Afoot & Afield in San Diego County

with Scott Turner

Afoot & Afield, first published in 1986, quickly became San Diego’s go-to guide. It introduced us to the diversity and natural wonders of our county, from desert to mountain to shore. By the time of author Jerry Schad’s death in 2011, four editions had been published. Dog-eared and highlighted, the books graced car trunks and backpacks all over Southern California.

After a few years, however, even the best trail guides beg for revision and expansion. But if the guide was penned by Jerry Schad, who could fill his shoes? To the rescue came Scott Turner, this month’s speaker. His new edition stays true to Schad’s legacy, while adding over 50 new walks, stunning photographs, and up-to-the-minute logistical details.

Join Scott Turner as he reintroduces us to our own backyard. At 282 hikes, walks, and meanders, there’s a fistful of treasure for each of us.

Wednesday, February 21, 2018
Social: 6:30 p.m.       Program: 7:00 p.m.
Overdue Credit to a Frequent Flyer

North American folklore has touted the American robin to be the harbinger of spring. For me, though, that honor goes to the mourning dove and its soft song drifting through the air beginning in February. A mourning dove is a medium-sized, streamlined bird with an almost ridiculously small head; a long, pointed tail; and a plump, grayish brown or taupe body—one author called it “a teardrop with a tail or a pear on a stick.” Black spots on the wings and behind the eye accent its otherwise drab colors.

Mourning doves build pitifully meager nests, usually consisting of just a handful of twigs laid rather haphazardly. The female nearly always lays two eggs, for which both parents take turns incubating for 14 days. Mourning dove babies (called “squabs”) grow very quickly, increasing their weight 14-fold in 15 days. Fledgling mourning doves look like their parents, except that their feathers have a “scaly” appearance: Wispy little white edges outline the tips of their feathers but wear off shortly after the young leave the nest.

Tied with the house finch for San Diego County’s most widespread bird, mourning doves occur throughout most of the county year-round. They are also the most widespread and abundant game birds in North America and, correspondingly, the most hunted species. Yet population numbers of this species remain stable, thanks to its short nesting cycle, long nesting season, and multiple broods each year. To raise so many broods, mourning doves start earlier than most other birds. As a result, this dove’s song begins filling the air again this month, heralding the onset of yet another songbird breeding season.

Refer to www.bvaudubon.org and click on NEWS for an extended version of this article.

Thanks to the people and birds that made the Christmas Bird Count a huge success!
BIRDING WITH BVAS

VOLUME 47 / NUMBER 2 / FEBRUARY 2018 / 3

BIRDING LEO CARRILLO
Thursday, February 1 — 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 (jmherskowitz@yahoo.com, janemygatt@me.com)

WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY WALK
Saturday, February 3 — 8 a.m.
Come along with John, Denise and friends for our regular monthly walk and bird survey at this beautiful sanctuary for resident and migratory waterfowl.
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)

STEVE’S SURPRISE THURSDAY WALK
Thursday, February 8 — 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)

BIRD-A-THON WITH STEVE
Sunday, February 11 — 7:30 a.m.
This is a wonderful opportunity to support your local Buena Vista Audubon Society while having a great time. Pledge an amount for every species we see during our morning peregrinations. No amount is too small or too large! Checks can be made to BVAS and given to Steve.
Location: We will start at Buddy Todd Park and then go to Whelan Lake and end up at Oceanside Harbor.
Leader: Steve Brad (760-633-1639)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS
It couldn’t happen without all of you! Heartfelt thanks to the board members and volunteers at the nature center who helped host this year’s CBC. Your talents and good cheer were very appreciated. Additionally, we thank the team leaders for getting their teams out early on a beautiful, crisp winter morning. Tom Troy and Susie Martin led 35 new birders around Buena Vista Lagoon. Thanks for that special effort to include beginning birders!
As of this writing we had 193 species, totaling more than 31,000 individuals. There were 150 participants in 28 teams putting in 185 team-hours. We covered 100 miles by foot, 185 miles by car, 35 miles by boat, and 17 miles by golf cart.
Some of our rare and unusual highlights included cackling goose, greater scaup, red-throated loon, Ridgway’s rail, common ground-dove, red-naped sapsucker, Costa’s hummingbird, Pacific-slope flycatcher, Bell’s vireo (eastern), sage thrasher, black-and-white warbler, black-throated gray warbler, white-throated sparrow, summer tanager, orchard oriole, and Bullock’s oriole.
What a wonderful day... let’s do it again!
Save the date; next year we hope to reserve December 29, 2018 for Oceanside. Until then, bird early, bird often!

