The First People—
Medicinal Plants of Southern California Tribes

The Payomkawichum creation story tells us that among The First People were plants, trees, and animals. Their natural medicines derived from native plants are as healing and as powerful today as Tamaayowut (Mother Earth) intended. From natural bug repellents to skin treatments, mood enhancers, and pain relievers, learn more about The First People and medicinal native plants by attending our conversation at our February Speaker Series.

Ami Admire is Payomkawish Waa$ngay, Payomkawichum from the Rincon Indian Reservation. She has been teaching introductory language and culture on the reservations for more than 20 years, specializing in plant medicines. Relatedly, she is a recipient of the 2019 National Indian Health Board Award for making a positive impact in her community.

Due to the uncertainty of the COVID status at the time of this writing, Ami’s lecture will take place on Zoom. Please see the box at the top to join the conversation.

All photos by Ami Admire.
Smile for the Camera!

The Northern Shoveler

As a medium-sized duck, the Northern Shoveler seems just too small for its preposterously large, flat, broad-tipped bill. A paint pallet on webbed feet, the male’s breeding plumage (September through May) borders on gaudy, with his bright white chest, rusty sides, and green head. Note especially the gleaming white chest. Only one other non-diving (also called “dabbling”) duck—the Northern Pintail—has a white chest, making IDing the shoveler even easier. But really, that bill is all you need to see, no matter the plumage stage, sex, or age of the bird.

That wacky bill has given rise to a number of folk names for the Northern Shoveler—Spoony and Spoonbill are obvious choices (although the U.S. actually has the legitimate Roseate Spoonbill). A special feature of the bill can be seen if you look closely—a “grin patch.” A straight lower bill and an arched upper bill create a gap near the head (see photo, right) that looks, if you have a vivid imagination, as if the bird were grinning. (It’s not.) That feature underlies other nicknames: Hollywood (“Smile for the camera!”), Smiling Mallard, and Grinner.

Basically an aquatic vacuum cleaner, the Northern Shoveler busily forages with its neck extended and its bill and often much of its head submerged for extended periods. Its uniquely shaped bill has more than 100 comb-like projections called “lamellae” along the edges. A shoveler takes water into its bill and the lamellae act like a colander as the water flows out, pulling out seeds and small nektonic (“swimming”) invertebrates such as insects and their larvae, mollusks, and crustaceans from the water. Sometimes large groups of shovelers swim in circles to stir up food.

Northern Shovelers winter widely in San Diego County’s coastal wetlands and on its inland lakes. Here, they prefer large, shallow, fresh- and saltwater lakes, wetlands, and sewage treatment settling ponds. (Eewwww!) Their special diet, in turn, explains their preference for shallow, muddy, even stagnant wetlands with plenty of bottom ooze, which provides a bounty of free-swimming invertebrates.

Northern Shovelers begin appearing in San Diego County in mid-August, and their numbers increase through December. Spring departure for more northern breeding grounds begins in March. From May to July shovelers become scarce in San Diego County, although here in North County, a smattering of summering birds may appear at Whelan Lake or Buena Vista Lagoon.

To read more about the Northern Shoveler, go to www.bvaudubon.org.
RANCHO CARRILLO TRAIL (Carlsbad)
Friday, Feb 4 — 7:30 a.m.
We will remain along the Rancho Carrillo Trail going west to the bridge and then returning.
Location: Park along the trailhead near 2955 Via Conquistador.
Leaders: Eve Martin, Kathy Aldern, and Jane Mygatt (jane.mygatt@gmail.com)

WHELAN LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY
(Oceanside)
Saturday, Feb 5 — 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 John for directions.
Leaders: John Haddock (760-941-7824) and Denise Riddle (driddle1855@att.net)

