From Your President

**BVAS Annual Report**

I hope all of you have had a good summer, restful as well as productive, with enough time taken to enjoy. Let's hope too we've saved enough energy for the pleasures and tasks of the coming fall. That's certainly been the case for us here at Buena Vista Audubon. Here are a few highlights from our just-completed 2007-2008 fiscal year report.

**Some Numbers**—Our membership increased to an all-time high of 1,341, which includes the 24 local business friends of BVAS who have joined our Ruddy Duck Club. We recorded 11,333 people visiting our Nature Center over the twelve months. They came for our monthly meetings, our nature education programs and tours, our preschool storytime with Mary Ellen Marquand, or our Nature Art Camp. They came to work on Eagle Scout projects, to tour the Native Plant Garden, or to explore our Nature Center and to see our new exhibits. Visitors came from 17 different foreign countries. Groups such as the Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation, Friends of Buena Vista Lagoon, the Grunion Greeters, and the League of Women Voters held their meetings at the Center. Others joined our weekly birding field trips, or joined Tom Troy for his Basic Birding classes.

**Some Accomplishments**—We successfully (so far) opposed the hotel proposed for the land on the lagoon across Coast Highway from our Nature Center. The developer withdrew his request for approval from the Coastal Commission and entered into negotiations for possible sale as permanent open space.

We installed new display cabinets, dedicated the Mountain Lion Corner in memory of our late president Jane Alexander, and completed our new Mastodon Discovery exhibit in the Nature Center.

We initiated the sponsorship of Terry Hunefeld's pelagic birding charter boat trips and webpage. Terry's ocean trips will provide some revenue for BVAS and exciting opportunities for birders looking for challenging new vistas. (See p. 3.)

**Some Goals**—We plan, at long last, to obtain our permits to build the boardwalk that will complete our nature trail. We will continue to be represented on the Buena Vista Lagoon Working Group to ensure our interest in optimizing the lagoon's long-term ecological value is achieved. Engineering studies for the Lagoon Restoration Plan have been completed (attend our September program for more information). The Environmental Impact Report is expected to be completed and made public in 2009.

(Continued on p. 2)

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September General Meeting

**Thursday, September 25**

**Buena Vista Lagoon and Creek:**

**Exploring A Restoration Linkage**

*with*

**David Cannon**

7 p.m. Social—7:30 p.m. Program

Our September meeting will feature David Cannon, a coastal engineer and the multi-disciplinary project manager for the Buena Vista Lagoon Restoration project. David will bring us up to speed on the planning for the lagoon restoration. He'll also discuss the link between watershed health and function upstream from the lagoon, and the ultimate choice of restoration design and chances for a successful project.

Our meeting is designed to help our members and the community better understand the need for restoration, the possible course that restoration might take, and the importance of a coordinated and comprehensive management plan for the entire watershed.

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**Creek/Lagoon Discovery Tour—September 27**

As a follow-up to our general meeting, join us on Sat., September 27, as we embark on a “Discovery Tour” caravan to several nearby locations of special interest along Buena Vista Creek and Lagoon. We’ll visit the creek’s sacred waterfall, join a birding group at the site of the sewage spill, and end up at the infamous weir. (See p. 3 for more info.)
Conservation Corner

Two friends contributed greatly to the BVAS conservation mission this summer. Joan Herskowitz wrote a comment letter on Carlsbad’s request for changes in its HMP implementation plan. Joan has recently taken on the role of Conservation Co-chair for BVAS (replacing Andy Mauro). Former board member and Conservation Chair Karen Messer wrote a comment letter and testified on behalf of BVAS regarding a new fire management plan proposed for San Diego County. To read the full text of the comment letters and access other information on conservation issues, visit the BVAS website at www.bvauduon.org.

