, or by e-mail at: council@ci.oceanside.ca.us

4. Make a Valentine’s Date — Attend the Oceanside City Council meeting at 6 p.m. on February 14th and voice your disapproval.

5. Contribute to the cause — Make a tax deductible contribution to Buena Vista Audubon Society specifically earmarked to support our efforts to oppose this project. Your BVAS Board has made this a top priority. We would be grateful for any contribution you can make toward this effort.

6. Give us your thoughts — The BVAS Board and Friends of Buena Vista Lagoon are interested in your feelings about this issue. Please feel free to contact us by e-mail at: bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net.

Preschool Nature Storytime

In keeping with the gray whales passing our coastline to Scammon’s Lagoon in Baja California to have their babies, the preschoolers learned about whales and their babies. There were many whales swimming around the craft table that morning! We also heard some rumblings from Little Bear, who seems to be getting ready for another winter hibernation. Come find out at the next storytime at 10 a.m. on the fourth Monday, Feb. 26.

—Mary Ellen, 760-918-6622
February and Upcoming Field Trips

Sat—Feb 3—8 a.m.—Whelan Lake Monthly Bird Count. 1-5 to Hwy. 76. Turn left at Douglas and continue to light at North River Rd. Turn left at cul-de-sac by entrance gate. Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Sat—Feb 10—9 a.m.—San Elijo Lagoon Nature Walk. 1-5 to Lomas Santa Fe. West to N. Rios Ave. Turn right and proceed to end of road.

Sun—Feb 18—9 a.m.—Ramona Hawk-Watch. Led by Dave Bitner, raptor expert and director of the Wildlife Research Institute. BVAS has arranged to have an exclusive Ramona Hawk-Watch tour for BVAS members and friends. Directions: Wildlife Research Institute, 1830 High- land Valley Road. From Hwy. 67 (Main St.) turn north onto Highland Valley Rd. (For those coming on Hwy. 78, turn right at Main St. which becomes Hwy. 67.) After two miles, look for the institute’s sign on the right near the intersection of Rangeland and Highland Valley Rd.

Sat—Feb 24—8 a.m.—Buena Vista Lagoon Count. 1-5 to Hwy. 78. East. Exit Jefferson. Turn right and take another immediate right onto Lagoon View Dr. Leader: Joan Fountain, 760-729-1379.

Sat—Feb 24—8:30 – 10:30 a.m.—Basic Birding Class at the Buena Vista Lagoon Landing. 1-5 to Hwy. 78. Exit Jefferson. Turn right and go to stoplight. Turn right and park in Landing parking lot on the right hand side of road. Leader: Tom Troy, 760-967-6915.

Upcoming Special Trips:

Sat—Mar 10—9 a.m.—Pelagic Boat Trip. Join us as we board a specially chartered whalewatching boat out of Oceanside Harbor and head out to sea on a two-hour cruise in search of a wide variety of marine wildlife. The primary focus of the trip will be on whales and dolphins, but we’ve also arranged for several seabird experts to join us to help identify the various pelagic bird species we expect to encounter. Please call the Nature Center to reserve your spot. Cost of the trip will be $25/person. BVAS will set up a sign-in table at the dock on the day of the trip. (Pay in advance, or bring cash or checks made out to “BVAS.”) Location: Helgren’s Sportfishing, 315 Harbor Drive S., Oceanside. (Take Oceanside Harbor exit off I-5). Free Parking.

Sat and Sun—March 17-18—Borrego Birding Weekend. Swainson’s Hawks will be in migration. We anticipate birding Clark Dry Lake for Le Conte’s Thrasher and migrating warblers, Lower Willows (road conditions permitting) and other desert areas. Participants will be responsible for arranging their own transportation and overnight lodging. A “semi-hosted” group barbeque is being planned for Saturday night. Call Andy Brumbaugh for further info, 760-434-3334. For meeting place and more info see the March newsletter.

Along the Trail

Birds, and other sightings to look for this month

February—It is still “winter” in San Diego, and most birds present at the beginning of February are either year-round residents or wintering visitors. That can be a good thing if you’re interested in working on your bird life list. A greater variety of bird species can be found during the winter months in San Diego than during the summer. Two of our most common over-wintering species, the Yellow-rumped Warbler and White-crowned Sparrow, can be found in almost every habitat, including your backyard. Have you noticed that our House Finches and Bushtits have been in large winter flocks over the last few months, hoping to improve their chances at finding food and avoiding predators? Soon the flocks will disappear as individuals pair off for breeding. Raptors are abundant in the San Diego skies this month, soaring on warm thermal updrafts despite the calendar. If you’re interested in variety, this is a good month to check out the large number of wintering shorebirds and ducks at our coastal lagoons. You can still enjoy the White Pelicans at Buena Vista Lagoon for another month or so before they move off to their summer breeding territories on the large freshwater lakes of the Midwest and Canada. February also marks the time to look for courtship and nesting behavior by some early breeding species like hummingbirds, owls, hawks, egrets, and herons.

