We’ve all heard plenty about climate change. We’ve seen the before and after photos documenting the shrinking of glacial ice fields. We know that hurricanes and wildfires are predicted to become more frequent and intense in coming years. We understand that sea level is expected to rise, some say by as much as three to six feet, during our children’s lifetimes. What does all of this mean for the birds and habitats of San Diego County?

Dr. Philip Pryde, Professor Emeritus at San Diego State University, has been studying this issue for much of his academic career. He taught courses on environmental policy for over 30 years, has written six books, published numerous papers, served as chair of the San Diego County Planning Commission and on the board of the San Diego Water Authority. Many of us know Phil as a fellow birder. He’s been on the board of San Diego Audubon since 1980, regularly teaches beginning and intermediate birding classes, and was an active participant in the San Diego County Bird Atlas project. He is the Audubon Society representative on the San Dieguito River Park JPA.

Phil will share his unique knowledge and perspective with us—connecting the dots between the science of climate change and the implications for San Diego’s specific ecosystems. A recently released study by California Audubon gave evidence that a northern shift in the distribution range for many North American bird species is already under way. Come to our October meeting and find out if it’s time to start brushing up on our tropical bird identification skills!

Least Tern w/ Chick
—C. Mayne
The six kids were not at all sure what they were about to promise when I asked them to raise their right hands to make a pledge, but they solemnly repeated after me:

I promise . . . to get dirty. When I see a bug I will say, “Cool!”, not, “Ewww!” And I promise to wash my hands before going back to class.

A lovely concrete bench forms a perfect semicircle at Laurel Elementary School in Oceanside. It was originally meant to contain a small bank of grass, but the bench never really worked as a retaining wall. The grass on the slope died long ago, but the sprinklers still kept at it. Water and dirt ran out on the paving, frustrating the maintenance staff. Professional landscapers, no doubt at great expense, had designed and installed the landscape, only to see it fail when the children deigned to play on it.

And that was about the time I volunteered to help transform this barren patch of dirt into a garden.

So what do we do that’s so different? The kids are asked to hold out their hands. Dirt is applied and they are told to plop down in the dust. When did schools run out of dirt? What fun! Every school should have a dirt pile right in the center of campus. Learning is often dirty work.

Expectant faces await the next instruction. Felipe starts to run off, challenging the notion that this could be anything interesting. Months of being told to sit and behave have made him cynical. But then he’s back. Intelligence lights up his eyes and energy courses through his body. Maybe this will work.

Sitting in the dirt together, we find pebbles and observe small differences. We talk about how the rocks may have traveled from Palomar Mountain to the beach. This inner-city school has a view of the mountain and the ocean! Elena starts a rock collection with a handful of small pebbles she has found. On another session we watch bugs and smell leaves. Learning good observation skills is key to the student’s future success in science.

Our times together always begin with weeding. We have a competition to see who can get the weed with the longest root. Weeds only count if they have the entire root attached. This growing pile of learning by kindergarteners enables them to identify roots, leaves and stems on plants and weeds (a California State Science Standard).

The upper grades get to mess in the garden as well. They learn that the grandparents of native plants were here right after the dinosaurs and before our local Luiseno tribe of Native Americans moved in. They learn that the dirt has everything the plants need to survive. Fertilizers and amendments are unnecessary. We are planting our local, perfectly adapted, native plants. After the long, dry California summer we try to pretend to be the rain. For the first four months of the school year, no one can describe a day when it rained. We have all forgotten.

After weeding, the kids get to dig. It is very difficult to dig in the dry, hard dirt, and water will not penetrate the soil unless we help it. Sometimes, I come early to start a few holes with the help of a pickax. The kids then dig out the holes, fill them with water, and then wait to plant. They’re smart. They understand that only water in the planting hole will get to the roots. Sometimes, we dig, water, and then refill the holes with dirt to wait for the next garden session. It is amazing that a week later, the ground is still moist down in the hole. Often we are rewarded with earthworms. Planting has to wait when there are worms to observe!

First Graders know that plants need water and sunlight to survive. Second Graders observe changes and learn that everything has a lifecycle. Third Graders know that the sun provides all the energy for the earth and that plants store that energy when they grow. Fourth Graders can explain that green plants are the start of all food chains (even in the ocean). Fifth Graders are clear that the sun causes the wind. Eventually, everyone learns about habitats. At first, our tiny little plants don’t look like a habitat. Later, when the bugs arrive, everyone says, “Cool!”