Carlsbad Seeks Changes in Habitat Plan

Carlsbad has requested Coastal Commission approval of several changes to the Implementation Plan for its approved Habitat Management Plan and other Land Use Plan provisions. The purpose of the HMP is to provide a comprehensive, city-wide program to preserve the diversity of habitat and protect biological resources while allowing for development within the City. BVAS agrees with the staff report determination that the proposed amendment is inadequate and inconsistent with the goals and requirements of the HMP and should be denied. Missing components of the proposed amendment include: (1) lack of a preserve management plan; (2) lack of resources; (3) no clearly identified communication or defined responsibilities between the City, the resource agencies, and the Commission; (4) no identification of mitigation sites/opportunities within the Coastal Zone; (5) lack of appropriately defined open space requirements; and, (6) failure to require the Commission’s review of specific guidelines that may lead to undesired changes in how the HMP is managed.

County Fire Management Plan

The County of San Diego has drafted a “Vegetative Management Plan” in response to concerns raised by the destructive wild fires of recent years. The plan is under review by various agencies and stakeholder groups, including members of the conservation community. The County’s goal is to have a plan approved by the Board of Supervisors early this fall. While everyone recognizes the need to address threats posed by uncontrolled wildfires, there remains significant disagreement on how this can best be accomplished.

Does protection from wildfire have to mean indiscriminate clearing of our county’s natural open spaces?

BVAS and other conservation groups feel the current proposed recommendations would likely be devastating to much of the habitat quality and diversity of our county, and would not result in any major improvement in protection from catastrophic fire. Federal and state land management regimes have largely abandoned this kind of vegetation management as ineffective.

The proposed plan primarily calls for a massive clearing of native vegetation, ignoring what many feel are the major tools of fire prevention: Power line modifications, zoning to avoid fire-prone areas, planning clustered and defensible communities, construction standards to make houses defensible, and a sound plan to “shelter-in-place” residents living in risky areas.

This plan continues to march rapidly toward finalization despite the serious concerns raised. County politicians seem determined to have a plan to point to, however flawed and destructive of the environment, prior to the fall fire season.

BVAS Annual Report (continued from p. 1)

Our proposal for the development of a comprehensive Buena Vista Creek Watershed Plan was awarded top priority by the reviewing agency. As this plan moves forward we’ll be establishing a framework for restoration and enhancement projects along the Buena Vista Creek corridor to support the long-awaited lagoon restoration.

We will continue to make every effort to preserve as permanent open space the 161-acre quarry site upstream from the Buena Vista Ecological Reserve (the Sherman Property) which was secured as open space in 2007. Current plans for the quarry site include the construction of some 600 houses.

We plan to meet regularly with the planning departments of Oceanside and Carlsbad to ensure that the cities are in compliance with their Local Coastal Plans concerning development alongside Buena Vista Lagoon.

In 2008-2009, as in previous years, we hope to improve the nature education experience in and around our Nature Center. Through our programs, field trips and advocacy, we will expand our outreach to the public. In doing so we will continue to rely on the commitment and dedication of so many of you who volunteer your time. I thank you all.

And a Special Thanks—In wrapping up our annual report, I would especially like to thank Annette Schneider who has managed our Nature Center so well for so many years. She’s the one who keeps us going year after year, who knows where everything is and how things are supposed to be done, who does everything from chasing out the ants to identifying the insects for school kids on their nature walks, who’s always willing to do more than she has to. She’s the memory that links what this organization is today to what it was and who was here in the past, and for most members of the public and for most of us volunteers she’s the first person we think of when we think of Buena Vista Audubon. We’d be lost without her.

