The Board of Directors has updated and amended the Buena Vista Audubon Society’s Bylaws. Check the BVAS website for more information. At the general meeting on June 17, 2020, we will discuss and vote on these updates.

All activities are subject to change. Please check our website or call the Nature Center before attending. See the back page for contact information. Thank you.

Buena Vista Audubon Ironically Presents: Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds*

For all our passions and commitments, we at Audubon try to be scientifically dispassionate about our feathered friends. But in all honesty, our endless, reasoned defense of corvids and gulls against their innumerable critics has brought us to a desperate place. Let the birds mount their own defense. Nobody likes a critic.

1963. A San Francisco bird shop. Two pairs of lovebirds, and a romantic encounter in picturesque Bodega Bay.

What could possibly go wrong?

Grab your binoculars, enjoy some popcorn, and root for the birds. Everybody loves a winning team.

Wednesday, May 20, 2020
Social: 6:30 p.m.
Walk & Trip Information: 6:45 p.m.
Program: 7:00 p.m.

Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZjaVdJt59U for an amusing pre-show lecture by Alfred Hitchcock.
Decades ago, I first learned to identify bird songs using a three-cassette-tape (remember those?) program called *Birding by Ear*. One of the best aspects of this program was that the designers grouped bird songs into easy-to-remember categories (e.g., whistlers, trillers, high pitchers). My favorite group became the name-sayers, whose songs or calls suggested their common names—for instance, Mountain Chickadee (“chick-ah-dee-ah-dee-ah-dee”), Killdeer (“ki-DEE, ki-DEE”), Common Poorwill (“poor WILL, poor WILL”). The odd species in that group was a bird whose call also suggested a name, just not its own: “Chi-CAH-go! Chi-CAH-go!” The first time I heard this call in the ravine behind our home in Oceanside, I smiled knowingly. Ah, yes—Chicago Quail. Wait. No. Wrong. *California* Quail.

The California Quail is a handsome quail known for its jaunty set of six crown feathers creating a plume and, due to unscripted appearances on Hollywood movie soundtracks, its repeated call. An adult male features a bold pattern throughout: a black-and-white face; upperparts and breast, brownish gray; the sides and flanks, olive-gray streaked with white; the remaining underparts, buffy with black feather “scaling.” The adult female looks similar but duller and browner. The teardrop-shaped plume—large and forward-drooping on adult males, short and erect on females—distinguishes this species from all other quail species except its congener, the desert-dwelling Gambel’s Quail.

Some of the best clues that quail lurk in your vicinity arise from their behavior. In fall and winter, they gather in large groups (*coveys*), easily spotted as they dash across an open area. When walking, they bob with their heads up—a cross between a waddle and a strut. They sprint, clucking and sputtering, with their bodies leaning forward. Preferring to run rather than fly, they will fly short distances to escape predators or birders who come a little too close. A distinctive whir of wings accompanies their takeoff.

California Quail ranks as the most widespread and, in most places, the most common quail species in the west. As a permanent resident throughout much of San Diego County, this species inhabits sage scrub, broken chaparral, open woodland, and desert oases with low, brushy cover; water; and open, sparsely vegetated habitat for foraging. Once land development starts to encroach on natural areas, though, the quail begin to disappear.

Adults eat fruits, seeds, leaves, and flowers from grasses, herbs, shrubs, and trees by scratching on the ground or leaping and plucking. They also consume grains, plant galls, and insects. They primarily feed twice a day—in the morning just after dawn and from late afternoon until dusk—generally searching for food in the open but never more than a short scurry from cover.

Breeding season typically starts here in late March with chicks often first appearing by the last week in April. The precise timing varies, though, depending primarily on rainfall and available food. The nest generally lies on the ground, well concealed in leaf litter, a clump of grass, or a hollow under a shrub. Clutch size ranges from 1 to 21 eggs (mean, 11). Completing a clutch takes about 20 days; incubation lasts 22–23 days. The down-covered precocial chicks follow the parents immediately after hatching and begin pecking at the ground. The young become fully independent by three months, when cross-family *coveys* begin to form. With ample rainfall and food, a pair may raise two broods. (Continued on page 4.)
WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY WALK
Saturday, May 2 — 8 a.m.
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)

BIRDING LEO CARRILLO
Thursday, May 7 — 8 a.m.
Location: 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, May 13 — 7:30 a.m.
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. 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)

SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK BIRD WALK
Saturday, May 16 — 8:30 a.m.
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.
Leader: John Haddock (760-941-7824)

COASTAL 101 BIRDING
Saturday, May 30 — 9 a.m.
This walk goes along Buena Vista Lagoon, Maxton Brown Park, to the ocean and weir, and returns to the Nature Center along Coast Hwy.
Location: Buena Vista Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Highway, Oceanside. Meet in the parking lot.
Leader: Tom Troy (760-420-7328)

ADAPTATIONS IN BIRDS — A MINIMALIST DESIGN
The avian body is exquisitely specialized and designed for economy of form and function. The illustrations of the Rock Pigeon (below) reveal the basic musculature (second from the left) and organ arrangement (far right) within the body. The large muscles of the chest that power flight and the internal organs are all concentrated near the body’s core. Birds have a highly efficient respiratory system, truncated digestive system, and simplified reproductive system that are protected by the lightweight skeletal system. The bulbous appendage at the base of the esophagus represents the muscular foregut or crop where food is temporarily stored before digestion takes place. Not all birds have a crop, as pictured here. The centralization of weight is crucial in providing greater balance during flight. The small muscles along the forelimbs are used to manipulate the feathers (more on wing anatomy in a future issue).