As we begin a new school year, last year’s garden looks a little weedy and unkempt. Some of the adults fret about how the garden looks. But garden lessons are more meaningful when the kids see the plants go dormant and then reawaken. Continuous blooms are pretty, but not very useful for science education. Now the kids are back, and the weeding, learning and planting can begin anew!

Joan Bockman is the founder and leader of the BVAS Native Plant Club. She has created California native plant gardens at Laurel Elementary, Ditmar Elementary and St. Mary’s School in Oceanside.
Birding in October—Everyone’s Welcome!

Sat.—Oct. 3—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.—Oct. 11—8 a.m.—San Dieguito Lagoon. We’ll explore the newly renovated San Dieguito Lagoon just east of the Del Mar Fairgrounds. Expect a wide assortment of sandpipers, wading shorebirds and ducks. Time permitting, we’ll go over to the polo fields and horse ranch where the sandhill crane was seen last year. Very easy walking on good trails. Directions: From I-5 Fwy., go east on Via de La Valle about two blocks and turn right (south) on San Andres Drive. Drive about one block to end of road and park on street. Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

Sat.—Oct. 31—8 a.m.—Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count. Freshwater wetland. 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.—Oct. 31—8:30-10:30 a.m.—Basic Birding Class at the Buena Vista Lagoon Landing. 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.

October Pelagic Birding with BVAS—Your next opportunities to go pelagic birding with BVAS on board the well-appointed Grande out of Point Loma Sportfishing will be the day trip on Oct. 3 to the Nine-Mile Bank and Los Coronados Islands, and the Oct. 10-11, 2-day weekend trip out to deep water. Every trip promises exciting ocean birding and marine mammal sightings.

Call Point Loma Sportfishing at 619-223-1627, and tell them you’re interested in signing up for a BVAS pelagic birding trip.


Coming in January 2010

Jan 9-10, 2010—2-Day Birding Trip to Cibola NWR and Blythe. Participants will meet on January 9 at 8 a.m. at the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters for a day of birding led by the Refuge Manager. The number of sandhill cranes has been increasing the past few years, with 1,500 expected this winter. We’ll be visiting excellent habitat along the Colorado River, suitable for many bird species. Sunday we will bird various locations in Blythe. Trip limited to 12 participants. Trip fee of $50 does not include transportation, lodging, or meals. Contact Andy Brumbaugh at andybbirder@yahoo.com or 760-434-3334 for further information and/or reservations. See the October digital edition of the Lagoon Flyer (online at bvaudubon.org) for a more complete description.

Conservation Matters

BVAS Appeal: The California Coastal Commission will hold its October 7 meeting in Oceanside. Included on the agenda is an appeal, filed by BVAS and others, of the 19-unit Batiquitos Bluff project off La Costa Ave., approved in June by the City of Encinitas. The Commission will rule on whether sufficient grounds exist to warrant a full review of the project by the Commission at a later date.

Anti-Poaching Legislation: After a strong advocacy campaign by California Audubon, the California legislature has taken action to strengthen the state’s poaching laws. AB 708 calls for increased penalties for violations such as hunting out of season, going over legal limits, killing protected species, or hunting without proper licenses. The bill now awaits Governor Schwarzenegger’s signature.

New Volunteers at BVAS

We have several new BVAS volunteers to acknowledge this month. Harvey Hart is taking on the important job of Membership Chair. Harvey and his wife, Lisa, are also teaming up to perform host duties at the Nature Center. Noelle Patterson has begun Nature Center hosting on alternate Sundays. Finally, Chris Clark, a former elementary school teacher, has completed training and will soon be joining our hosting lineup. Thank you all!

Nature Art Camp Postscript: In last month’s newsletter we gave a misdirected credit for the excellent live hawk program at the Art Camp. The raptor program so enjoyed by our campers was actually presented by Nancy Conney of “Sky Hunters”. Thank you, Nancy, for helping make the Art Camp such a great success.
Preschool Nature Storytime

This month we’re going to talk about some of the most common yet amazing critters around—spiders! If you think spiders are sort of creepy, don’t worry. We’re going to talk about friendly spiders. Once you get to know them, they’re really quite special. We’ll discover some of the interesting things that make them different from other animals. Bring your preschool children and join us for stories, songs, and crafts.