Thank you Annette! —Dennis Huckabay, President
### Upcoming Trips

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

**Sat.—Sept. 13—8 a.m.—San Elijo Lagoon. (Special Sandpiper ID walk)** This month we’ll be joined by Sea and Sage Audubon on our visit to San Elijo Lagoon. Fall migration will be in full swing with many of our wintering sandpipers back from their summer holidays up north. Figuring out the age of a bird is an important and often neglected aspect of bird ID. We’ll learn how to sort out the juvenile sandpipers in their fresh plumage from the worn breeding (alternate) plumage of the adults, and maybe find a Baird’s or semi-palmated sandpiper in the mix. **We’ll meet at 8 a.m., ONE HOUR EARLIER** than the usual time for walks at San Elijo. Directions: From I-5 take Lomas Santa Fe west to Rios Ave. Turn right. Go to the end and park. Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

**Sat.—Sept. 27—8 a.m.—Buena Vista Creek and Lagoon Discovery Tour.** This special tour will be a follow-up to the topics discussed and locations cited at the September General Meeting program. Among our stops will be the Buena Vista Creek Ecological Reserve, the site of the lagoon sewer spill, and the weir at the mouth of the lagoon. Our focus will be the resiliency of nature and the rewards of good stewardship. Meet at Starbucks in the Quarry Creek Shopping Center at College Ave. and Lake Ave. off Hwy. 78 in Carlsbad. We’ll caravan around to our various locations. Leaders: Diane Nygaard, and Andy Mauro, 760-753-1266.

**Sat.—Sept. 27—8 a.m.—Buena Vista Lagoon Monthly Bird Count.** Freshwater coastal lagoon. Directions: I-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. Contact person: Tom Troy, 760-967-6915.

**Sat.—Oct. 4—6:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. —Pelagic Trip: Nine-Mile Bank/Los Coronados Islands.** Join us for a 3/4 day pelagic trip to hunt boobies, storm petrels and shearwaters in ABA waters, then into Mexico to the Los Coronados Islands to see the brown booby colony, up to two species of oystercatchers and maybe, just maybe, a blue-footed or masked booby. $75 fee. Boat departs from Point Loma Sportfishing. Call 619-223-1627 for reservations. Visit [www.socalbirding.com](http://www.socalbirding.com) for more information.

### Birding in Jalisco, Mexico—April 1-7, 2009

Ah, Jalisco - what a place to go birding! It’s far enough south to see many bird species not seen north of the border, yet serviced by an easy-to-get-to airport and a relatively quick flight. This is the first call for our featured international birding excursion for 2009. Join expert birding guide Larry Liese on this seven-day/six-night tour based near the town of El Tuito, 44 km south of Puerto Vallarta. Lodging for the entire stay will be at Rancho Primavera, a private ranch owned by Americans. The ranch is quiet and relaxing, and features some of the best birding in the area. Cost is $1,500/person, and includes lodging, all meals, transportation while in Jalisco, and guide services. Air transportation from San Diego is extra. Trip is limited to eight participants. A $500 deposit is required to reserve your spot. Visit [www.bvaudubon.org](http://www.bvaudubon.org) for detailed information, or call Andy Brumbaugh, 760-434-3334.

### BVAS-Sponsored Pelagic Birding from San Diego

BVAS is now the proud sponsor of “Southern California Birding”, offering regularly scheduled charter boat trips out of San Diego in search of a wide variety of pelagic bird species. Board member and pelagic birding expert Terry Hunefeld originally developed this program several years ago. Terry’s highly successful chartered boat trips and informational website have been instrumental in introducing numerous birders to the challenges and joys of pelagic birding. Terry will continue to oversee all aspects of the Southern California Birding pelagic bird program on behalf of BVAS, including organizing, scheduling, promoting, and leading the numerous pelagic boat trips offered each year, and maintaining the information-packed website. Learn all about ocean birding in San Diego’s near offshore waters, including dates and prices of scheduled trips, expected sightings and identification tips by visiting the Southern California Birding website at: [www.socalbirding.com](http://www.socalbirding.com).

### BVAS Field Trip Info Line

Check out the new BVAS phone-in service for last-minute information about scheduled field trips. Call the hotline number to hear a recorded message giving the latest information about dates, locations, directions, and times for upcoming field trips. 760-688-0660
Preschool Nature Storytime

Monday, September 22, 10 a.m.

