From Snow to Sand—Birding Morocco

With Gary Nunn

Perched at Africa’s northwest corner, Morocco conjures images of Bedouins, sand dunes, and a smoke-filled Casablanca gin joint. But Morocco offers birders amazing landscapes, exciting cultural sights, and knockout birding. The enigmatic and endangered northern bald ibis, the desert-dwelling greater hoopoe-lark, and the “Atlas” tawny owl can all be found here. Gary Nunn chased these lifers (and dozens more!) from the snowcapped Atlas Mountains to the desert sand dunes last February and brings his stunning presentation to you during our January gathering.

Gary Nunn hails from England, where he grew up birding, chasing rarities in the crucible of twitching—the county of Norfolk. He holds a BSc in biological sciences and a PhD in genetics; he was also a postdoctoral fellow at both the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institution. While birding in over 30 countries, Gary and his family make San Diego home, conveniently nearby some of his favorite birding patches.

Join us for an exotic journey with one of birding’s most engaging tour guides. We’re looking for YOU, kid.

Wednesday, January 17, 2018
Social: 6:30 p.m. Program: 7:00 p.m.
Working the Night Shift

Who’s awake? Me too! In the fall and winter, this series of hoots—all on one pitch—wafts through the darkness. The sentinel taking attendance is the great horned owl. The largest and most widely distributed owl in North America, this owl is heavily barred in brown and black, with feather tufts (not horns at all) atop its large head, giving rise to its rather inaccurate (albeit catchy) common name. Its enormous yellow eyes are so large that they cannot move in the owl’s head. However, the owl can swivel its head as much as 270 degrees to look in any direction. Its powerful talons allow it to instantly snap the spine of even large prey. As with many birds of prey, both males and females look the same, although females often are as much as 30% heavier.

Great horned owls can be found throughout San Diego County, from the coast up to the mountains and down to the floor of Anza-Borrego Desert. As is true with most owls, first on the menu are rodents, rodents, rodents (e.g., mice, rats, voles) followed by other nocturnal (active at night) and crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) mammals such as skunks and rabbits.

Great horned owls begin nesting very early in the year, typically in January or February. Following 28 – 35 days of incubation, owlets require four or five weeks to mature after hatching and even longer to develop complex hunting skills once they fledge. By hatching in late winter, the owlets can start practicing those skills when lots of other birds and mammals are raising young, providing an abundance of prey for practice.

Without the keen skills of these vigilant nocturnal hunters, the rodent population might now be running the world while we sleep. Who’s awake, indeed…

(Refer to www.bvaudubon.org for more information about these important rodent-controlling raptors.)

The Last Lap

Just two years ago, Buena Vista Audubon received an amazing gift from Brian Malk and Nancy Heitel of San Diego. They pledged to donate up to $333,000 in double-matching funds to establish the BVAS Nature Endowment—a fund that will support our work in perpetuity. Our task, to raise $167,000, is now only $22,000 from completion. That we’ve come so close while accomplishing so much is a testament to you, our members and supporters.

Buena Vista is a vibrant force for nature in the community. Whether it’s a class visit to the Nature Center, a guided walk at a North County birding hotspot, the monthly evening nature program, the fun-filled Birdhouse Auction, preschool nature storytime, nature art classes, Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse, the Endangered Species Day Open House, the Oceanside-Vista-Carlsbad Christmas Bird Count, —there’s something for everyone at BVAS.

Making a difference locally is a tangible, gratifying act worthy of your list of New Year’s resolutions. You’ve already shown how much you appreciate and support our mission and us. With your help we can put the crowning touch on a remarkable run.

Thank you!
Natalie Shapiro, President
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO OUR BVAS FAMILY!

Enjoy our natural world!

BIRDING LEO CARRILLO
Thursday, January 4 — 8 a.m.
We will be walking the trails and exploring inside Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park. We always have a special guest expert!
Location: Meet at the trail head west of Carrillo Elementary School parking lot (off Poinsettia Lane, west of Melrose Ave. and turn south on Paseo Escuela). Trail parking is available in the lot to the right (west) of the school parking lot.
Leaders: Joan Herskowitz, Eve Martin, Patti Koger, and Jane Mygatt (jm herskowitz@yahoo.com, janemygatt@me.com)

WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY WALK
Saturday, January 6 — 8 a.m.
Come along with John and friends for our regular monthly walk and bird survey at this beautiful sanctuary for resident and migratory waterfowl. Whelan Lake is always a favorite place to go birding!
Directions: From I-5, take Hwy 76 east; turn left at Douglas Drive; continue to the light at North River Road; go left on North River Road. Pass through entrance gate and follow signs to the lake. Feel free to contact the leader for directions.
Leader: John Haddock (760-941-7824)

SAN JOAQUIN MARSH & WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, IRVINE
Sunday, January 7 — 8:00 a.m. (NOTE CHANGE OF DATE)
Join Steve as we explore one of the premier birding areas in Southern California. We will have close-up views of shorebirds, waders, raptors, and songbirds.
Location: 5 Riparian View, Irvine. Those wishing to carpool, meet at the La Costa Avenue Park and Ride (off I-5 at La Costa Avenue) at 7:00 a.m.
Leader: Steve Brad (760-633-1639)

EL CORAZON GARRISON CREEK BIRD WALK
Wednesday, January 10 — 7:30 a.m.
Join Denise for a 2-mile walk along El Corazon’s Garrison Creek Trail. In addition, BVAS’s Joan Bockman will share her knowledge of the local flora and the history of El Corazon. Should be fun!
Directions: Turn into the El Corazon gate east of El Camino Real on Oceanside Blvd. Veer to the left for ample parking.
Leader: Denise Riddle (driddle1855@att.net)

STEVE’S SURPRISE THURSDAY WALK
Thursday, January 11 — 8 a.m.
Come along on our weekday surprise-location bird walk on the second Thursday of each month. Where we go is based on recent reports and Steve’s personal surveying. It is always great fun!
Send Steve an email if you are interested in participating.
Leader: Steve Brad (stevanbrad@gmail.com)

SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK BIRD WALK
Saturday, January 20 — 8:30 a.m.
Lower Crest Canyon
We’ll be looking for the many waterfowl and shorebirds that come to spend the winter at North County’s coastal wetlands.
Directions: Lower Crest Canyon— From I-5, take Via de la Valle west; left on Jimmy Durante Blvd.; go east on the turn-about to San Dieguito Road. Continue driving east 1 mile to the trailhead.
Leader: John Haddock (760-941-7824)

COASTAL 101 BIRDING
Saturday, January 27 — 9 a.m.
Meet up with Tom and Susie for a casual combination birding workshop and bird count around Buena Vista Lagoon. We visit Maxton Brown Park, walk to the ocean and weir, and return to the nature center along Coast Highway. We should see waders, songbirds, and shorebirds. After the walk, we tally the birds and finish by 11:30 a.m.
Location: Buena Vista Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Highway, Oceanside. Meet in the parking lot.
Leaders: Tom Troy (760-420-7328) and Susie Martin

RESULTS OF THE 2017 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
Our newsletter goes to the printer a month ahead of our planned events. Check the BVAS website (bvaubon.org) after the New Year to see the early results!
A Long and Winding Road
Buena Vista Lagoon Enhancement Update

The issue of how best to enhance the lagoon has been studied and discussed for many years in an effort to address infill of the lagoon due to sedimentation. Ultimately, SANDAG consented to take over as lead agency for the lagoon enhancement environmental review process. In the last few months, progress has been made on completing that environmental process, although a funding source still needs to be secured for the project to be implemented.

As background, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which analyzed saltwater, freshwater, and hybrid alternatives, was issued in July 2015 and followed by a public comment period. Then in September of this year, SANDAG completed the Final EIR, which designated the Saltwater Alternative as the proposed project. They determined that this alternative best met the project objectives, with superior benefits for birds and other wildlife, as well as for water quality. Buena Vista Audubon supports the Saltwater Alternative as the environmentally superior alternative, as does the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Coastal Commission.

On November 7th, the lagoon enhancement project was placed on the Carlsbad City Council agenda by Councilwoman Cori Schumacher to inform the public and Council on the project issues. The Council heard a report from the SANDAG representative and, after hearing public testimony, voted unanimously to send a letter to SANDAG indicating their support for the Saltwater Alternative. However, the weir that prevents tidal influences in the lagoon is located on private property and there may still be substantial resistance to this alternative. The SANDAG Board will make the final decision on which alternative to support and a hearing before the Board is expected in late January. The Board can choose any of the alternatives, as they were all thoroughly analyzed in the EIR. BVAS will keep members informed on the website and on Facebook.

Do I need a Lands Pass at the Buena Vista Lagoon Ecological Reserve?

