Restoring Nature in Your Garden  
with Dennis Mudd

For Dennis Mudd it all began with mountain biking through the natural areas of San Diego. The more time he spent in nature, the more he wanted to recreate it in his own garden. Along the way, Dennis’s nature restoration efforts started to work only after switching to all endemics. “I was astounded by the amount of bird life that my garden attracted; I’ve counted over 50 species in the last few years. The number of butterflies was also amazing. If you like birds and butterflies, you should plant a native garden.”

Dennis Mudd is a self-taught, native plant enthusiast who founded Calscape in 2010 with the goal of enabling small-scale, nature restoration efforts in California. The site is primarily focused on showing homeowners which plants are likely native to any location in the state and helping these gardeners figure out which plants they want, where to buy the plants, and how to grow them. Mudd donated Calscape to the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) in 2014 and leads development of the site in partnership with CNPS and the Jepson eFlora group at UC Berkeley. The site is now approaching one million unique users per year. (https://calscape.org)

Whether you are a novice or seasoned gardener, Dennis Mudd can open your eyes to new ways to make a world of difference. Join us in learning how to improve your own backyard.

Wednesday, January 15, 2020  
Social: 6:30 p.m.  
Walk & Trip Information: 6:45 p.m.  
Program: 7:00 p.m.
Like Rogers and Astaire  
The Western Grebe

An adult Western Grebe is a large black-and-white water bird distinguished by a long, thin, swan-like neck and a dull greenish yellow, massive straight spike-like bill. Dark above and bright white below, a Western has a black cap that streams down the back of its neck like a dark mane. With good optics and bright light, you can see that the black cap of a Western completely surrounds its dark eye; the nearly identical and former conspecific Clark’s Grebe’s eye lies distinctly below its cap.

Western Grebes eat fish, fish, and more fish, primarily pursued under water using their powerful legs that are set far back on their bodies. They will also take crustaceans and bottom-dwelling fish, suggesting that they forage along the bottom as well. Western and Clark’s Grebes are unique among grebes in their ability to thrust their bills forward like a spear.

Western Grebes are perhaps best known for their elaborate and lively courtship ritual: a series of displays in pairs including what looks like running across the water side by side. (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Western_Grebe/media-browser-overview/455564). To build a nest, the parents use aquatic vegetation placed on a submerged snag or anchored to emergent or floating plants. Clutch size ranges from 3–7 eggs; incubation lasts 24 days. Within minutes of hatching, the young climb onto a parent's back, riding there while the adults swim and forage. At the end of a brooding bout, the parent rises up in the water and flaps its wings; the young drop off and paddle to the other parent. Adults may assist youngsters in climbing back up by holding one foot stiffly out on the surface providing a literal “leg up.” Although back-brooding lasts only about four weeks, the young often stay with their parents until migration.

If you’d like to see these grebes’ courtship ritual, head to Lake Hodges before the end of January, when this impressive behavior begins to diminish. To learn more about this graceful bird, visit https://bvaudubon.org/news/.

WHY DO BIRDS MATTER TO YOU?

Birding is a great form of exercise. Otherwise, we might be tempted to cut our walk short. But with the hope of seeing an elusive bird, we keep going.

— Harlynne Geisler

Send your thoughts to mr.leakey@gmail.com.
BIRDING LEO CARRILLO
Thursday, January 2 — 8 a.m.
We will be walking the Rancho Carrillo trails and exploring inside Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park.
**Location:** Park along the trailhead near 2925 Via Conquistador.
**Leaders:** Eve Martin, Patti Koger, and Jane Mygatt (jane.mygatt@gmail.com)

WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY WALK
Saturday, January 4 — 8 a.m.
Join John and Denise 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 leaders for directions.
**Leaders:** John Haddock (760-941-7824) and Denise Riddle (driddle1855@att.net)

SAVE THE DATE— FEBRUARY 9, 2020
BIRDATHON WITH STEVE BRAD
This is one of Buena Vista Audubon’s favorite fundraising events. Birders of all ages and levels of experience are welcome to join the fun.
Pledging is easy. You can pledge any amount per species or a predetermined sum.
For more information on how to participate and pledge, contact stevanbrad@gmail.com. (The date is subject to change depending on the weather conditions.)

