February General Meeting

Wednesday, February 17
Landscaping with California Native Plants with Greg Rubin

7 p.m. Social—7:30 p.m. Program

San Diego native plant enthusiasts know all about Greg Rubin. Many of us were introduced to native plant gardening by attending a Greg Rubin lecture and being mesmerized by this “Svengali” of the sagebrush. (He’s not really that sinister!) His seemingly boundless knowledge of the topic is awe-inspiring, and he captivates his audience with his easy-going manner. But be forewarned. Greg’s passion is contagious!

Greg will answer all our questions about native plant gardening. When to plant? Is watering necessary? What about fertilizers and soil additives? Is a native plant landscape a fire-safe choice in San Diego? How can we handle problem areas in our yards? What are the fail-safe native plant choices?

Greg, owner of California’s Own Native Landscape Design, started working with native plants back in 1985, while renovating his parents’ home. Although educated and subsequently employed in a successful engineering career, Greg maintained a fascination with natives based on this early experience. Soon, he was landscaping for friends and family on weekends and holidays. Demand continued to rise, and by 1993, Greg was able to start his successful and unusual landscaping business. Since that time, his company has designed over 400 native landscapes in San Diego County.

Greg has been featured in a number of newspapers and magazine stories, including the North County Times, San Diego Union-Tribune, San Diego Reader, Sunset, San Diego Home and Garden, and California Gardener. He is a regular guest on San Diego television and radio stations whenever the discussion turns to native plant gardening.

Join us on February 17 for this special program on the secrets of successful California native plant gardening. Don’t miss your chance to catch the fever!

Kayak Cleanup Slated for Lagoon

BVAS, in association with the CDF&G, will be conducting a kayak cleanup event at the Buena Vista Lagoon in February. A small number of BVAS friends will have the opportunity to launch their personal kayaks into the lagoon on Saturday, February 27, from 9-11 a.m., to help gather fishing tackle and assorted paper trash from the ecological reserve. Only a limited number of people will be able to take advantage of this unique chance to paddle out into the lagoon, which is normally closed to all boating activity. Participants must be at least 18 years old and will be selected by reservation on a first-come basis. Contact Doug Schanzenbach at dakotadoug@cox.net to request your info packet and registration materials.
The future of the 157-acre former sand quarry property that straddles Buena Vista Creek on the northern border of Carlsbad has been a topic of discussion for awhile now. The 25 people who showed up at a Carlsbad City Council hearing two days before Christmas would have appreciated it if that discussion could have involved a more thorough airing by the city of the pros and cons of its proposal to greatly increase the zoning density on the site. “Bah, humbug”, said the City Council, abruptly ending all the talk with its vote to update the city’s 2005-2010 housing element by approving the massive density increase.

What does all this mean, and why do we care?

There won’t be any houses built here anytime soon. About one-third of the property is currently undergoing environmental cleanup to address groundwater and soil contamination issues left over from several decades of sand and gravel mining. In fact, since no development would be able to take place on this property during the planning window embraced by the current housing element, generally accepted guidelines suggest it was inappropriate to approve a density increase on this property at this time. So why the rush to approve this density bonus?

Existing overlays on the site dictate that portions of the property will be off limit to development. We’re told that almost half of the 157 acres will be set aside as open space, regardless of the actions of the council. Any increase in the number of allowable housing units would thus be concentrated in the developable portion of the site. Experience has shown, however, that one of the greatest impacts on the viability of natural open space in urban areas is the fringe effect from adjacent development. Impacts from night lighting, domestic pets, exotic vegetation, polluted runoff, traffic noise, etc. become much more pronounced when the density of the adjacent development is increased. Why take actions that compromise some of the benefit of the open space that will eventually be provided on this site?

Every survey done by the City of Carlsbad has shown that residents overwhelmingly would like to see more natural open space and less traffic congestion. The city has millions of dollars set aside for land acquisition, but the council consistently refuses to support the purchase of natural open space. Instead, a city already home to several high-end golf courses chooses to build one of the nation’s most expensive public golf courses, operates it at an annual loss, and calls it open space. Golf interests get a public subsidy while nature lovers just get to share the bill. Maybe it’s time for another survey?

This Buena Vista Creek Valley site is listed as a top priority for open space acquisition in this region. Even though it has been greatly impacted from its use as a sand and gravel mining operation, this site holds tremendous potential for restoration and mitigation. It is immediately upstream from the recently established Buena Vista Creek Ecological Reserve, and would serve as a vital link in the wildlife corridor. Is our natural heritage a value worth preserving and passing on to future generations?