NOTE: Because of a conflict, our Nature Storytime this month has been moved up to the 3rd Monday, October 19, at 10 a.m. If newcomers have any questions, please call Mary Ellen at: 760-918-6622.

Ruddy Duck Club

Join this special group of local businesses and organizations who support the nature education and recreation programs offered at the Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center with an annual donation of $100 or more. Call or stop by the Nature Center for more information, or check it out on the BVAS website at www.bvaudubon.org.

BVAS OFFICERS, BOARD* AND CHAIRS

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Vice-President    Dave Billings*   760-753-7925
Secretary         Kathy Billings*  760-753-7925
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Audubon Adventures Ruth Gransbery  760-729-2240
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Native Plant Club Joan Bockman*  760-433-9401
Native Plant Garden Joan Bockman*  760-433-9401
Newsletter       Andy Mauro*   760-753-1266

E-mail: akamauro@cox.net

Pelagic Birding   Terry Hunefeld*  760-908-3453
Programs         Dennis Huckabay*  760-757-6437
Publicity        Judi Wilson*  760-439-3649
Ruddy Duck Club  —OPEN POSITION—
Volunteers       Mary Ellen Marquand*  760-918-6622
Webmaster        Larry Spann: E-mail: larry@spannweb.net

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: ___

Friends Membership: New ____ Renewal ____

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

Send me my newsletter by 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

Native Plant Club
Sunday, October 18, 2 p.m.

Hands-On Garden Design

It’s football season, and you’re still fumbling around without a game plan! Bring a layout of your property and we'll help you bring it all together with unifying concepts and a few big plays that are sure to score. We'll discuss sun/shade, dry/wet, and high use/low use situations, plus anything else that’s on your mind. Experts and novices alike are welcome.

David Danville, Carolyn Lundberg Honored with Memorial Gifts

BVAS has received special donations in memory of recently departed friends. Carolyn Lundberg was remembered with donations from Joyce Page and Deborah Stillman. Muriel Kaplan and Mary Sanders each contributed gifts in memory of David Danville. We thank our donors for their thoughtful remembrances.

Coastal Cleanup Day—BVAS board member Judi Wilson and husband, Ron, pick up trash next to the Buena Vista Lagoon during September’s Coastal Cleanup Day. Board members Joan Bockman, Danny DiMento, and Sandy McMullen, plus other good friends, also helped clean up the areas across the street from the Nature Center and along Coast Highway.

Wildlife Extraction

Wildlife Extraction is a new service provided by Project Wildlife to assist in the humane removal of unwanted wildlife from around the home. Call 619-692-WILD, or visit: www.WildlifeExtraction.com.

Natives for your Garden

Deer Grass

*Muhlenbergia rigens*

Deer grass is an attractive native plant that performs well in sunny North County gardens. Once established it survives with minimal care, but really thrives with a little supplemental water. Deer Grass grows to about 4’ X 4’, and sends out graceful seed spikes. It serves as a dramatic background plant for other native plants.

Thursday Mornings with the Natives

Joan Bockman and Debra Burroughs invite interested gardeners to join them on Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. at the Nature Center for some casual gardening and friendly chatter.
QUICK CALENDAR

Fri. Oct. 2—Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sat. Oct. 3—Whelan Lake Walk—8 a.m.
Mon. Oct. 5—Nature Guides Meeting—10 a.m.
Sun. Oct. 11—San Dieguito Lagoon Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Sun. Oct. 18—Native Plant Club Meeting—2 p.m.
Wed. Oct. 21—General Meeting—7 p.m.
Sat. Oct. 31—B.V. Lagoon Count—8 a.m.
Sat. Oct. 31—Basic Birding at B.V. Landing—8:30 a.m.

October Pelagic Trips:
Sat. Oct. 3—Nine-Mile Bank and Los Coronados
Sat./Sun. Oct. 10-11—Two-day Trip to Deep Water

Visit www.socalbirding for information and sign up

Mystery Bird on the Coronado Strand

What Knot?

As has become the routine of late, the San Diego birding community once again found itself engaged in a spirited debate over the identification of an unusual bird. This time it was a possible Great Knot, first sighted by Brennan Mulrooney on August 24. Birders quickly rushed to view what promised to be the first California record of this Asian species, but then a few doubts were raised. The bird had many features compatible with a Great Knot ID, but it also seemed to show features that suggested a common Surfbird. It just didn’t seem quite right for either species.

