Volume 41 Number 2 February 2012

Lagoon Flyer

Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

Buena Vista Audubon Society

Wednesday, February 15

with Jim Karnik

7 p.m. Social—7:30 p.m. Program

Our February program will feature a sneak peek at a major multimedia production now being developed by well-known local nature videographer, Jim Karnik. Jim's presentation will focus on the diversity and unique qualities of San Diego's natural habitats, and will be accompanied by sample video clips from his new nature series, "The Wilds of San Diego".

Since 1987, Jim has focused his efforts on helping conservation organizations increase public awareness of human and natural history through film, video and photography. Over that time he has filmed most of the habitats and species in the county. Now he is recapturing and packaging the beauty and natural diversity of San Diego using the latest multimedia filming and editing technology, including high-definition single-lens reflex cameras and Hollywood-style editing software. The new series will attempt to increase public awareness and appreciation for San Diego's natural world by focusing on the connections between wildlife, habitats, and humans. Ultimately, Jim intends to reach as large an audience as possible by utilizing multiple media outlets. This could include the use of traveling theater exhibits installed in public spaces such as visitor centers like the BVAS Nature Center, as well as libraries, public buildings and shopping malls.

Please join us at our February meeting and be among the first to experience this exciting new program.

February 25, 5-8 p.m., at the Nature Center

BVAS BIRDHOUSE AUCTION!

Hand-Crafted Birdhouses by Local Artisans

Live and Silent Auction with Celebrity Auctioneer Martha Barnette from NPR's "A Way With Words"

$5 Cover

All Proceeds Support the Nature Center

Live Music From Endangered Speciez

Food, Drinks, Wine, and Beer

An Owl for A Pet?

About this time last year a new BVAS Nature Center host was just settling down for her first day at the desk. The phone rang.

"I just found a baby owl in my back yard", said an excited woman. *"What do I do"?*
The new volunteer thought back on her training and quickly came up with the right response. *"Let me give you the number for Wildlife Assist",* she replied. *"They will come out and pick up the bird and take care of it".*
"Oh no", said the lady. *"I don't want to give it up. I just wanted to know what I should feed it".*

At this point the phone was handed over to a more experienced volunteer who happened to be nearby. After being told that baby owls primarily subsisted on a diet of ripped off portions of raw rodent meat, one would have thought the woman might have been happy to call Wildlife Assist. But it took a couple of days and several follow-up calls before our owl lady was convinced she should give up her prize to the proper folks. There are at least two lessons in this story. First, it can be pretty interesting to volunteer at BVAS, and second, you don't want an owl for a pet.

Harry's owl, Hedwig, is portrayed as a female snowy owl in the Harry Potter movies. The seven different owls that filled the role of Hedwig in the films, however, were all males, distinguished from female snowy owls by whiter and less streaked plumage and somewhat smaller size. You can't see it in the photo, but hidden under Harry's cloak is the thick leather protection on his arm designed to protect him from Hedwig's long, sharp talons.

—Taken from Laura Erickson's website: "The Owls of Harry Potter".

The Harry Potter books gave some folks the idea that having an owl perched on the shoulder might be pretty cool. To dispel that notion we should first point out it is totally illegal to keep an owl for a pet in the United States. Aside from that technicality, here are some thoughts on the topic, gleaned from the "Owls As Pets" website:

1. There is no Purina "Owl Chow". Owls eat small rodents and reptiles. That means locating a source, keeping a freezer full of dead animals, and thawing and dicing up mice for your special pet every night.
2. Owls can be very destructive. That natural killing instinct can be applied to pillows, furniture, and other prized household belongings. Also, owls don't like to be petted or cuddled. Those who touch an owl can pretty much expect a bite. And, oh yes, owl beaks and talons are very sharp.
3. Feathers, pellets, and poop, oh my! Owls molt thousands of feathers each year, and regularly throw up pellets of undigested bits of fur and bone. In addition to their regular bird poop, owls empty out the *ceca* at the end of their intestines almost every day. This discharge is about the color and consistency of chocolate pudding, but reportedly smells quite different.
4. Taking a vacation or leaving home would be very difficult, since owls require a great amount of special attention every day. Who would take care of it?
5. And then there's the mating season. The all-night racket of a lovesick owl might not be such a hoot for family members and neighbors.
6. Owls are high maintenance in the best of times, but when they aren't well, they require specialized (and expensive) professional care. Most vets aren't trained in owl care and don't have the slightest idea what normal owl poop might even look like.
7. Finally, should you decide to defy federal law and common sense and keep an owl as a pet, you should know that keeping an owl can be a long-term commitment. The larger species can live 30 years or more.