Later in the month, long distance migrants start to appear. Swallows begin to arrive in mid-month, flying overhead and swooping down to take insects on the wing. Of course it’s not just the birds—other animals are active in February as well. The Brush Rabbit has the first of its 3-4 litters, the Gray Fox and Bobcat breed, the Pacific Gray Whale can still be seen on its southern migration, Gopher snakes and rattlesnakes begin to appear on warm days, the Pacific Treefrog starts calling from the willows along our creeks. February usually mixes in a little winter rain followed by a few sunny days, and the plant world responds. Plants of the coastal chaparral like the California Sagebrush end their dormancy and begin to leaf out with fresh, aromatic foliage. An assortment of early wildflowers begin to bloom along the trails in our coastal reserves. Unlike over most of the United States, February in San Diego is a great month to experience nature in the outdoors. Go on—take a hike! And be sure to let us know what you find!

—A.M.

Note: Some of the seasonal information contained in this article was taken from S. California Coast Almanac 2007, a desk calendar and planner available in the BVAS bookstore. The Gray Fox and Bobcat specimens pictured above were prepared by Joyce Anderson, and are admired and loved by every school child and member of the public who visits the Nature Center.
BUENA VISTA NATIVE PLANT CLUB

Oops! Last month we erred in listing the Native Plant Club’s regular monthly meeting day. This month the Native Plant Club will hold its regular THIRD Sunday meeting at the Nature Center on February 18th at 2 p.m. It’s time to get ready for Spring! All gardeners, expert and novice alike, who are interested in learning about working with native plants are invited to attend.

**Monthly Nature Center Grounds Cleanup**

Join us on the 1st Saturday of each month from 8-10 a.m. as we do hand weeding and trash removal at the Nature Center. Remember to bring your hat, gloves, sunscreen and hand gardening tools.

For more information on any Native Plant Club events, call the Nature Center and leave a message for Joan Bockman.

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**SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE**

**Saturday, March 3, 2007**

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Tree of Life Nursery**

3201 Ortega Highway

(east of San Juan Capistrano on Ortega Highway)

Books, posters, seeds and free advice on native plant gardening will also be available. Benefits the Calif. Native Plant Society of San Diego. For more information, contact Tree of Life Nursery [www.treeoflifenursery.com](http://www.treeoflifenursery.com)

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**BVAS OFFICERS, BOARD* AND CHAIRS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Dennis Huckabay*</td>
<td>757-6437</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Bill Jones*</td>
<td>944-1775</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Mary Jane Roberts*</td>
<td>231-8148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Douglas Schanzenbach*</td>
<td>726-3531</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audubon Adventures</td>
<td>JoAnne Schontzler</td>
<td>431-0953</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center Manager</td>
<td>Annette Schneider</td>
<td>945-8891</td>
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<td>Christmas Bird Count</td>
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<td>Andy Mauro*</td>
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<td>Doug Dunn*</td>
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<td>Renee Racine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Nancy Miller</td>
<td>929-2869</td>
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<td>Andy Brumbaugh*</td>
<td>434-3334</td>
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<td>Rosalyn Dong*</td>
<td>806-1430</td>
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<td>Library</td>
<td>Norma Handy</td>
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<td>Judi Wilson*</td>
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<td>Tom Troy*</td>
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<td>Joyce Anderson</td>
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<td>Mary Ellen Marquand*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webmaster</td>
<td>Larry Spann</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:larry@spannweb.net">larry@spannweb.net</a></td>
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**Nature Center**

Tue-Sat 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Sun 1 p.m.-4 p.m.  
Closed Monday

760-439-2473

2202 South Coast Hwy., Oceanside, CA
East side of street just north of lagoon bridge

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 480  
Oceanside, CA 92049-0480

**Website:** [www.bvaudubon.org](http://www.bvaudubon.org)  
**E-mail:** bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net

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**Ruddy Duck Club**

The businesses listed below are supporters of BVAS through their membership in the Ruddy Duck Club. Help us show our appreciation by stopping by and saying “Thanks for Supporting BVAS”.