Birds have exceptionally long necks, and any weight in the head must be minimized. Quick movements of a heavy head could strain or damage the neck and spinal cord. To prevent damage to the delicate neck, the skull is as lightweight as possible and often is paper-thin. The most essential organs, the brain and eyes, have remained large and provide the greatest amount of weight to a bird’s head. The remaining structures have been streamlined and are very specialized: birds have a lightweight beak (no heavy teeth), two small nostril openings on the upper bill, and a narrow canal leading to the inner ear.
Native Plants To Sustain Wildlife

Enjoy birds and other animals in a more personal way by bringing nature to your own garden. Incorporating native plants in your landscapes can, to some degree, mitigate local habitat destruction and species loss. California natives have a special beauty in that they evolved with and support our native wildlife. These plants provide habitat for birds, bees, butterflies, moths, and other native insects. As an example, approximately 90% of butterfly species can only grow and develop on native plants as a food source. Their caterpillars, in turn, provide essential proteins for young birds. Creating a beautiful habitat for birds and other wildlife can be achieved in our own gardens. As open spaces become more fragmented and choked with invasive alien species that provide little food value, native gardens can become small reservoirs of life.

Collectively we can make a positive difference for the future of native animals if we appreciate our unique native plants. California has a rich and diverse flora, and several nurseries specialize in selling native plants. It may not be possible to convert our gardens entirely; but as we start to choose and incorporate natives, our yards can become small vestiges of a once diverse ecosystem. Native plants provide the flowers, seeds, nuts, and berries that keep our wildlife alive. Reap the rewards of becoming better stewards of our environment by incorporating native plants in your garden.

California’s Native Son (Continued from page 2)

The California Quail’s scientific name, *Callipepla californica*, derives in part from Greek in reference to the male’s stunning plumage. *Callipepla* means “beautifully robed,” from kalos (“beautiful”) and peplos (“woven cloth used for a covering”). The species name, “Californica” (as well as the common name) denotes that the original specimen was collected in California (at the time, part of Mexico). “Quail,” from Old French *quaille*, allegedly imitates the call of a European quail species.

As the state bird of California, the California Quail is an iconic member of the New World Quail family. Yet habitat fragmentation accompanied by increases in disturbance, exotic weeds, predators, and still unknown negative factors portend problems for the California Quail. Looking at data across annual Oceanside/Vista/Carlsbad Christmas Bird Counts since 2000* (adjusted for effort), our area has experienced a statistically significant drop in individuals, from 233 in 2000 (1.4 individuals/party hour) to 89 in 2019 (0.34/party hour). Despite this drop locally, the California Quail has shown remarkable adaptability in novel habitats. Introduced populations have now been established in other parts of the world such as New Zealand, Hawai‘i, Chile and across the eastern slope of the Andes to western Argentina. Now if we can only move to better support California’s state bird here on its home turf. And keep this “name-sayer’s” not-its-own-name-saying call ringing through our countryside.

*CBC Data are provided by National Audubon Society and through the generous efforts of Bird Studies Canada and countless volunteers across the Western Hemisphere ([www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), [www.christmasbirdcount.org](http://www.christmasbirdcount.org)).
THE KIDS’ PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED THIS MONTH

Here are three activities to do at home with your children. They're fun for all ages.

Create a Snail Habitat

- Find a clear container with a lid. Add fresh greens and leaves.
- Go on a walk in your yard or neighborhood and find a snail or two for the habitat. Carefully add them to your container.
- Keep the snails moist by spraying lightly with water daily.
- Observe your snail with a magnifying glass or hand lens.
- Draw and write about it. How does it change over time? What does it seem to prefer to eat?
- Clean out the feces with a tissue.
- After a few days, be sure to return the snails.

Make Homemade Playdough

Combine the following ingredients in a saucepan:

- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- food coloring
- * 1 tablespoon cream of tartar

Heat until warm. Remove from heat. Add 1 cup flour. Stir, then knead until smooth.

* The cream of tartar makes this dough last six months or longer. You may omit it if necessary.

Store the dough in an airtight container. Make it in different colors. Be creative!

Take a Walk or Hike!

Remember we don’t need to stay indoors. Lead

Calling All Bird Photographers

If you have a bird photo that you would like to share in this newsletter, please send it to us at the following email: mr.leakey@gmail.com.

Please record the species of bird and location of the shot. Unless you prefer to be anonymous, include your first and last name so we can give you credit.

You just might find your photo published in a Lagoon Flyer someday!
**BVAS QUICK CALENDAR**  
*Please check before attending.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri. May 1</td>
<td>Nature Guides Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. May 2</td>
<td>Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. May 4</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. May 7</td>
<td>Birding Leo Carrillo</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. May 11</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. May 13</td>
<td>El Corazon Garrison Creek</td>
<td>7:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>Fri. May 15</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat. May 16</td>
<td>San Dieguito River Park</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. May 18</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Wed. May 20</td>
<td>Movie, <em>The Birds</em></td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Mon. May 25</td>
<td>Garden Crew</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. May 30</td>
<td>Coastal 101 Birding</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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For Steve Brad’s two monthly walks, dates and times will vary. If interested, send Steve an email: stevanbrad@gmail.com.

The Preschool Storytime and Joey and Johnny’s Clubhouse were cancelled at the end of March. If these programs resume in May, we will send an email.

Please note: Endangered Species Day, which was scheduled for May 16, has been postponed until further notice.

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**Buena Vista Audubon**  
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
2202 S. Coast Highway  
Oceanside, CA 92054  
760-439-BIRD = (760-439-2473)  
email: bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net  
website: www.bvaudubon.org

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

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Read about the CA Quail on page 2.