The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a Caribbean cultural melting pot renowned for its Carnival, pulsating to the beat of steel drums, soca music, and calypso. But it’s nature at its finest that draws us in; it’s colorfully kaleidoscopic.

The size of Delaware, the two-island nation off Venezuelan’s coast is home to 482 species of birds, 68 bat species, and 765 butterfly species. The islands really are an introduction to the natural history of South America.

Through the eyes of Martyn Kenefick, the region’s premier bird guide, you’ll get a great taste of tropical birding in Trinidad’s high mountain rainforest, on its sandy beaches, and in mangroves with Scarlet Ibis evening roosts.

Martyn Kenefick has been an avid birder since his early teens, moving to Trinidad in 1999 and spending the next 15 years working as a bird tour leader, guiding in Trinidad and Tobago and many other countries. In 2007 he became the main author of *Field Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*, the third edition of which will be published in early March. Let him take you to this tropical paradise, home to the Bearded Bellbird, Tufted Coquette, Blue-backed Manakin, and nocturnal Oilbirds.

Don’t forget your passport!
Tripping the Light Fantastic
by Tina Mitchell

When I set out to write about a species, I start with “What is interesting about this species?” With hummingbirds though, what isn’t interesting about them? The smallest of all birds, hummingbirds in California weigh between 0.1 and 0.3 ounces or less than 5 original M&Ms. Probably their most striking characteristic is their unique and extraordinary ability to hover in the air, as well as fly forward, backward, side to side, and even upside down for short distances.

Their bills are uniquely designed to extract nectar from deep within tubular flowers. Acting as a “micropump,” two long, skinny tubes along the sides of the tongue flatten as it reaches to a flower, storing elastic energy; when it contacts nectar, the top of the tongue reshapes, quickly drawing the nectar through the now-expanded tubes at a rate of 20 mouthfuls per second. But not even hummingbirds can live on sucrose alone. Small insects such as gnats and aphids as well as tiny spiders also make up an important part of their diet, providing protein to supplement the sugary high of nectar.

By far the most common hummingbird in San Diego County is Anna’s Hummingbird. In all plumages, the body shows a bronzy green above and gray or gray-green below. The male’s throat, face, and crown flash an iridescent rose, copper, or gold, depending on the light; in bad light, the entire head just looks dark. Adult females and immature birds display darkly beaded throats and a smattering of iridescent rose-colored feathers, usually in the center of the throat.

Here, most Anna’s Hummingbirds nest mid-February to early June. Females raise the young alone, building thimble-sized nests of thistle and dandelion seeds, fur, feathers, and rootlets; small bits of bark or lichen serve to camouflage the nest. Spider webs provide the stretchy glue for these components, allowing the tiny nests to expand as the nestlings grow. Eggs (almost invariably two) are about the size of a small jelly bean. The young hatch after 16 - 19 days and leave the nest around 20 days after hatching.

To learn more about hummingbirds, as well as about one of its more creepy predators, go to https://bvaudubon.org/news/.

TIPS FROM THE GARDEN CREW

It’s winter - time to get active! Check that rain gauge. If the skies have been stingy, go ahead and water. Now’s the time to plant natives; and if your existing plants are pushing out new growth, it’s time to prune. A general rule of thumb is to prune sages and buckwheats back by one-third. Cut Encelia and Matilija Poppy close to the ground and try to never touch Ceanothus and Manzanita.

Finally, be on the lookout for Argentine ants. They are the biggest reason for plant failure now. They colonize the rootball and suck the life out of the plant. Controlling the ants and removing non-native weeds will result in a successful garden.

Looking for on-the-job training? Join the Garden Crew. We meet every Monday at the nature center at 10 a.m. Volunteers are always welcome!
**EL CORAZON GARRISON CREEK BIRD WALK**
Wednesday, January 9 — 7:30 a.m.
Join Denise for a walk along El Corazon’s Garrison Creek Trail. In addition, Joan Bockman will share her knowledge of the local flora and the history of El Corazon.
**Directions:** From the intersection of El Camino Real and Oceanside Blvd., go east on Oceanside Blvd., turn left (north) into the first gate. Veer to the left and park.
**Leader:** Denise Riddle (driddle1855@att.net)

**STEVE’S SURPRISE THURSDAY WALK**
Thursday, January 10
This is Steve’s regularly scheduled 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)

**STEVE’S IMPROMPTU WALK**
You won’t want to miss Steve’s impromptu walk, which will not follow any particular schedule. Where and when will we go? Join Steve’s email list to find out. It certainly will be spontaneous and a great opportunity to chase local rarities together!
Contact Steve if you’d like to be included on his email list.
**Leader:** Steve Brad (stevanbrad@gmail.com)

**SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK BIRD WALK**
Saturday, January 19 — 8:30 a.m. (Lower Crest Canyon)
We’ll be looking for various species of waterfowl and shorebirds that come to spend the winter at North County’s coastal wetlands.
**Leader:** John Haddock (760-941-7824)
**FYI:** The location of this walk alternates every month between Lower Crest Canyon and San Andres Drive.
**Directions for Lower Crest Canyon** — From I-5, take Via de la Valle west; left on Jimmy Durante Blvd.; left on San Dieguito Rd. Drive east 1 mile to trailhead. (January, March, May, September, November.)
**Directions for San Andres Drive** — From I-5, take Via de la Valle east; go right on San Andres Drive to end of road. (February, April, October, December.)

**WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY WALK**
Saturday, January 5 — 8 a.m.
Join 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 bird!
**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)

**COASTAL 101 BIRDING**
Saturday, January 26 — 9 a.m.
Please join us for this walk along 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. This is a great way to spend the morning and Tom is a wonderful guide!
**Location:** Buena Vista Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Highway, Oceanside. Meet in the parking lot.
**Leader:** Tom Troy (760-420-7328)
Dear BVAS Members and Friends,

North County San Diego is filled with natural beauty: the ocean, lagoons, foothills, and mountains. Yet it is easy to forget how many nearby communities are "park-poor." The Buena Vista Audubon Society (BVAS) fills this gap at its nature center and on its trail. During our school programs, Nature Guide volunteers hear comments such as "We're in nature!" "I wish I could come back here!" "This is the best thing I have ever done!" These comments remind us of how important our nature center and trail are for these kids and our community.

Working with a design consultant from the San Diego Natural History Museum, we’ve built a model to help visitors connect to the Buena Vista Creek watershed. Understanding what a watershed is and how our activities upstream impact the lagoon (and ultimately the ocean) is crucial for helping the next generation be good stewards of the land. This interactive model offers a fun and educational way to explore the local environment during our children’s programs, teaching why we need open spaces and that what we do upstream matters.

In addition, our trail often floods when the lagoon backs up due to sand buildup on the beach. Visitors and children leave frustrated that they couldn't walk around the trail and enjoy the duck pond. We now have completed plans for building a boardwalk to make the trail accessible year-round. This project will be expensive but we are determined to make it happen!

Finally, our wonderful nature center has delighted visitors for many years but it is time for an upgrade. We want to take our next steps with a long-range vision. How can we tell a compelling story of Buena Vista Audubon, the lagoon, and the larger watershed? What design will best inspire and educate visitors? A Master Plan can guide us in these efforts and we will begin work on that soon.

BVAS members and friends such as you have been instrumental in supporting our programs and projects over the years. We have received 2-for-1 grant commitments for both the boardwalk and the Master Plan projects. We are working to raise the $40,000, which is our share of these grants. Your donation can make a world of difference.

As always, we deeply appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Curt Busk, President

Thank you for your help!

Contributions can be made at the nature center, by mail, or online at https://bvaudubon.org/donate/.
Back to the Future -
Past President Natalie Shapiro Becomes Buena Vista’s
First Executive Director

The Buena Vista Audubon Society is proud of its legacy and excited about its future. Maintaining all that we do with and for our community is a full-time commitment. Center Manager Annette Schneider and the volunteer army that make it happen are doing a remarkable job.

Now it’s time to honor the past and organize for the future. We have land to restore, a nature center and trail to upgrade, and the vision of a tidal lagoon to defend and promote. It’s time for an Executive Director.

Accepting the position is Past President Natalie Shapiro. Conservationist, educator, scientist, and leader, Natalie is a respected, familiar friend of Buena Vista and the community. She has been an integral part of Buena Vista and all its endeavors. No one is more qualified to help guide us into the years ahead.

Scouts Welcome!
We invite Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts to visit the Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center. View our beautiful taxidermy and walk along the peaceful lagoon trail. Groups require an appointment, so please call Sondra at (617) 763-0705 for details.

KIDS’ CORNER AT THE NATURE CENTER
Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse
Sunday, January 20, 1-4 p.m.
Saltwater Heals Everything!
Fun activities for kids that teach them about our watershed and the importance of caring for the lagoon.
Preschool Nature Storytime
Monday, January 28 at 10 a.m.
Let’s learn how to keep our environment safe for our animal friends. Through stories and activities, your little ones will learn while having fun.
Questions? Call Sally at 760-525-2351.
BVAS QUICK CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Jan. 3</td>
<td>Birding Leo Carrillo Ranch</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. Jan. 4</td>
<td>Nature Guides Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. Jan. 5</td>
<td>Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 7</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Jan. 9</td>
<td>El Corazon Garrison Creek Walk</td>
<td>7:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. Jan. 10</td>
<td>Steve’s Surprise Thursday Walk</td>
<td>email Steve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Jan. 14</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Jan. 16</td>
<td>Program: “Birding Trinidad and Tobago” with Martyn Kenefick</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. Jan. 18</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. Jan. 19</td>
<td>San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. Jan. 20</td>
<td>Joey &amp; Johnny’s Clubhouse</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 21</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. Jan. 26</td>
<td>Coastal 101 Birding</td>
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<td>Preschool Nature Storytime</td>
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<td>Garden Crew</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

Come view photos of the Bearded Bellbird and more stunning birds of Trinidad and Tobago. See page 1.

Center Hours
Sunday: 1 - 4 p.m.
Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
23RD ANNUAL SAN DIEGO BIRD FESTIVAL

- Over 40 field trips
- Skill-building Workshops
- Optics and Birding Expo
- Birds Birds Birds!

SAN DIEGO BIRD FESTIVAL

Marina Village Conference Center
February 27 - March 3, 2019

SPECIAL GUESTS
Sam Fried
Karan Odom
David la Puma
Steve Shunk

Where Every Day is a Big Day

www.sandiegoaudubon.org

SAN DIEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY
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