This is a site with enormous cultural significance. It contains El Salto Falls, a sacred site for the original Native American inhabitants of the valley. The Portola Expedition stopped at the fresh water springs here in 1769. It was a part of the original Marron land grant, and is adjacent to the Marron adobe, one of San Diego County’s oldest intact adobe houses. Why are we so anxious to abandon our cultural heritage and links to the past?

Where there’s a political will, there’s a way. Much like the waters rushing around the boulders at the foot of El Salto Falls, questions swirl about the ultimate fate of Buena Vista Creek Valley. City officials are elected to find the answers that best serve the interests of all of the community. In beautiful Carlsbad, where so much is done so right, why does the City Council have such a blind spot when it comes to purchasing and preserving natural open space? Does the answer always have to be more houses, more traffic, more noise?

We’re just asking.

—Andy Mauro
Birding in February—Everyone’s Welcome!

Sat.—Feb. 6—8 a.m.—Whelan Lake Monthly Bird Count. Whelan Lake is a reserve with a freshwater lake and riparian edge habitat. Directions: I-5 to Hwy. 76 East, left at Douglas and continue to light at North River Rd., left on North River Rd. Meet at the cul-de-sac at the end of the road by the entrance gate. Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Sun.—Feb. 7—8 a.m.—Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. The Elfin Forest area includes habitats of coastal sage, riparian, oak woodland, and grassland. It also contains a year-round stream, Escondido Creek. The different habitats and rich natural resources attract an exciting variety of birds, including woodpeckers, wrens, nuthatches, vireos, titmice, and an assortment of raptors. We hope to have driving access up to the reservoir, where there are waterfowl, rock wrens, several species of sparrows, and scenic views all the way to the ocean. Meet at the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve parking lot. Directions: From I-5 or El Camino Real in Carlsbad, take La Costa Ave. east; left on Rancho Santa Fe Rd.; right on San Elijo Rd.; right on Elfin Forest Rd. Elfin Forest Road eventually becomes Harmony Grove Rd. Go about five miles and turn right into the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve parking lot. Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

Sat.—Feb. 27—8 a.m.—Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count. Join the regular monthly bird survey team and get to know the Buena Vista Lagoon. Get the satisfaction of contributing to the on-going bird database by performing a little citizen science. We always record a nice assortment of freshwater wetland and marsh species on this easy-paced monthly excursion. Directions: I-5 to I-78 East, take Jefferson St. exit, turn right and make another right turn onto Lagoon View Dr. Leader: Joan Fountain, 760-729-1379.

Sat.—Feb. 27—8:30-10:30 a.m.—Basic Birding Class at the Buena Vista Lagoon Landing. Novice birders are invited to join our monthly class for some informal, no-pressure birding. Your leader will share some friendly tips and help you practice your bird identification skills. Directions: I-5 to I-78 East, take Jefferson St. exit, 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.

Visit www.socalbirding.com for full pelagic birding information.

Rare Bird Hotline Hangs Up

Last month, the San Diego County Field Ornithologists (SDFO) announced it was discontinuing the county’s Rare Bird Hotline. The telephone hotline served for many years as the place for reporting and hearing about rare birds being seen in the county. In recent years, however, the spread of computer technology and the growing popularity of the SDBirds listserv has rendered the telephone hotline obsolete. Most birders now learn about birds being seen in the county by checking reports posted on the free SDBirds listserv. Reports of interesting bird sightings, including specific locations, identification issues, and other details, are being posted throughout the day by multiple observers. SDBird’s more than 1,200 subscribers then receive the reports by e-mail, to read at their leisure. The listserv has proven to be an easy and efficient way for birders to quickly report personal sightings of note and keep tabs on what others are seeing. It also provides a searchable database of prior sightings, and a vehicle for posting and viewing digital bird photos. The old hotline (and the informal “telephone tree” alerting selected birding friends of an exciting find) has now morphed into a widespread birding information network offering free, peer-reviewed, and almost instant communication to anyone who wishes to receive it. To check out the listserv for yourself, just google SDBirds.
Preschool Nature Storytime

Monday, February 22—"Thar’ she blows"! It’s February, and grey whales are once again moving north along our coastline on their journey to their summer home in the Arctic Sea. Bring your little ones to our February Nature Storytime. We’ll have songs, a story, and a craft, as we learn about our great big friends in the sea. If you have any questions about Storytime, please contact Mary Ellen at 760-918-6622.