Fortunately, we can enjoy being close to owls without actually keeping one in the house. Many people have successfully attracted barn owls to their property by installing owl nesting boxes. One BVAS board member attempted to do just that last year. Unfortunately, he is now blessed with an active colony of bees, Africanized no doubt, that quickly moved in to the owl box and set up its hive. This should not discourage other potential owl box installers, however. If one were to call our now experienced Nature Center host today, they would learn that applying a thin coating of Ivory Soap to the owl box as it's being installed will prevent the bees from moving in, and the owls don't seem to mind.

—Andy Mauro

Snowy Owl Irruption*—Snowy owls are being sighted in abundant numbers in the northern U.S. this winter. It's typical for snowy owls to show up in the U.S. every three or four winters, but this year's irruption is particularly large and widespread. The arrival of the birds is the result of a bounty of lemmings in the Artic tundra last summer, which led to a strong breeding season. —A.P.*

February Birding Schedule—Join Us!

Whelan Lake Monthly Bird Count

with John Haddock

Saturday, Feb. 4—8 a.m.

Whelan Lake is a bird reserve with a freshwater lake, riparian-edge habitat, grass-covered hillsides, and an oak grove. The varied habitat results in a nice assortment of bird species in all seasons. It is especially noted for its wintering duck populations and interesting sightings during fall and spring migration.

Directions: I-5 to Hwy. 76 East, left at Douglas, continue to light at North River Rd., go left on North River Rd. Pass through the entrance gate and follow the signs to the lake.

Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Lake Hodges Bird Walk

with Steve Brad

Sunday, Feb. 12—8 a.m.

Lake Hodges offers a nice variety of bird species attracted to the lake, its reed and willow fringes, the oak tree woodland that characterizes much of the Del Dios residential community, and the adjacent chaparral-covered hillsides. Western and Clark's grebes breed at the lake throughout the year, and birders have a good chance of seeing them doing their distinctive courtship dance across the surface of the lake.

Directions: From I-5, take Encinitas Blvd. east into the heart of Rancho Santa Fe. The road changes names from Encinitas Blvd. to Rancho Santa Fe Rd., La Bajada, Los Morros, and finally La Granada. Turn left on Paseo Delicias and continue east as the road name changes to Escondido Del Dios Hwy. Turn right on Rancho Dr. and proceed a couple of blocks to Hernandez' Hideaway on Lake Drive in Del Dios. We'll meet in the parking lot across the street from the restaurant.

Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639; stevebrad1@earthlink.net.

San Diego Bird Festival

March 1-4, 2012

Keynote Speaker:
Kenn Kaufman

For info and on-line registration, go to:

www.sandiegoaudubon.org

Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count

with Joan Fountain

Saturday, Feb. 25—8 a.m.

Become a citizen scientist! Join the regular monthly bird survey team and get to know the Buena Vista Lagoon. This monthly bird survey has been conducted by BVAS for many years, and the extensive database of bird sightings will be a factor for consideration as officials continue to study the best approach for managing, maintaining, and restoring this ecological reserve.

Directions: I-5 to I-78 East, take Jefferson St. exit, turn right and make another right turn onto Lagoon View Dr. Park along road at cul-de-sac.
Leader: Joan Fountain, 760-729-1379.

Basic Birding Class at the Buena Vista Lagoon Landing

with Tom Troy

Saturday, Feb. 25—8:30 a.m.

Are you interested in learning a little more about the birds of our lagoon? Join the friendly group of fledgling birders that regularly turn out for Tom Troy's basic birding class at Buena Vista Lagoon on the last Saturday of each month. Everyone is invited to join the class for some informal, no-pressure birding and lots of friendly tips.

Directions: I-5 to I-78 East. From I-78, take Jefferson St. exit and turn right. At the light on Jefferson St. turn right again. Make an immediate right turn into the BVL Landing parking lot. Leader: Tom Troy, 760-420-7328.

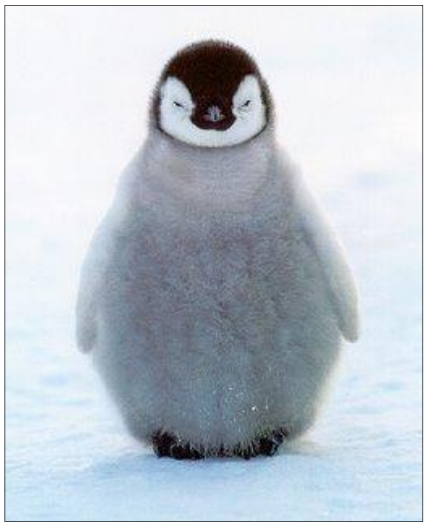
Saturdays Through February

Ramona Hawk Watch

Wildlife Research Institute is again offering its popular Hawk Watch program each Saturday during January and February from 9 a.m. to noon. This free event allows visitors to see many of the raptor species that use the grasslands and wooded areas around Ramona for breeding or wintering grounds. Join guides on a raptor field trip, see a hawk banding operation at close hand, and view displays in the WRI nature center.
Location: WRI headquarters, 18030 Highland Valley Rd., Ramona. For more info: 760-789-3992.