EL CORAZON GARRISON CREEK BIRD WALK
Wednesday, January 8 — 7:30 a.m.
Denise will be birding along El Corazon’s Garrison Creek Trail.
**Directions:** From the intersection of El Camino Real and Oceanside Blvd., go east on Oceanside Blvd., turn left (north) into the first gate. Park to the left.
**Leader:** Denise Riddle (driddle1855@att.net)

STEVE BRAD’S TWO MONTHLY WALKS
(DATES AND TIMES WILL VARY)
Join Steve for these surprise-location walks. When and where we go is based on recent reports and Steve’s personal surveying. Starting times and days will vary, so send Steve an email if you are interested in being on his notification list!
**Leader:** Steve Brad (stevanbrad@gmail.com)

Results of the Christmas Bird Count won’t be available when this newsletter goes to print. Check the BVAS website for a summary report: https://bvaudubon.org/

SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK BIRD WALK
Saturday, January 18 — 8:30 a.m.
(Lower Crest Canyon)
We’ll be looking for various species of waterfowl, songbirds, and shorebirds.
**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. (JAN, MAR, MAY, SEP, and NOV)
**Directions for San Andres Drive—** From I-5, take Via de la Valle east; go right on San Andres Drive to end of road. (FEB, APR, JUN, OCT, and DEC)

COASTAL 101 BIRDING
Saturday, January 25 — 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.
**Location:** Buena Vista Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Highway, Oceanside. Meet in the parking lot.
**Leader:** Tom Troy (760-420-7328)
The San Diego Bird Festival

The next San Diego Bird Festival will be February 26 - March 1, 2020 at Marina Village Conference Center. Enjoy daily field trips, photography workshops, ID seminars, and mixer events with other birders! Keynote speakers include Kevin McGowan, Pete Dunne, Julia Parrish, Nathan Pieplow, and Jason Ward. Also offered will be two post-festival trips: one to Baja California and the other a pelagic venture into Mexican waters. Registration is now open.

Watch [www.sandiegoaudubon.org](http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org) for schedules and more information.
BVAS MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION MINI-FORM

You can now become a member or donate. Friends of BVAS (members) receive the chapter newsletter. Annual donations of $25 or more qualify as membership dues.

Name: __________________________________________ Email: __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________ Zipcode: _____________________ + ___________
Phone: __________________________________________ Amount: __________________ Check (enclosed?) __________
(or if using CC)
Credit Card # __________________ Exp. Date. _______________ CVV ___________

Full-color newsletters are distributed by email as a conservation measure and to save printing and mailing costs. Please check here only if you would prefer a mailed black-and-white copy of the monthly newsletter: __________

You can now donate conveniently online from our website: https://bvaudubon.org/donate/.

Or mail to BVAS; P.O Box 480; Oceanside, CA 92049.

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"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you." - Frank Lloyd Wright

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KIDS’ CORNER AT THE NATURE CENTER

Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse
Sunday, Jan. 19, from 1-4 p.m.
Come learn about birds from around the country. We'll share about the various birds we’ve seen while visiting the National Parks.

Preschool Nature Storytime
Monday, Jan. 27 at 10 a.m.
Bring your little ones (ages 3-5) to our monthly program. This month our story and activities will highlight owls. Questions? Call Sally at 760-525-2351.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. Jan. 2</td>
<td>Birding Leo Carrillo</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. Jan. 3</td>
<td>Nature Guides Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat. Jan. 4</td>
<td>Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 6</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan. 8</td>
<td>El Corazon Garrison Creek</td>
<td>7:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 13</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan. 15</td>
<td>Program: <em>Restoring Nature in Your Garden</em> with Dennis Mudd</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. Jan. 17</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat. Jan. 18</td>
<td>San Dieguito River Park</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 19</td>
<td>Joey &amp; Johnny's Clubhouse</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 20</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
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**February 26 - March 1**
San Diego Bird Festival
(see page 4)

For Steve Brad's two monthly walks, dates and times will vary. If interested, send Steve an email: stevanbrad@gmail.com.