EL CORAZON GARRISON CREEK BIRD WALK
Wednesday, February 14 — 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)

SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK BIRD WALK
Saturday, February 17 — 8:30 a.m.
San Andres Drive
Join John and friends as we look for the many waterfowl and shorebirds that come to spend the winter at North County’s coastal wetlands.
Directions: San Andres Drive — From I-5, take Via de la Valle east; go right on San Andres Drive to end of road.
Leader: John Haddock (760-941-7824)

COASTAL 101 BIRDING
Saturday, February 24 — 9 a.m.
Meet 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
Oceanside SOAR is circulating petitions to help protect Oceanside’s open space and agricultural land from development and sprawl. If successful, the initiative will require voter approval before such land can be rezoned.

Buena Vista Audubon, along with over a dozen other local and regional conservation and voters’ rights organizations, endorse this initiative. There is an urgent need to protect Oceanside’s rapidly dwindling open space and farmland for birds and other wildlife that depend on them for habitat. The stress on wildlife (and people!) caused by the conversion of open space to housing and hardscape is well documented. Displaced animals lose their home territories and familiar feeding areas, have to carve out new territories when the best ones may already be claimed, and have more frequent run-ins with humans (which rarely end well for the wildlife).

SOAR has until March to acquire enough signatures to place the initiative on the November ballot. Volunteers are needed to help collect signatures and training will be provided. Please contact Diane Nygaard (dnygaard3@gmail.com) if you can help. For more information, visit Oceanside SOAR’s website: oceanside-soar.org.

To Every Season… Tips From the Plant Lady

Plant! Plant! Plant! Our “rainy” season failed to start this fall. But since native plants are adapted to survive drought, what better time to plant than right now? Go to Audubon Native Plants Database www.audubon.org/native-plants to get started. Bladder-pod (Peritoma arborea) attracts five species of birds along with other pollinators. The yellow flower clusters are a great companion to apricot globe-mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua) or Cleveland sage (Salvia clevelandii). Within a few months you will have a true birdfeeder in your yard. Use one-gallon pots, space them two feet apart, and water for the first few months. Need motivation? A trip to Tree of Life Nursery will inspire you with their large trees and beautiful arroyo. http://californianativeplants.com/

This is also a good time to prune. Cut sages and buckwheats back by one third, take encelia and matilija poppies to the ground, and never touch manzanita or ceanothus. Control Argentine ants because they kill plants by colonizing the rootball.
Meet Logan

Volunteer Coordinator Bob Crowell can’t help but smile when he speaks of Logan Wiedenhoffer. Logan has been full of nice surprises since the day he walked into the nature center. It began as a casual meeting with a pleasant young man—unassuming, quiet, and easy-going. He’s an excellent host and great with visitors of all ages, whether from around the corner or around the world. Even with a job, grad school, and personal life, Logan is always the person to say, “Yes, I can do that.” Whether it’s rescuing the audio and visual set-up at our monthly meetings, helping with the website, or baking cookies for the Christmas Bird Count, Logan is there. When you see Logan, take the time to say hello and get to know him. You will be the better for it.

Birdhouse and Nature Art Auction

The Birdhouse and Nature Art Auction will be Saturday, March 24, from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the nature center. The entrance fee of $15 will include live music, unlimited hors d’oeuvres, wine, and craft beers.

For this year’s auction we are accepting birdhouses, beehouses, and any nature-themed art. This might include a painting, sculpture, quilt, or other inventive art you’d like to create with nature in mind. Bring your masterpieces to the nature center in February and early March.

To preserve space we’re asking contributors to limit their artistic donations to three items.

Join us for a fun time!

KIDS’ CORNER AT THE NATURE CENTER

Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse

Sunday, Feb. 18 from 1:00 - 4:00.
This month come and make your own birdseed heart.

Preschool Nature Storytime

Monday, Feb. 26 at 10 a.m.
Bring your little ones to the center to learn and read about ducks. 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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<tr>
<td>Thurs. Feb. 1</td>
<td>Birding Leo Carrillo</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Nature Guides Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary</td>
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<td>Garden Club</td>
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<td>El Corazon Garrison Creek Walk</td>
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<td>Board Meeting</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

Reddish egret by Steve Brad. One of the rare birds spotted at the Christmas Bird Count.

Happy Valentine’s Day:
February 14

Center Hours
Sunday: 1 - 4 p.m.
Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.