Preschool Nature Storytime

Monday, February 27, 10 a.m.



Maybe you saw the penguin movie "Happy Feet", or visited the penguin exhibit at Sea World. Since we don't live in the Antarctic, most of us aren't able to visit penguins in their wild habitat. What are they like? Do they live in houses? Do they swim or walk, fast or slow? And what do they eat? Come to this month's Storytime and find out more about penguins and their friends. We'll enjoy a story, songs, and a craft.

If you have any questions please call Mary Ellen at 760-918-6622

BVAS OFFICERS, BOARD*, AND CHAIRS

President	Dave Billings*	760-753-7925
Vice-President	Dennis Huckabay*	760-757-6437
Secretary	Kathy Billings*	760-753-7925
Treasurer	Sandy McMullen*	760-944-5690
Audubon Adventures	Ruth Gransbery	760-729-2240
Center Manager	Annette Schneider	760-945-8891
Christmas Bird Count	Terry Hunefeld*	760-908-3453
Conservation Co-Chair	Danny DiMento*	858-688-6891
Conservation Co-Chair	Joan Herskowitz*	760-942-5167
Circulation	Lisa Hart	760-945-9601
Education Co-Chair	Ellen Kindsvater	760-433-8097
	E-mail: ekindsvater1@gmail.com.	
Education Co-Chair	Carol Riker	760-599-0868
Facilities/Exhibits	Danny DiMento*	858-688-6891
Field Trips	Andy Brumbaugh	760-434-3334
Field Trip Leader	Steve Brad*	760-633-1639
Gift Shop	Rosalyn Dong	760-806-1430
Library	C. J. DiMento	760-231-9096
Membership	Harvey Hart*	760-945-9601
Native Plant Club	Joan Bockman*	760-433-9401
Native Plant Garden	Joan Bockman*	760-433-9401
Nature Storytime	Mary Ellen Marquand	760-918-6622
Newsletter Editor	Andy Mauro* E-mail:	akamauro@cox.net
Pelagic Birding	Terry Hunefeld*	760-908-3453
Programs	Dennis Huckabay*	760-757-6437
Publicity	Kelly Deveney*	760-721-2441
Ruddy Duck Club	Kelly Deveney*	760-721-2441
Volunteers	Bob Crowell*	760-207-3884
Webmaster	Larry Spann: E-mail:	larry@spannweb.net

Follow BVAS on Facebook

We're excited to report that BVAS will soon have 200 "Friends" on Facebook. In fact, by the time you read this we will almost certainly have surpassed that particular landmark. We know that someone like Justin Bieber probably has several million Facebook friends, but for a bunch of computer-challenged birders, we think we deserve a pat on the back. Thank you, everyone! We invite you to take the next step and get social by posting a nature or conservation comment, uploading your nature photo, or simply commenting on someone else's posting. Don't be shy!

A photo of Steve Scarano's Birdhouse #1, a rustic house featuring barbed wire décor, leather hinges, and tin roof, as originally posted on the wall at BVAS Facebook.

How to get on Facebook:

Log on at **www.facebook.com** to establish your Facebook account. It's simple and free. Once you have your account, just type in "Buena Vista Audubon" on the search line and you'll be connected to the BVAS Facebook page. Once there, make sure you click the "Like" icon!

Location: 2202 South Coast Hwy. Oceanside, CA (East side of street on north shore of lagoon)	**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 480 Oceanside, CA 92049 **Phone:** 760-439-2473
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday — 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday—1 p.m.-4 p.m. **Closed Monday**	**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. The BVAS Nature Center and its educational programs will receive 100% of my contribution. Minimum donation suggested: $25.

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

Send me info about the BVAS Legacy program.: ____

Name_____
Address_____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone_____
E-mail_____
***Send me my newsletter by e-mail.** ☐

My Annual Donation

Enclosed is my donation to the 2011/12 BVAS annual fundraising campaign to support the Nature Center, nature education and environmental conservation programs at BVAS. ☐

Please bill my credit card:

Card #_____
CRN_____

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

B.V. Native Plant Club

Sunday, February 19, 2 p.m.—Things may be a little bleak in some gardens this month, but the native plants around the Nature Center are looking good! This is their "spring" growing season now, and fresh growth is busting out all over. Stop by and smell the fresh sage.

The Buena Vista Native Plant Club meets at the Nature Center at 2 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month. Everyone's welcome, regardless of their native plant knowledge or gardening expertise. We'll answer your questions, help solve your gardening issues, and offer tips for native gardening activities appropriate for the season. And there's always an opportunity to get a little "hands-on" experience among the native plants around the Nature Center.