Bird Houses at the Golf Course

Last month we reported on our plans to install and monitor bluebird houses at Eternal Hills Memorial Park. We now have permission to expand our program to include Oceanside’s El Camino Golf Course. BVAS will supply the bluebird boxes, but we need a couple of volunteers to check on the boxes during the breeding season. BVAS president, Dennis Huckabay, will help hang the boxes and teach you how to record your observations. Interested? Give Dennis a call at 760-757-6437. You just might find yourself enjoying a bunch of bluebird days this summer!

Bird Houses at the Gift Shop

The BVAS Gift Shop now features two different models of bird houses sure to please your most discriminating avian visitors. These hand-made wooden bird houses come fully assembled and ready for hanging. They also are easily opened for seasonal cleaning. The larger box is specially built for western bluebirds, and sells for $25. The smaller box is designed for wrens, titmice, or chickadees (depending on your neighborhood), and sells for $20. (The pictured plush birds are optional!) What could be more fun and interesting than watching a pair of birds take up residence and raise their family in your own backyard?

Cash for Clunkers

BVAS received a $900 check in January from Cars4Causes. One of our members had donated an old truck through Cars4Causes, designating BVAS as the benefiting charity. The donor got the tax deduction, and BVAS got the check! If you have a vehicle you’d like to get rid of, it’s fast, easy, and absolutely hassle-free. Just call 1-800-766-2273 and say you’d like to donate your vehicle to benefit BVAS. More info and a link to Cars4Causes is on the BVAS website: bvaudubon.org.

Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center

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

760-439-2473

2202 South Coast Hwy., Oceanside, CA
(East side of street on north shore of lagoon)

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 480
Oceanside, CA 92049-0480

Website: www.bvaudubon.org
E-mail: bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
Field Trip Hotline: 760-688-0660
**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: $25.

I would like to donate $ 25 ___ $50 ___ $ 100 ___ Other: ___

Name____________________________
Address__________________________
City, State, Zip ___________________
Phone___________________________
E-mail___________________________

**Create Your Special Legacy**

Join many of our founding members and make BVAS a part of your estate plan. Your legacy gift goes directly to the Endowment Fund, providing lasting support for our Nature Center. Please call Dennis Huckabay at 760-757-6437 for more information.

Please Bill My Credit Card:
Card #______________CRN___

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

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**Native Plant Club Explores Sex in the Garden**

Plant club meetings often seem to devolve into a spat of “talking dirty”. After all, dirt is the medium of our passion! But if the topic for our February meeting, “Safe Sex in the Garden”, sounds a little too provocative, we assure you it’s just your overactive imagination. We’ll just be discussing the sex life of plants, and promise that causes for blushing will be kept to a minimum. Here’s a hint: Are your allergies acting up? What do you know about urban pollen producers? Do you know you have both “nice” and “naughty” plants in your yard? To top off our sexy afternoon, we’ll walk around the garden and identify newly emerging blooms and seeds. Join us at our next Plant Club meeting on February 21 at 2 p.m. at the Nature Center. Add a little spice to your life!

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**Dear Mary Jane,**

Please excuse this open note, but we wanted to let you and all the world know just how much your friendly face and happy spirit means to all of your friends at Buena Vista Audubon.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery. We’ll see you soon!

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**The Great Backyard Bird Count**

It’s time once again for The Great Backyard Bird Count, an annual event where America’s amateur birders are called upon to help create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Over Presidents Day weekend, February 12-15, people are being encouraged to spend a little time recording the birds they see in some very familiar territory—their own backyards. Anyone can participate, regardless of age or level of birding expertise. People can count birds for as little as 15 minutes on one day, or count for as long as they like each day of the event. It’s free, fun, and easy—and the information collected will help guide bird conservation programs in the years ahead.

For more information, including general tips and how to report your sightings, pick up a flyer at the BVAS Nature Center, or visit The Great Backyard Bird Count webpage, [http://www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

As in past years, participants are invited to also e-mail their tally results, interesting observations, or bird photos to the *Lagoon Flyer* (akamauro@cox.net). We’d love to report on how everyone did!

