Volume 40 Number 7 September 2011

Lagoon Flyer

Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

Buena Vista Audubon Society

Thursday, September 22

Finding Birds at the Salton Sea and in Imperial County

by Bob Miller

7 p.m. Social—7:30 p.m. Program

We are delighted to kick off our autumn program schedule with a presentation by noted Imperial County bird guide, Bob Miller. Bob has been studying birds and the natural environment in Imperial County and the Yuma area for just about all of his adulthood.

Bob Miller at Salton Sea

Popularly known as the "birding cowboy", Bob has an easy going, country boy style that quickly relaxes his audience and puts a smile on everyone's face. But don't be fooled by his easy manner—his knowledge of the natural history of his region is only matched by the love he shows for his subject matter.

Burrowing Owl in Imperial County —Bob Miller

The title of Bob's talk is taken from a newly published field guide he co-authored with Southwest Birders partner Henry Detwiler of Yuma, AZ, and based on their combined years of birding, guiding and exploring the area. Autographed copies of Bob's books will be available for sale after the program. Check out their wonderfully informative website at: www.southwestbirders.com.

Join us for a personal look at this most important birding area through the eyes of a colorful and passionate fan.

New BVAS Birding Guide Now Available

Birding Hotspots of North County

In response to repeated requests, BVAS has produced a full-color brochure highlighting some of the best birding spots in North County. The brochure profiles 14 different coastal and inland birding sites that promise a varied bird list in a range of habitats. A detailed site map and directions are included, along with notes about visitor services at each site. Award-winning photographer Chris Mayne contributed the dramatic bird photos that illustrate the brochure.

California. Quail —C. Mayne

The brochure was partially funded by a San Diego County grant. A committee headed by Judi Wilson oversaw the project, with graphic design services provided by Daniel Sanchez. The brochure is being distributed free of charge at the BVAS Nature Center and at several other North County sites. Stop by to pick up your copy today, and go birding!

Black-necked Stilt —C. Mayne

Conservation Matters

Here's a quick rundown of summer news, both good and bad, on some conservation issues of interest to BVAS.

I-5 Widening Project—Following years of study and public debate, Caltrans announced its decision to support the addition of four managed lanes (i.e. express lanes) in a dedicated corridor for the I-5 freeway between Del Mar and Oceanside. The option chosen was a step down from alternatives calling for additional regular traffic lanes. A large number of community members, conservation-oriented non-profit organizations, and some governmental entities had joined forces to rally against a more massive freeway widening project. The project recommendation also includes money for North County lagoon restorations, freeway bridge widening, public trail enhancements, and complete double tracking for the Coaster in the North County. The project would be phased over 40 years.

Melrose Road Extension— The Oceanside City Council majority bloc voted to override its Planning Commission and approve the EIR in support of extending Melrose Road. The project had been soundly criticized by community activists for its environmental impact on the natural resources of Guajome Park. A lawsuit has been filed to challenge the decision on environmental grounds.

Gregory Canyon Dump—In another majority bloc 3-2 decision, the Oceanside City Council voted to oppose state Senate Bill 833 by Sen. Juan Vargas, this despite the fact that the bill would effectively kill the long-fought Gregory Canyon landfill proposed near Pala. The dump site would be adjacent to the San Luis Rey River. Critics contend eventual seepage from the dump site would contaminate the river which supplies a significant percentage of Oceanside's drinking water. Debate on this issue has about run its course, and a final judgment is expected soon.

County General Plan Update—After close to 15 years of study, public meetings, heated debate, and last-minute revisions, County Supervisors have approved an update to the Master Plan for development of the rural backcountry. The plan embraces a "smart growth" approach, mostly concentrating future development in existing rural centers and lessening density in the more remote outlying areas.

Sewage Spill Aftermath—A failure in Oceanside's sewer pipelines caused a 5-million-gallon spill in Buena Vista Creek last December. The city must now pay for more monitoring and analysis of the creek's water flow, will be required to speed up replacement of its aged sewage infrastructure running through the creek bed, and may need to fund a special enhancement project as a result of a to-be-determined fine from the Water Quality Control Board.

Sanchez Earns High Marks On Coastal Panel

Among members of the California Coastal Commission, Oceanside council member Esther Sanchez had the voting record most aligned with environmental groups last year, according to a report released by a consortium of conservation groups in late June.

The report took issue with the perception that Coastal Commissioners are dependable supporters of the environment, citing statistics that showed the overall conservation score for the commission dropped from 66 percent in 2009 to 61 percent in 2010. According to the analysis, Sanchez supported environmental interests in 90 percent of her votes in 2010. In contrast, former governor Schwartzenegger's appointees cast pro-environment votes only 43% of the time.