Have you ever seen the wonderfully intricate webs that a spider weaves and wonder how they are done or for what purpose? Come to our Nature Storytime in September and find out these and other facts about our eight-legged friends.

PLEASE NOTE: There are five Mondays in September, but we will meet as usual on the fourth Monday at 10 a.m. I hope you have all had a great summer and are ready for more songs, crafts, and stories about our natural world.

—Mary Ellen—760-918-6622

Ruddy Duck Club

We love our “Ruddy Duckers”! Please check out the local businesses in our Ruddy Duck Club by visiting the BVAS website, and support them with your patronage. For more information about joining our local business “Friends” group and becoming a Ruddy Duck Club member, please contact Tom Troy at 760-967-6915.

“Friends” Members:

Check your Mailing Label

Those of you who receive the Lagoon Flyer as a result of your BVAS “Friends” membership, please note that the expiration date for your Friends membership is listed on your mailing label. A red slash across your mailing label indicates that your membership has expired and that this will be your last newsletter. To renew your membership and continue to receive your newsletter and other benefits, please clip out the donation form on p. 5 and send in your renewal check.

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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 just north of lagoon crossing

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 480

Oceanside, CA 92049-0480

Website: www.bvaudubon.org

E-mail: bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
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:

Friends Membership: New ____ Renewal ____

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

Name____________________________
Address__________________________
City, State, Zip ___________________
Phone___________________________
E-mail___________________________
Please bill my VISA or MC:  Card # ________________CRN # ____

Thank You!

BUENA VISTA NATIVE PLANT CLUB
September 21—2 p.m.—Nature Center
“Designing Your Native Garden”

All your garden design books probably talk about picking individual plants based on color, shape, texture, etc. Sure, those are factors for consideration, but how do you pull it all together? Native plant lovers know it can be much more rewarding and reliable to design your garden by considering a unifying habitat theme—choosing plants with compatible personalities that belong together in nature. Come to our September meeting and let’s talk!

Thursday Mornings with the Natives
Joan Bockman and Debra Barrows invite any gardeners interested to join them on Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. for some casual gardening and friendly chatter at the Center.

Monthly Nature Center Grounds Cleanup
Join us on the first Saturday of the month throughout the year from 8-10 a.m. as we tend the gardens at the Nature Center. Bring work gloves and gardening tools.

Saturday, September 7

Mammoth Trip Retrospect

Ten birders joined us on our extended foray into the Eastern Sierras last month. Highlights included: Satisfying looks of the often elusive black-backed woodpecker in a recently burned over area; the darling little white-headed woodpecker working the pine tree and visiting the feeder each day just outside the window of my cabin; common night hawks foraging overhead in bright daylight; an abundance of sage thrashers conveniently posted on nearby sage bushes; a bald eagle and full-grown chick on their bulky stick nest; bank swallows swooping over the water with their nest holes readily visible in the dirt cliffs across the lake; thousands of Wilson’s phalaropes eating brine shrimp within feet of us at the boardwalk at Mono Lake; and 100 or more pairs of eared grebes building their weedy nests in the shallow waters of Crowley Lake. Fascinating sights were the norm. A couple of us watched two Steller’s jays in their frantic but futile attempt to stop a raven from pulling one of their half grown chicks out of the nest. Some of us saw a nearby forest fire with tanker planes dropping retardant.