More info is available at **www.bvaudubon.org.**

New Support for Parks in Oceanside

Two new non-profit 501 (c)3 citizen groups have recently been formed to support parks within Oceanside.

The Oceanside Parks and Recreation Community Foundation, also known as the "Friends of Oceanside Parks", is a broad-based group dedicated to raising funds in support of the city's parks and recreation programs and services. More info: **www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/gov/ns/parks/friends/about.asp**, or (760) 435-5529.

The Friends of El Corazon is a citizen's group that was formed following the city's adoption of the El Corazon Specific Plan and selection of a developer for that project. The group has a nine-member board of directors headed by BVAS member Diane Nygaard, and counts many former members of the El Corazon Citizens Planning Committee among its founding members. Among its goals is ensuring that the development of El Corazon Park is done in accordance with the adopted Specific Plan.

Rare Birds Sighted at BVAS

In the birding world a rare bird at an unexpected time is an exciting find, cause for happy exclamations and wide grins. We treasure these occurrences, and share the news of our good fortune with others in our circle.

At the Nature Center we also encounter exciting finds at unexpected times. When extra help was needed over the holidays to keep the doors open, BVAS volunteer **Kris Thorsten** was regularly sighted. We offer up a big "Thank You" to Kris, our most recent BVAS "rare bird".

The many BVAS volunteers who give their time to Nature Guides, Garden and Trail, or Center Hosting, turn the Nature Center into a special habitat, a place where schools, families and visitors from all over the world gather, learn, and enjoy nature and our community.

If you would like to be one of our noteworthy sightings, call or stop by the Center and we'll get you started. Excited acclamations are sure to follow! *—Bob Crowell*

Thank You For Your Donations!

The results are still rolling in, but early returns to the BVAS year-end fundraising letter are well on track to meet the chapter's 2011/12 budgetary goals. Over $4,000 in contributions had been received through the first week in January, a strong showing of support within the community for the Nature Center and the full range of nature education and recreation programs offered by BVAS. If you haven't had a chance to send in your donation yet, please take a moment and write out your check. As BVAS members, we treasure our connection to the world of nature that surrounds us, appreciate the joy and fulfillment it provides in our daily lives, and strive to do what we can to ensure that our children and others who follow will also be able to experience the blessing of our natural heritage.

BIRD HOUSE AUCTION!

LIVE AT THE NATURE CENTER
FEBRUARY 25
5-8 P.M.

Lagoon Flyer

BUENA VISTA AUDUBON SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 480
OCEANSIDE, CA 92049-0480

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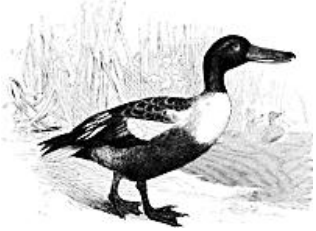
BVAS Quick Calendar

February

Fri. Feb. 3 —Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 4—Whelan Lake Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Fri.. Feb. 10—Nature Guides Meeting—10 a.m.
Sun. Feb. 12—Lake Hodges Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Wed. Feb. 15 —General Meeting—7 p.m.
Sun. Feb. 19—Native Plant Club Meeting—2 p.m.
Sat. Feb. 25 —Buena Vista Lagoon Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 25—Basic Birding at BVL Landing—8:30 a.m.
Mon. Feb. 27—Preschool Nature Storytime—10 a.m.

Coming in March

Thur.-Sun. Mar. 1-4—San Diego Bird Festival



Printed on Recycled Paper

Mew Gull in Oceanside

—Steve Brad

According to the S.D. County Bird Atlas, our county lies near the southern limit of the mew gull's winter range, so the species occurs here only as an uncommon winter visitor. That's good enough for us, though, as a group of BVAS birders watched this mew gull at the mouth of the San Luis Rey River near Oceanside Harbor in January. Steve Brad led the group, found and identified the bird, and took the photo. Thanks, Steve!

Buena Vista Audubon Society

Fundraiser and Open House

February 25, 2012

Buena Vista Audubon Society Nature Center
2202 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside

SECOND ANNUAL BIRD HOUSE AUCTION

Calling all artists, craftspeople, and nature loving people of all ages: Buena Vista Audubon Society is soliciting donations of signature birdhouses, bat-houses and birdfeeders for our **2nd Annual Birdhouse Auction**. Entries may be decorative or functional and can be submitted by teams or individuals. Prizes will be awarded for the top three vote getters. A limited number of undecorated birdhouses are available for $8.00 to help you get started. The use of sustainable, recycled and repurposed materials is encouraged.

All proceeds benefit the Buena Vista Audubon Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to fostering an appreciation for the plants and animals of our community.

Deadline for dropping off Birdhouses is February 18, 2012.

bvlagoon@gmail.com ✳ 760-439-2473 ✳ www.bvaudubon.org