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**SAN DIEGO BIRD FESTIVAL**

**March 4 through 7**

Marina Village Conference Center
Mission Bay

*Birding trips, workshops, talks, trade show
Over 250 species seen during 2009 Festival*

For more information and registration materials:
[www.sandiegoaudubon.org/birdfest](http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org/birdfest)
Quick Calendar for February

Mon. Feb. 1—Nature Guides Meeting—10 a.m.
Fri. Feb. 5—Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 6—Whelan Lake Walk—8 a.m.
Sun. Feb. 7—Elfin Forest Reserve Walk—8 a.m.
Sun. Feb. 21—Native Plant Club Meeting—2 p.m.
Wed. Feb. 17—General Meeting w/ Greg Rubin—7 p.m.
Sat. Feb. 20—Agua Hedionda Bird Walk—8:30 a.m.
Mon. Feb. 22—Nature Storytime—10 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 20—Buena Vista Lagoon Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 27—Basic Birding at B. V. Landing—8:30 a.m.

Coming in March
Mar. 4-7—San Diego Bird Festival

A Christmas Bird Count Highlight

Black Oystercatcher

Happily, a black oystercatcher showed up first on the beach, and later on the jetty at Oceanside Harbor, during the 2009 Oceanside Christmas Bird Count. A total of 193 species were recorded this year, one of the best count totals in many years. A number of key elements needed to fall in place to record this many species. We had generally good weather and many dedicated participants, plus we had a bit of good luck. A total of 23 of the species recorded were represented by a single bird of that species! Many thanks to Terry Hunefeld, who, aside from serving as count organizer and compiler, also spotted and photographed this lone oystercatcher of the day.
"The GBBC is an important tool for tracking birds and for getting people interested in birds."

"I am happily impressed at how easy this was to do. Friends have encouraged me to participate for several years; I am glad I did!"

"This seems like a good way to keep me and my kids involved with wildlife and the outdoors."

- Discover and help the birds in your community
- It’s fun, family-friendly, and educational
- Free and open to all ages and skill levels

For extra copies of this 13th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count brochure, please visit www.birdcount.org

www.birdcount.org
Count alone or with friends

This February, take part in a family-friendly, educational activity that: (1) doesn’t cost money, (2) makes a difference, and (3) is lots of fun!

Each year, tens of thousands of people throughout the U.S. and Canada take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). You can count the birds you see in your backyard, off your balcony, at your local park, or from your window.

People of all ages and all levels of bird-watching experience are welcome. The GBBC is a great way to learn more about the birds in your backyard and neighborhood. It’s also a fun and engaging activity that encourages kids to get outside and connect with nature. You can count by yourself, or with your family, community group, school, or friends! It’s an ideal way for more experienced birders to introduce children, grandchildren, and others to the wonderful world of birds.

Send in your observations

Whether you are new to spotting and counting birds, or an expert birder, your counts count! Your checklist will contribute valuable information for conservation when you enter your tally online at www.birdcount.org. Short or long, your list will help scientists understand more about how the distribution and abundance of birds are changing through time.

Last year, participants identified 619 species and submitted a record-breaking 93,600 checklists. Their reports tracked the locations and numbers of American Robins, Black-capped Chickadees and other familiar birds as well as a massive surge of Pine Siskins over much of the eastern United States. The siskins moved southward because of seed crop failures in their usual wintering grounds in Canada and the boreal forests.

Anyone can explore which species have been seen in their community, state, or province and see maps showing where specific species have been found on the GBBC website.

Top 10 most commonly reported species in GBBC 2009 were

1. Northern Cardinal
2. Mourning Dove
3. Dark-eyed Junco
4. American Goldfinch
5. Downy Woodpecker
6. Blue Jay
7. House Finch
8. Tufted Titmouse
9. American Crow
10. Black-capped Chickadee

“GBBC reports add up to an amazing snapshot of winter bird populations.”
John Fitzpatrick, Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

It’s easy to participate

February 12–15, 2010

2. Count the birds you see, wherever you choose to count. Write down the highest number of individual birds you see at one time—that way you will avoid counting any bird twice.
3. After at least 15 minutes of watching in one place, report your results online at www.birdcount.org. (You can spend more time observing if you prefer.)
4. You can repeat your count at the same place on each day of the Great Backyard Bird Count, or you can visit other locations. Submit a new checklist for each day that you count.

View your results

Online maps and lists are updated throughout the count, making it easy to see how your birds fit into the big picture.

Send your photos and videos!

You can submit your digital images of birds—or Great Backyard Bird Count participants—for review and possible inclusion in our online gallery at www.birdcount.org. Photos are also eligible for our photo contest!

If you’d like to post a video about your GBBC experience, please post to www.youtube.com and tag it “Great Backyard Bird Count”.

All bird photos in this brochure were taken by GBBC participants.

THE 13th ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT IS HOSTED BY THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY & CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY

Audubon

TheCornellLab of Ornithology