Lagoon Restoration Dropped

BVAS members and others who treasure our local natural environment at its wildlife will be disappointed to learn that hopes for a landmark project in the heart of our community have apparently been dashed by others in Oceanside who just don't share these values. BVAS has learned that the long-sought and desperately needed restoration of the Buena Vista Lagoon has been officially scuttled by the regulatory officials in charge. This after years of study, planning, and the expenditure of several millions of dollars. But don't blame the resource agencies. It seems a group of land owners could not accept the idea of living adjacent to a saltwater lagoon and marsh.

Studies show the saltwater restoration alternative would maximize habitat values and best improve the natural functioning of the lagoon. Key property owners who control the lagoon inlet, however, have always favored a freshwater lagoon. After numerous unproductive meetings between property owners and agency officials, a professional facilitator was hired early this year to work out an agreement. In early August, the property owners again gave word they were unwilling to support a saltwater alternative.

It is difficult to understand the intransigence of the property owners. The saltwater alternative not only is best for nature, it is also best for human values like improved water quality, better flood control, easier mosquito abatement, and more sand on the beach. And the pricey homes of Upper Newport Bay give proof that high property values can be supported in proximity to a tidal saltwater lagoon and marsh.

According to officials, the impetus to continue the expensive and time-consuming restoration planning process is now lost, potential funds for the project will soon be committed elsewhere, and all further restoration efforts at our lagoon have been indefinitely cancelled. So sad. *—Andy Mauro*

September Birding Schedule—Join Us!

Whelan Lake Monthly Bird Count

with John Haddock

Saturday, September 3—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, and can be good for interesting sightings during fall and spring migration. **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.

Shorebirding at San Elijo Lagoon

with Steve Brad

Sunday, September 11, 8 a.m.

San Elijo Lagoon offers wonderful shorebird habitat and excellent viewing conditions. By September, a sizable number of shorebirds will be back from their long sojourn to the north. This is a time when juvenile and adult-plumaged shorebirds can often be found together, providing opportunities for learning how to sort out individuals of a species by age. We'll work on this skill, important for helping to spot any rarities that might be present. We can expect all the usual wintering species, as well as some late migrants lingering on their journey further south. Meet at the Rios Trail head. **Directions:** From I-5, take Loma Santa Fe west. Turn right on North Rios Ave. and drive to its end. Park on road. No facilities.

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

Eastern Sierra Trip Nets 100 Species

The BVAS birding trip to the Eastern Sierras in July spotted 100 different species over four days of birding in Mono and Inyo Counties. Leader Steve Brad had a number of key species staked out for the participants as a result of earlier trips taken to his cabin at Mammoth. Highlights included numerous common nighthawks "hawking" insects at Crowley Lake (see Steve's photo), close-up looks at evening grosbeaks, black-backed woodpeckers in the burn area north of Mammoth, and at least 20 species feeding young. The winter snow pack was still in evidence at higher elevations, and the wildflowers were in full display. Wonderful weather and a friendly group made for a great trip.

Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count

with Joan Fountain

Saturday, September 24—8 a.m.

Join the regular monthly bird survey team and get to know the Buena Vista Lagoon. Have the satisfaction of contributing to the ongoing bird database and gaining a better knowledge of the birds of our lagoon. We always record a nice assortment of freshwater wetland and marsh species on this easy-paced excursion. **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, September 24—8:30 a.m.

Is this the year that you become a birder? Novice birders are invited to join our monthly classes for some informal, no-pressure birding. We'll share friendly tips and help you build your bird identification skills.

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.

Pelagic Birding in October

Craveri's Express: October 8. This all-day trip will depart from the docks at 6 a.m. and return by 7 p.m. It will stay in San Diego County waters, visiting the Nine-mile and Thirty-mile Banks. Target species include Craveri's murrelet, brown boobies, four different storm-petrel species, skua, three different jaegers, flesh-footed shearwater, and black-footed albatross. Cost: $115. Reserve by Sept. 17 for early bird discount of $26.

Petrel & Rare Seabird Deep Water Weekend: October 15-17. This 56-hour trip will depart from the docks on Saturday at 6 a.m., and return on Monday at 3 p.m. The trip will head out to deep water in search of species seldom seen by less adventurous birders. In addition to the species listed for the Oct. 8 trip above, we'll be looking for Cook's, mottled, and Stejnager's petrels, five different storm-petrels, and red-billed tropicbirds, with other rarities always possible. Cost: $325. Reserve by Sept. 15 for the early bird discount of $30.

