Celebrities in the Midst:  
Lake Hodges and Brian Caldwell

Lake Hodges lies just 22 miles southeast of the Buena Vista Nature Center, but it seems a world away from the coastal wetlands and the Pacific Ocean. On our last visit, a dozen White Pelicans kettled overhead while Western and Clark’s Grebes dominated the water’s surface. California Gnatcatchers, ignorant of their endangered status, flitted and mewed within the 2,300 acres of coastal sage scrub surrounding the shore. But however notable, these are just three of over 200 avian species that reside in or visit this precious habitat each year.

Eagle, falcon, kestrel, phainopepla, and roadrunner join the lineup beside shorebirds and waterfowl such as kingfisher, heron, ibis, killdeer, and bittern. Add chaparral, oak woodland, rocky hillside, and riparian habitat to the lake’s special place on the Pacific Flyway, and it becomes obvious why Lake Hodges is recognized as a Globally Important Bird Area, the highest rank bestowed by National Audubon.

For over 20 years, the lake has also been home to Brian Caldwell. Noted photographer and birding guide, Brian knows the area like no other. Owner of Lake Hodges Photo Tours, he knows just where the action is and just where to capture that perfect shot. On Wednesday, March 20, that place will be at our Nature Center, where Brian Caldwell will lead us behind the scenes at one of San Diego’s (and Nature’s) greatest performances.

Wednesday, March 20, 2018  
Social: 6:30 p.m.  
Walk & Trip Information: 6:45 p.m.  
Program: 7:00 p.m.
Avian Architects Setting Up Shop

Originally birds of the western mountains, Cliff Swallows nested in vast colonies in the steep canyons and lower elevations of the massive mountain ranges. During the past century or so, though, they expanded their breeding range across most of North America, following close on the heels of the construction of highways and bridges that now provide potential nesting sites as well.

In low light, a Cliff Swallow looks brown with light underparts, a buffy rump patch, and a squared-off tail. Good light reveals its lovely metallic blue-black back and shoulders and a sharply defined chestnut-colored throat. With a pale strip on its forehead, it somewhat resembles a chunky bird sporting a headlamp. Males and females look alike. But juvenile birds show extremely varied colors and degrees of white speckling on their throats and foreheads—greater variation in juvemal plumage than any other species in North America.

Cliff Swallows arrive in California in mid-February to early March. They build their unmistakable nests—gourd-shaped bowls covered with mud pellets, attached to a vertical surface, with small entrance tunnels—under an overhang to escape heavy rains (disastrous for any mud home!). Both males and females help with construction; they often tuck their nests in corners and tight against neighboring nests, minimizing the amount of mud needed to cover the nest. These birds return to successful sites year after year. You’ve heard of the swallows that used to return to the mission at San Juan Capistrano every year? Yep—Cliff Swallows.

These birds provide a wonderful service of insect control. During breeding season alone, each nesting pair can remove as many as 5 kilos of insects just feeding their kids—not even counting what they themselves devour. In early September, as insect swarms decline, nearly the entire population heads to South America for the winter.

To read more about the extremely sociable Cliff Swallow, go to https://bvaudubon.org/news/.
WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY WALK
Saturday, March 2 — 8 a.m.
Join John 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)

BIRDING LEO CARRILLO
Thursday, March 7 — 8 a.m.
We will be walking the trails and exploring inside Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park.
Location: Note the new starting point for this walk.
Park along the trailhead near 2925 Via Conquistador.
Leaders: Eve Martin, Patti Koger, and Jane Mygatt (jane.mygatt@gmail.com)

EL CORAZON GARRISON CREEK BIRD WALK
Wednesday, March 13 — 7:30 a.m.
Denise will be walking along El Corazon’s Garrison Creek Trail. There is a nice variety of hawks, songbirds, and waterfowl to be seen.
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 BRAD’S TWO MONTHLY WALKS
STEVE’S IMPROMPTU WALK (Sunday, March 10)
SURPRISE THURSDAY WALK (Thursday, March 14)
Join Steve for these surprise-location walks. Where we go is based on recent reports and Steve’s personal surveying. Starting times vary, so send Steve an email if you are interested in participating.
Leader: Steve Brad (stevanbrad@gmail.com)

SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK BIRD WALK
Saturday, March 16 — 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 Road. Drive east 1 mile to trailhead. (January, March, May, September, and 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, and December)

COASTAL 101 BIRDING
Saturday, March 30 — 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.
Location: Buena Vista Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Highway, Oceanside. Meet in the parking lot.
Leader: Tom Troy (760-420-7328)

SWAINSON’S HAWK WATCH
BORREGO SPRINGS — March 21
Every year thousands of Swainson’s Hawks pass through Borrego Springs on their migration north. The hawks can be seen kettling or amid the fields of wildflowers gorging on large caterpillars. If the rain continues it will bode well for abundant wildflowers, caterpillars, and hawks in March!
Leaders: Hal Cohen and Steve Brad
Contact Steve (stevanbrad@gmail.com) for details.
Food Network Exclusive
Feeding a Crowd

When conditions are just right, two things happen in Anza Borrego. Flower seeds germinate and the White-lined Sphinx Moths lay their eggs. The perfect mix of heat and moisture result in a ground-covering array of fat, juicy, neon-colored caterpillars that gorge on the bursting blooms.

Despite their orange butt-spikes and defensive coating of acid, these feasting larvae are a gourmet delight to the thousands of Swainson Hawks that enter the valley. Gluttons one and all, the hawks often overfill their gullets, vomiting up mushy green cakes after liftoff. Moth researcher Cristina Francois reports as many as 30 insects in a Swainson’s pellet. “It’s a full-on binge.” It’s what’s for dinner.

(Adapted from the article, “Acid-Covered Caterpillars Are a Delicacy for Migrating Swainson’s Hawks”.)

17th Annual Seaside Neighborhood
California Native Plant Garden Tour
Sunday, March 31 at 2:00 p.m.

Come see more than 18 Native Plant Gardens in the Historic Seaside Neighborhood in downtown Oceanside. Plant experts and neighborhood locals will lead a 1.5-mile walking tour to see these wonderful frontyard gardens. Meet at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 31 at St. Mary's School parking lot at 515 Wisconsin Ave. The guided walk is free. Kids will be selling lemonade and cookies along the route. This event is sponsored by Oceanside Coastal Neighborhood Association and Buena Vista Audubon.

For more information, call Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center at 760-439-2473, or check the following websites: BVAudubon.org or OCNA101.org.
Birdhouse and Nature Art Auction
March 16, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

On Saturday, March 16, the Nature Center will open its doors for the 9th Annual Fundraiser and Open House. Whether you’re interested in some stunning or whimsical art or you’d like to help out a bird, bat, or bee looking for a cavity to call home, this auction offers something for everyone.

Each year brings new treasures. Whether in ceramic, wood, metal, stone, or textiles, a one-of-a-kind museum piece is waiting for you.

**Music for All the Senses.** Hors d’oeuvres, fine wine, and craft beers will be featured. The D.J. will set the tone.

**Making a Difference.** Your $15 admission (and all auction proceeds) will be generously used to further Buena Vista’s work. Imagine—a night of community, camaraderie, and charity. Please bring your own creative art to be auctioned. The Nature Center is already collecting items. Questions? Email Kelly at bvlagoon@gmail.com. This event wouldn’t be possible without you!