Over the five days of our trip our bird list totaled over 80 species. On every day and at every new place we explored we reveled in the majestic beauty of the mountains. We witnessed stunning vistas, crystal clean streams and lakes, and beautiful wildflowers. Equally satisfying was the wonderful comradery we all experienced as we sipped wine, joked and told tales over our potluck dinner at the end of each day. ‘Twas a very good time—join us next year! —Steve Brad
QUICK CALENDAR

Mon. Sept. 1—Nature Guides—10 a.m.
Fri. Sept. 5—Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sat. Sept. 6—Whelan Lake Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Sept. 6—Nature Center Garden Clean-up—8 a.m.
Sat. Sept. 13—San Elijo Lagoon Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Sun. Sept 21—Native Plant Club—2 p.m.
Mon. Sept. 22—Preschool Nature Storytime—10 a.m.
Thur. Sept. 25—General Meeting—7 p.m.
Sat. Sept. 27—Buena Vista Lagoon Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Sept. 27—Bird Basics at BVL Landing—8:30 a.m.
Sat. Sept. 27—Creek/Lagoon Discovery Tour—8 a.m.
Sat. Oct. 4—Los Coronados Pelagic Birding—6:30 a.m.

S.D.’s First Recorded Red-necked Stint

The first red-necked stint ever recorded in San Diego County was found and photographed by Matt Sadowski on July 23, 2008. Matt was surveying an area of the Naval Amphibian Base Coronado when he discovered this species of sandpiper that breeds in Siberia and normally winters from southeast Asia down to Australia and New Zealand. Matt’s bird brings the official county bird list to 499 species, setting up a grand celebration for the next new species that shows up. The bird has attracted a lot of attention from the birding community, and was still present in late August. Our congratulations to Matt for his exciting find.

Birding Jalisco, Mexico
April 1-7, 2009
(See p. 3)
Ah, Jalisco - what a place to go birding! It’s far enough south to see many bird species not seen north of the border, yet serviced by an easy to get to airport and a relatively quick flight. Join birding guide Larry Liese on this seven-day/six-night tour based near the town of El Tuito, 44 km south of Puerto Vallarta in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Lodging for the entire stay will be at Rancho Primavera, a private ranch owned by Americans located four miles outside of town. The ranch is quiet and relaxing, with some of the best birding in the area right on the ranch. Breakfast and evening meals are prepared by our host Pat and her daughter Bonnie (a nutritionist), and are noteworthy for their homemade soups and breads - a high point of our trips here in the past. This will be Larry's eleventh trip he's led here and he promises exciting birding results. The group should see from 175 to 200 species with about a third of them Mexican specialties. Attached please find a composite bird triplist spreadsheet (EXCEL file) showing previous trips’ results (315 species total). Mexico is credited with having 90 -100 endemic bird species, many of which are centered in Western Mexico. If you want to build up a big Mexico list, this trip is for you!
The ranch is located at 2000 feet elevation, with nearby habitat choices ranging from Pacific Ocean coast, mangroves, lowland thorn scrub, arid and moist deciduous forest, on up through pine-oak and pine woodland. This area of Mexico is a junction of three major biomes. The central volcanic belt stretching across the country meets the Pacific here, separating the lowlands of northwest Mexico from the Balsas River drainage to the south. Many species reach their southern limit here, as well as it being the northern limit for a number of more southerly birds. Some favorites from past trips here include Crane Hawk, Orange-fronted Parakeet, Military Macaw, Lilac-crowned Parrot, Squirrel Cuckoo, Mexican Hermit, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Citreoline Trogan, Gray-crowned Woodpecker, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Ivory-billed & White-striped Woodcreepers, Gray-collared Becard, Masked Tityra, Sinaloa Martin, Blue Mockingbird, Golden Vireo, Red-breasted Chat, Elegant Euphonia, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Blue Bunting, Orange-breasted Bunting, Black-vented Oriole, and the two official ranch trash birds – San Blas Jay and Russet-crowned Motmot. Though we'll undoubtedly miss some of these, we should see a majority of them.

For transportation we'll use a fifteen passenger van rented through National Car Rental. Drive times are typically fairly short, as our destinations are arranged around the ranch area like spokes of a wheel. The drive to the coast is a full-day outing, but still not overly driving-heavy. We'll have a cooler with soft drinks in the van, and snacks will be provided.