For reservations, call Point Loma Sportfishing at 619-223-1627, and let them know you'd like a spot on one of the October pelagic birding trips on board the *Grande*. For details about pelagic birding trips throughout the year, as well as photos, trip lists, and tips, go to: www.socalbirding.com.

BVAS Summer Scrapbook

Above: Nature Center manager, Annette Schneider, hangs out with Jerry Mathers of "Leave it to Beaver" fame, prior to Carlsbad Lagoon Day in July.

Below: Eight-year-old Abby shares her aunt's tortoise, Maxine, with her new friends at the BVAS Nature Camp in late June. The "happy campers" at BVAS enjoyed an exciting kick-off to their summer.

Above: A young naturalist looks out at "his favorite place", the Buena Vista Lagoon, as he enjoys his first ride on the Coaster. The photo was posted on Facebook by BVAS " fan" Jennifer Skaptason.

Below: Vanessa Okafor, Miss Oceanside for 2911, welcomes visitors to the BVAS Nature Center.

Above: New BVAS Librarian, C.J. DiMento, carefully holds a young clapper rail as it's being banded prior to its release at the Buena Vista Lagoon in July.

BVAS OFFICERS, BOARD*, AND CHAIRS

President	Dave Billings*	760-753-7925
Vice-President	Dennis Huckabay*	760-757-6437
Secretary	Kathy Billings*	760-753-7925
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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
Education Co-Chair	Nancy Miller	760-704-6479
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

Location: 2202 South Coast Hwy. Oceanside, CA (East side of street on north shore of lagoon)	**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 480 Oceanside, CA 92049-0480 **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.** ☐

Create A Lasting 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 info.

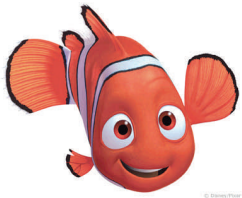
Please Bill My Credit Card:

Card #_____
CRN_____

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

Preschool Nature Storytime

Monday, September 26, 10 a.m.—It may be back to school time for the older children, but Nature Storytime doesn't want summer to end! We're going to explore "nature at the beach" during our September session. Our story and craft will focus on some fun critters that enjoy the beach even more than we do! Bring your preschool children to our Nature Storytime this month—it'll be like a day at the beach. Don't worry though. Mommy won't have to worry about sunscreen or sand being tracked into the house.



If you have any questions about Nature Storytime, please contact Mary Ellen at 760-918-6622.

Become a BVAS Volunteer

If you have as little as three hours of time available each month, you can become an important member of the BVAS family of volunteers. Whatever your interests, talents, experience, or free time, we'd love to welcome you on board at the Nature Center.

Next time you stop by the Nature Center, introduce yourself to one of our recent crop of new volunteers: David Baker, Melinda O'Brien, Denise Buccola, Sandy Carpenter, Mary Cappudonna, Jo Moore, Arlene Schag, Kris Thorsten, and Linda Viggiauelli. They're all now enjoying the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that goes along with doing something fun for their community. Thank you to all our volunteers and interns. The wildlife knows it is not alone.

If you are interested in helping, please call me at 760-207-3884, or e-mail me at kbcrowell@cox.net, and we will get you started! *—Bob Crowell*

Nature Guides Have Busy Year

A huge thank you to our dedicated band of eleven Nature Guides, led by Ellen Kindsrvater, who educated and entertained almost 3,000 young students at the Nature Center this last school year. Over 60 school groups visited the Nature Center. The students learned about lagoon wildlife, Native Americans, and the watershed, and took guided walks along the trail. Most students came from Oceanside, but some from as far as San Bernardino. Private schools visited the Nature Center as well, along with smaller groups of homeschooled children.

Special thanks to Mary Ellen Marquand and Dovie Christensen who ran our two-week summer camp for 68 children. Mary Ellen also provided monthly pre-school Nature Storytime for 208 children. Joan Fountain gave lessons to 220 Boy & Girl Scouts over the year. Steve Lacy provided outreach programs serving 100 students and Joan Bockman provided native plant programs to 220 students.

In addition to our student visitors to the Nature Center, students from 45 third grade classrooms in the community received free in-class nature education lessons courtesy of BVAS through the Audubon-in-the-Classroom program.

Great job, everyone! *—Kathy Billings*

Buena Vista Native Plant Club

Sunday, September 18, 2 p.m.—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. Club members answer questions and help solve your gardening issues, as well as 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 in the demonstration gardens or along the trails at the BVAS Nature Center. More info at www.bvaudubon.org.