On January 1, 2018, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is implementing a Lands Pass Program at Buena Vista, Batiquitos, and San Elijo Lagoons. Anyone over the age of 16 who plans to access these reserves’ trails must first acquire a Lands Pass. There are certain exemptions that apply, including volunteers, researchers, and chaperones with organized school tours. Our website contains all the details and visitors should be familiar with these. The annual and day use passes ($24.33 and $4.32, respectively) will not be available on site but can be purchased online at www.ca.wildlifelicense.com/internetsales/, by phone at (800) 565-1458, and in person wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold.

CDFW is going to be using the revenue from the program to fund the maintenance and conservation of California’s ecological reserves and wildlife areas.

For more information regarding the Lands Pass Program and the Buena Vista Audubon Society, please visit: https://bvaudubon.org/2017/11/26/lands-pass-program/.
Supporting Tomorrow’s Naturalists Today
Buena Vista Audubon’s Teen Scholarship Program

BVAS is proud to announce the kickoff of a new program to support nature-related studies or projects of local teens. A wide array of activities will be considered: participation in BVAS- or other Audubon-sponsored trips or classes, involvement in other scientific coursework, conferences, or field studies, or the creation and implementation of a nature-oriented project in the local community.

North County students, ages 13 – 19, are invited to submit proposals through March 30. The applicants are asked to describe their interests and involvement in birding or nature and offer a description of how they might use their award, should they be selected. A stipend of up to $500 is being offered. For further details and to download the scholarship application form, see digital pages 7-8 or go online at https://bvaudubon.org/education/.

(Heavy-Handed)
New Year’s Resolutions

1. Renew your membership.
2. Go on a new bird walk.
3. Plant a native plant.

KIDS’ CORNER AT THE NATURE CENTER
Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse
Sunday, January 21 from 1-4 p.m.
This month we will create our own owls out of bark. Come join the fun!

Preschool Nature Storytime
Monday, January 22 at 10 a.m.
The focus for January will be weather.
Questions? Call Sally at 760-525-2351
BVAS QUICK CALENDAR

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Jan. 1</td>
<td>NO GARDEN CLUB DUE TO HOLIDAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. Jan. 4</td>
<td>Birding Leo Carrillo Ranch</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. Jan. 5</td>
<td>Nature Guides Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat. Jan. 6</td>
<td>Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 7</td>
<td>San Joaquin Marsh &amp; Wildlife Sanc.</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 8</td>
<td>Garden Club</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan. 10</td>
<td>El Corazon Garrison Creek Walk</td>
<td>7:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>Thurs. Jan. 11</td>
<td>Steve's Surpise Thursday Walk</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 15</td>
<td>Garden Club</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan. 17</td>
<td>Program: “From Snow to Sand”</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. Jan. 19</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat. Jan. 20</td>
<td>San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 21</td>
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<td>Garden Club</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 29</td>
<td>Garden Club</td>
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Buena Vista Audubon
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
2202 S. Coast Highway  Oceanside, CA 92054
760-439-BIRD (-2473)
email: bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
website: www.bvaudubon.org

Join us on Jan. 17 to learn about the desert-dwelling greater hoopoe-lark and other birds from Morocco.

Center Hours
Sunday: 1 - 4 p.m.
Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Buena Vista Audubon Society
Teen Scholarship Program
Application Form

**Guidelines:** Open to North County teens, ages 13 – 19, the BVAS Teen Scholarship Program will award a scholarship supporting nature-related activities, studies, or local, community projects. Completed applications are due by March 30, 2018, and can be submitted by email (bvaudubon@sbglobal.net) or delivered to the Nature Center (2202 South Coast Highway, Oceanside, CA 92054). The winning applicant should plan to complete their project by December 31, 2018.

**Personal Information:**
Name: _______________________________ Age: __________
Street Address: __________________________ City: ______________
Zip Code: ______________ Phone: __________________________
School: ___________________________ District: ______________
Parent or Guardian’s Name: ________________________________
Address & Phone Number (if different): __________________________

**Interests and Involvement:** Briefly describe your past and present interests and involvement in birding or nature.
**Project:** Describe your project, course or study, or field activity. What specifically will you do and accomplish using Buena Vista Audubon’s support? Why is the project or activity important, either to you as a budding naturalist or to your local community? What is the budget for your plan, and how much support are you requesting from BVAS (up to a maximum stipend of $500?)

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**Agreement:** If awarded a scholarship by BVAS, I agree to fully complete the described project by December 31, 2018.

Signed: ____________________________________________  ____________________________  
Student                                           Parent