The trip is limited to eight participants, which leads to most birds being seen by everyone and a comfy riding arrangement. Cost for the trip is $1500, with $100 of this a tax-deductible donation to Buena Vista Audubon. Limited single room supplements are available which add $150 to the trip price. The trip includes six nights lodging, breakfast and evening meals at the ranch and lunches at local restaurants, snacks, and all transportation once in Puerto Vallarta. A deposit of $500 will be required to lock in your spot. Airfare and alcoholic beverages are not included in the tour price.

ITINERARY

Day 1: We arrive in Puerto Vallarta, pick up our transportation and then drive to El Tuito and Rancho Primavera. After meeting Pat & Bonnie (our Rancho hosts) and settling in, we’ll get our first day’s birding fix in on the ranch grounds. There is a pair of ponds that
have been quite productive bird-wise on Bonnie's adjoining ranch, Rancho Santa Monica. We usually see over fifty species in an hour and a half!

Day 2: We’ll spend the morning birding the road to Bioto, a lush somewhat steep drainage with abundant birds and vegetation. This is probably the single best birding spot in the area. Species we'd expect include Military Macaw, Lilac-crowned Parrot, Citreoline Trogon, and Lineated Woodpecker. We'll head into El Tuito for lunch, then spend siesta at the ranch. Late afternoon birding will be on the Cienega de Ojeulos road, one of the best areas for Spotted Wren and Gray-crowned Woodpecker.

Day 3: We’re off to the coast today for shore and mangrove birding, plus great seafood. The town is the small fishing village of Tehuamixtle, and the road there offers prime desert scrub habitat. We’ll stop a few times to bird on the way down, have lunch in an absolutely beautiful setting overlooking the bay, and take our time stopping to bird on the way back. We'll check on the sea turtle conservation project to see if there's anything going on there, plus visit Aquiler Serdan - a coastal village with a nice estuary. Target birds for the day include White-throated Magpie-Jay, White-bellied Wren, Red-breasted Chat, Brown and Blue-footed Boobies, and Collared Plover.

Day 4: After our longer drive the day before, today we’ll give the ranch a chance to strut its stuff. Many of the birds voted in the top three at the end of the trip have been found on the ranch. Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Squirrel Cuckoo, Elegant and Citreoline Trogons, Blue Mockingbird and Russet-crowned Motmot are some of our hoped-for birds today. For lunch we’ll drive down the road to a new restaurant (La Divisidero), take a tour of their tequilla/riscilla factory, and then return for an afternoon walk down the road to Chacala along the creek.

Day 5: A new locale we've been visiting on recent trips is the Botanical Gardens of Vallarta. The lush, beautiful grounds attract a variety of birds, and the restaurant there serves very good food. Some interesting species we've gotten at the gardens include Mexican Hermit, Ruddy Quail-Dove, and Rose-throated Becard. Time depending, we'll take a jaunt over to the Santa Monica Ranch ponds in the late afternoon to look for possible new species.
Day 6: Today we'll head up into the pines for views of some new bird species not found at the lower elevations. We'll drive up the La Bascula road to the town of Provincia, birding along the way. We'll look for Pine Flycatcher, Green Jay, Rufous-capped Warbler, Rusty Sparrow, and Flame-colored Tanager, among others.

Day 7: Our last morning we’ll do some relaxing birding going for birds that might have been missed by some on the ranch grounds. Then, it’s on to the airport and our flights home.

Note: This itinerary is subject to change, but we’ll try to include all of the above. New local hotspots recommended by locals have been passed on to us by Pat, and substituting them into the itinerary has been helpful in the past.

For further information, or to sign up for the trip contact:

Andy Brumbaugh
760-434-3334
or
andybbirder@yahoo.com

Images:

View of creek crossing driveway to ranch
Male Red-breasted Chat near Tehua
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl from front door of ranch
Female Rosy Thrush-Tanager (on ranch)
Santa Monica Ranch ponds
Male Orange-breasted Bunting