Coastal Cleanup Day

Saturday, September 17, 2011—9 a.m.-12 p.m.

For details, directions, and registration, go to:

http://www.cleanupday.org/index.htm

Lagoon Flyer

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OCEANSIDE, CA 92049-0480

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BVAS Quick Calendar

Fri. Aug. 26—Board Meeting—9 a.m.

Sat. Sept. 3—Whelan Lake Bird Walk—8 a.m.

Mon. Sept. 5—Nature Guides Meeting—10 a.m.

Sun. Sept. 11—Shorebirding at San Elijo—8 a.m.

Sat. Sept. 17—Coastal Cleanup Day—9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Sun. Sept. 18—Native Plant Club Meeting—2 p.m.

Thur. Sept. 22—General Meeting—7 p.m.*

Sat. Sept. 24—Buena Vista Lagoon Count—8 a.m.

Sat. Sept. 24—Basic Birding at B.V. L. Landing—8:30 a.m.

Mon. Sept. 26—Preschool Nature Storytime—10 a.m.

Oct. 8 and Oct. 15-17— Pelagic Birding Trips

***NOTICE**: *Please note our General Meeting this month will be on THURSDAY, September 22, rather than our usual third Wednesday of the month.*

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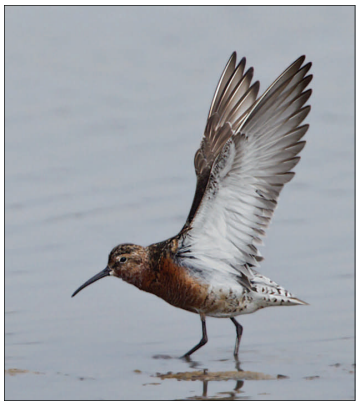
Rare Curlew Sandpiper in Town



—Chris Mayne

Mid- to late-summer is when shorebirds return to San Diego after breeding in northern latitudes. Along with the usual wintering species, there's always a chance to spot a rarity like this beautiful curlew sandpiper, still sporting its breeding plumage.

The bird was first spotted on July 24 by San Diego birding guru, Guy McCaskie. It was foraging with western sandpipers in a tidal salt pond in Imperial Beach on land now included in a new wildlife refuge. Curlew sandpipers aren't seen very often in San Diego County, with only three previous records listed in the *S.D. County Bird Atlas* (Unitt). Interestingly, two of those three previous records were from San Elijo Lagoon, the site of our September 11 shorebird trip by Steve Brad (see P. 3). Join Steve, and who knows? Maybe we'll be toasting your rare sighting next month!

Coastal Cleanup Day in North County

Saturday, September 17, 2011—9a.m.-12 p.m.

Bring your family and friends and spend a few hours helping clean up our North County beaches, lagoons, and creeks during the 2011 Coastal Cleanup Day. There will be contests and awards and a whole lot of friendly interaction with like-minded fellow North County residents, but most of all, you'll be doing your part to make our community a nicer place to live!

If you want to volunteer for the Coastal Cleanup Day for San Diego County, simply follow these four easy steps.

1. Go to the San Diego County Coastal Cleanup website at: http://www.cleanupday.org/index.htm

2. Pick your Cleanup Site from among the North County Coastal locations listed below or the other San Diego County locations listed on the website.

North County Coastal Locations:

*Torrey Pines & Penasquitos Lagoon
*Del Mar - Powerhouse Beach
*Solana Beach - Fletcher Cove
*Solana Beach - San Elijo Lagoon
(Trailhead at Rios)
*Cardiff - Seaside Beach
*Cardiff—San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center
*Encinitas - Beacon's Beach
*Encinitas - Swami's Beach Cardiff
and San Elijo State Beach (Camp Grounds)
*Carlsbad - Frazee Beach
*Carlsbad - Ponto Beach
and So. Carlsbad State Beach
*Carlsbad - State Beach
(North of Campgrounds)
*Carlsbad - Tamarack State Beach
and Aqua Hedionda Lagoon
*Oceanside - Buccaneer Beach
*Oceanside - City Beach (Pier)
*Oceanside - Oceanside Harbor

3. Register Online

Once you decide on which site you want, click on the "Click here to Register" button, on the Site Details page. This will start the online registration process. It's easy and takes only a minute.

4. Sign the Waiver using the link on the website.

Every participant in CCD needs to sign a waiver; anyone under the age of 18 needs a parent or guardian signature to participate!

We'll See You On the Beach!