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**BVAS CONTACTS, BOARD*, AND CHAIRS**

Center: 760-439-2473  bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
Executive Director: Natalie Shapiro  (406) 241-2153
Center Manager: Annette Schneider  760-716-7686
Volunteers & outreach: Bob Crowell*  760-207-3884
Kbcrowell1@att.net
President: Curt Busk*
Vice-president: Jane Mygatt*
Secretary: Bruce Montgomery*
Treasurer: Margie Ellsworth*
Conservation Chair: Joan Herskowitz*
Public Relations: Brian Petersen*
Native Plant Club: Joan Bockman*
Director: Sandy McMullen*
Director: Tina Mitchell*
Director: J.R. Kinander*
Birdhouse Auction: Kelly Deveney*
Facilities/Exhibits: Danny DiMento*
Gift Shop: Denise Riddle
Library: C.J. DiMento
Children’s Programs: Sally Bickerton
Webmaster: J.J. Springer
Membership & mailings: Janice Osborne  bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
Newsletter: Bruce* & Patty Montgomery*

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Buena Vista would like to thank Rodger Reese for cleaning the Nature Center’s carpets gratis. We appreciate you, Rodger!

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**KIDS’ CORNER**
**AT THE NATURE CENTER**

**Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse**
Sunday, March 17, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
This month the kids will get to create a pinecone feeder that birds will really use!

**Preschool Nature Storytime**
Monday, March 25, 10:00 a.m.
Bring your little ones to the center to learn about butterflies. Questions?
Call Sally at 760-525-2351.
BVAS QUICK CALENDAR

Fri. Mar. 1  
Nature Guides Meeting 10:00 a.m.
Sat. Mar. 2  
Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk 8:00 a.m.
Mon. Mar. 4  
Garden Crew 10:00 a.m.
Thurs. Mar. 7  
Birding Leo Carrillo Ranch 8:00 a.m.
Sun. Mar. 10  
Steve’s Impromptu Walk email Steve
Mon. Mar. 11  
Garden Crew 10:00 a.m.
Wed. Mar. 13  
El Corazon Garrison Creek Walk 7:30 a.m.
Thurs. Mar. 14  
Steve’s Surprise Thursday Walk email Steve
Fri. Mar. 15  
Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.
Sat. Mar. 16  
San Dieguito River Park Walk 8:30 a.m.
Sun. Mar. 17  
Joey & Johnny’s Clubhouse 1:00 p.m.
Mon. Mar. 18  
Garden Crew 10:00 a.m.
Wed. Mar. 20  
Program: Lake Hodges with Brian Caldwell 6:30 p.m.
Thurs. Mar. 21  
Spg. Migration: Borrego Springs email Steve
Mon. Mar. 25  
Preschool Nature Storytime 10:00 a.m.
Mon. Mar. 25  
Garden Crew 10:00 a.m.
Sat. Mar. 30  
Coastal 101 Birding 9:00 a.m.
Sun. Mar. 31  
Native Plant Tour 2:00 p.m.

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

Find out what animals can be seen at Lake Hodges. See page 1.

Center Hours
Sunday: 1 - 4 p.m.
Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Get those creative juices going. Preserve Calavera is sponsoring a contest to design bookmarks for one or more of California’s endangered and/or threatened species, be it animal or plant (see http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/t_e_spp/) to find a species or two or three). Possible formats are shown in the photograph above.

Age groups: 12 and under, 12-17 years, and over 18. Sizes should be between 2”x7” and 2.75”x8.5”.

Submit entries by March 22, 2019 to:
Paige DeCino/Bookmark contest
BV Nature Center
2202 S. Coast Hwy
Oceanside, CA 92054

Artwork to be displayed and cash prizes in each age group to be awarded on the day of the event, May 18, 2019. For more information and application forms contact: pdecino@preservecalavera.org
17th Annual
California Native Plant Garden Tour

Sunday March 31st
2pm

Over 18 Native Plant Gardens in the Historic Seaside Neighborhood in Downtown Oceanside!

Free guided 1.5 mile walking tour. Donation Requested for map.

Meet at St. Mary's School, 515 Wisconsin Avenue, (one block east of the 101 Café, Coast Highway and Wisconsin St)

Buena Vista Native Plant Club BVAudubon.org
Oceanside Coastal Neighborhood Association OCNA101.org