Some wonderfully detailed photographs were taken by Matt Sadowski and others. After careful examination by many experts throughout the U. S., a consensus began to emerge. The possible Great Knot that was a Surfbird in the eyes of some, is now being considered a hybrid between the two species. It’s currently being popularly referred to as the San Diego “Surf Knot”.

'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,' I said, `art sure no craven.
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the nightly shore -
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!'
Quoth the raven, `Nevermore.'

SEARCHER sailed September 7 to explore the waters of the Nine Mile Bank, wound through the Channel Islands, over the Rodriguez Dome and into the Southern California bight, past the San Juan Seamount, over the Bell Bank, Mushroom Bank and Sixty Mile Bank and returned to San Diego at sunrise on Friday September 11.

It was a great trip, with perfect weather, great live-aboard quarters, a CRAVERI'S MURRELET, both races of Xantus's Murrelet, a KILLER WHALE, an astounding 570 LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS of 3 races, Sabine's Gulls, 240 Buller's Shearwaters, two "SKUA-SLAM" days and tremendous "surround sound" whale shows.

The trip report, species list, photos and video are posted at:
http://www.socalbirding.com/tripreports/searchersep7112010.html

The incredible YouTube Video only can be seen at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs_06nncr3U

The Nine Mile Bank was so birdy on Sept 7 that we spent the entire afternoon in San Diego waters counting 9 Poms, 3 Parasitics, 2 Long-tailed Jaegers, 30 Least and 54 Black Storm-Petrels, 138 of the "Chapman's" race of Leach's Storm-Petrels, 3 Blue Whales, a Sei Whale and the highlight of the day, a CRAVERI'S MURRELET.

We'll be covering the bidental Nine Mile Bank again on our Buena Vista Audubon Society day trip on Grande on October 3, spending as much time as possible on the Nine Mile Bank before swooping south over the international boundary to check out the Booby colony on Booby Rock in the Coronados Islands.

Join us October 3 for our day trip. Register by Sept. 20 and save $15.

http://www.socalbirding.com/release/sandiegooct32009.html

There are only 7 spaces left on our 48-hour live-aboard October 10-11 deep water trip on Grande as we go out to find tropicbirds and petrels:
http://www.socalbirding.com/release/sandiegooct10112009.html

W. Terry Hunefeld, Encinitas
Life is short. Seabird often.
In memory of Luke Cole
"Come on out with us to see what's out there."

Southern California Seabirding Trips
Buena Vista Audubon Society
http://www.SoCalBirding.com
Los Coronados Islands, Channel Islands
to the Edge of the Continental Shelf
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http://twitter.com/SoCalBirding
Cibola NWR is on the Arizona side of the Colorado River but can only be accessed from the California side of the River. The refuge consists of channels, backwaters, lakes, and ponds along a 12 mile stretch of the Colorado. The Colorado River is a migratory flyway and hence a large variety of water fowl are found on the refuge including sandhill cranes. It is anticipated that 1,500 cranes can be expected this winter. The Yuma clapper rail and the California black rail are on the refuge's species list.

Blythe California is perhaps not on a list of birding hot spots but its location on the Colorado River can make for interesting birding. In the ABA’s A Birder’s Guide to Southern California, revised in 2007, a chapter has been added on birding Blythe. Because Blythe is the closest place to find lodging when birding Cibola NWR time will be spent birding selected spots in Blythe.

Sandhill Cranes —Todd Telander

Trip Itinerary

The trip will begin at the Cibola NWR headquarters at 8 a.m. on Saturday Jan. 9. It is suggested that participants drive to Blythe on Friday—it is about 220 miles from San Diego to Blythe. The refuge manager will guide us as we bird the refuge. Bring a lunch as there will be no restaurants. Our schedule will be flexible but it is anticipated we will spend most of the day at Cibola.

On Sunday we will meet at the Super 8 Motel at 7 a.m. and spend the morning birding Blythe. We’ll plan on having lunch in Blythe before heading home.

Motel rooms have been reserved at the Super 8 Motel. Camping is also an option at McIntyre-Destiny Campground.

Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from Blythe, lodging and meals.

The trip is limited to 12 participants.

To register for the trip call or Email (preferred) Andy Brumbaugh at 760-434-3334 or andybbirder@yahoo.com. A $50 check is required to secure your spot on the trip. Your $50 fee can be considered a tax-deductible donation to BVAS.

Andy Brumbaugh