Anderson’s La Costa Nursery  
Beach Break Café  
Bob Baker VW-Subaru  
Carlsbad Paddle Sports  
Carlsbad Inn Beach Resort  
Cream of the Crop Deli and Market  
Hatter and Associates  
Harbor Fish and Chips  
Hoehn Honda  
Hunter Steak House  
I Love Life Window Cleaning  
Jón Baldur Hlíðberg Art  
Longboarder Café  
101 Café  
North County Radiology  
North County Times  
Oceanside Photo & Telescope  
Pelly’s Fish Market and Cafe  
The Printery  
Rorick Buick and Cadillac  
Seagaze Realty  
Scott T. Woods Contracting & Remodeling  
Seth R. Sharon, Prudential CA Realty  
Temecula Valley Bank  
Wild Bird Center - Encinitas  
Wild Birds Unlimited - Carlsbad  
Worldwide Express

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**For more information on any Native Plant Club events, call the Nature Center and leave a message for Joan Bockman.**
FRIENDS OF BUENA VISTA AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

As a Friend of BVAS, I will receive the chapter newsletter, be invited to special events just for Friends and receive a discount on BVAS Gift Shop purchases. 100% of my contribution will go to support the BVAS Nature Center and its educational programs. Minimum donation required - $20.

I would like to donate $ 25 ________  $ 40 ________  $ 50 ________   $ 100 ________  Other: __________

Name ____________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________
City, State, Zip ______________________________________
Telephone __________________________________________
Please bill my VISA or MASTERCARD
Card Number ________________________________________
Expiration Date ______________________________________

Thank You!

Make Checks Payable to: Buena Vista Audubon Society
P.O. Box 480
Oceanside, CA  92049

Conservation Corner

Our Endorsement for the Coastal Commission

In our role as responsible stewards of our environment, the Buena Vista Audubon Society strongly supports the mission of the California State Coastal Commission to preserve and protect our state’s most precious coastal resources. Toward that end, we take great interest in an upcoming appointment to fill a current vacancy on the Commission.

BVAS and San Diego Audubon recently sent a joint letter to the California Speaker of the Assembly, Fabian Nunez, urging the appointment of Encinitas council member Maggie Hoolihan to the Coastal Commission. Hoolihan has shown her commitment on many occasions with her hard work on behalf of the coastal lagoons and watershed networks of North San Diego County. She has always taken a strong stance on behalf of responsible development within the coastal zone. She has a keen understanding and appreciation of the role of the Coastal Commission.

Californians deserve to have a well qualified and dedicated commissioner representing their interests, one like Hoolihan, with the demonstrated willingness to work hard to protect our state’s natural heritage of priceless coastal resources.

A link to the full text of our letter can be found on our website: www.bvaudubon.org.

—Andy Mauro, Conservation Chair

Legacy and Memorial Gifts

Over the years, BVAS has received bequests from members who wanted to help the chapter continue its programs long into the future. Our endowment is funded by these legacy gifts, and its earnings have allowed us to greatly expand our programs in recent years. Have you ever thought about your own personal legacy? Our president, Dennis Huckabay, would be pleased to meet with you for a confidential discussion of your interests. Please give him a call at 760-757-6437.

Friends and family members have recently made generous donations to the Buena Vista Audubon Society in memory of Joseph William Dunsing and David Rorick.

A Rose to Us All

Did you happen to notice the special “rose” awarded by the NC Times on their New Year’s Day editorial page? They gave “a Rose to the preservationists who raised enough money to buy the Sherman property.” Prominently mentioning Buena Vista Audubon Society by name, it ended with the observation, “It’s an investment our children—and their children—will enjoy for years to come.”

We owe a great debt to Diane Nygaard of Preserve Calavera, and a legion of others whose tireless efforts helped marshal the forces and resources to make this acquisition happen. The conservation agencies and organizations stepped up and delivered the bulk of the funding, and the community pitched in the rest. We can all be proud of the part BVAS played in creating this new wildlife reserve. The final close of escrow and title transfer will take place as soon as a few more papers are signed and delivered, but rest assured, it’s a done deal!

HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU

MacGillivray Freeman's

At the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center...

HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU offers a breathtaking IMAX® tour of the Louisiana bayou, presenting strong testimony to the beauty and critical importance of our coastal wetlands. It offers an emotional portrayal of the rapid decline of bayou wetlands – and the staggering effects of one of the worst natural disasters in American history, Hurricane Katrina. Narrated by Academy Award®-nominated actress Meryl Streep with a moving soundtrack that includes the best of New Orleans blues and gospel spirituals, HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU is both a festive celebration of America’s most vibrant city and an emotional call to save our country’s environmental and cultural treasures. Opens February 16. Admission fee.

For information: www.rhfleet.org, or call (619) 685-5705.
**QUICK CALENDAR**

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<td>Feb 7-12</td>
<td>SD BIRD FESTIVAL</td>
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<td>RAMONA HAWK-WATCH</td>
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<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Nature Storytime</td>
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**Natural History of The Gray Whale**

*Feb 28th*

See page 1

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**A Valentine’s Date with Nature**

See page 2

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**Along the Trail in February**

See page 3

*Buena Vista Audubon online:*

www.bvaudubon.org

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