EL CORAZON GARRISON CREEK
(Oceanside)
Wednesday, Feb 9 — 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 BIRD OUTINGS
(DATES AND TIMES WILL VARY)
Join Steve for these surprise-location offerings. When and where we go is based on recent reports and Steve’s personal surveying. Starting times and days 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 (Del Mar)
Saturday, Feb 19 — 8:30 a.m.
FYI: The location alternates every month between Lower Crest Canyon and San Andres Drive.
Directions for 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 (Oceanside)
2202 S Coast Highway
Saturday, Feb 26 — 9:00 a.m.
We start along the Buena Vista Lagoon, visit Maxton Brown Park, travel to the ocean and weir, and return to the Nature Center along Coast Hwy.
Location: Buena Vista Nature Center, 2202 S. Coast Hwy., Oceanside. Meet in the parking lot.
Leader: Tom Troy (760-420-7328)

Hummingbirds have very tiny feet and can not hop or walk, though they can scoot sideways while perched.
Conservation Corner

Los Angeles County Planning Commission Vote

The Los Angeles County Planning Commission approved a ground-breaking Safety Element Update and Land Use Element amendment in December that set a model for addressing fire risk and climate change throughout the state. The update prohibits new subdivisions in very-high-risk fire zones unless entirely surrounded by existing built development or connected to public infrastructure or major highways that could safely accommodate evacuations. The policy is balanced—protecting wild lands, reducing tax-payer-funded fire-fighting costs, and allowing ample potential housing in non-flood, non-seismic, and non-fire-hazard locations.

In recent years, Buena Vista Audubon Society members and other San Diego residents have grown increasingly concerned about the expansion of massive new developments in high-fire-risk areas of San Diego County. Therefore, we joined a number of southern California conservation organizations as signatories on a letter of support for the Los Angeles Safety Element Update, which was drafted by Dan Silver of the Endangered Habitats League. After listening to speakers for and against this item at the hearing, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 for the update. Final approval will still be required by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and we hope that will be forthcoming. We also hope that enlightened public officials in San Diego County will follow this example of prudent planning for public safety and protection of the environment.

Oceanside General Plan

City staff and consultants continue to work on the Oceanside General Plan update, South Morro Hills Community Plan, and Smart and Sustainable Corridors Plan. Some drafts are already available. You can learn more about them and ways to participate by accessing the Internet site onwardoceanside.com. We will stay informed and recommend that members do that as well to ensure that the final plans contain adequate environmental protections.

Christmas Bird Count Preliminary Results

Many thanks to the 81 participants in the 2021 Oceanside CBC on December 26, 2001. The preliminary estimate is 179 species, a bit under what we have had in the past few years. Several areas were not counted due to offshore weather conditions, but we were able to get on Camp Pendleton once again. We had a nice break from the rainy weather and enjoyed mostly sunny skies.

Notable species include Greater White-fronted Goose, Common Murre, Iceland Gull, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Red-naped Sapsucker, Plumbeous Vireo, Cactus Wren, Purple Finch, Grasshopper Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Hermit Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, Summer Tanager, and Western Tanager.

(Continued on page 5)
A Man with a Mission

For this person, members are surely the mission.

He’s that guy—the person who connects you to Buena Vista Audubon. Whether putting the Newsletter in your mailbox or in-box, taking your RSVP to attend events and linking you to programs, or sending out important messages, he’s the one.

If our communication seems more efficient, more organized, and more personal, it’s because it is.

Thank you, Bob Crowell!

(CBC— continued from page 4)

Buena Vista Audubon hosted a compilation/lunch at the Nature Center and we were able to enjoy Annette’s famous chili. A special thanks for those who made that happen, Joan and Bo Bockman, Pat Brown, Annette Schneider, and Natalie Shapiro. Thanks everyone!

All photos taken by Patrick Shipley.

BVAS CONTACTS, BOARD,* AND CHAIRS

Center: 760-439-2473  bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
Executive Director:     Natalie Shapiro   406-241-2153
Center Manager:        Annette Schneider  760-716-7866
Membership:            Bob Crowell        760-207-3884
Volunteers:            Rocco Valluzzi     volunteerbvaududon@gmail.com
President:             Curt Busk*
Vice-president:        Jane Mygatt*
Secretary:             Bruce Montgomery*
Treasurer:             Margie Ellsworth*
Conservation Chair:    Joan Herskowitz*
Public Relations:      OPEN
Native Garden:         Joan Bockman*
Program Chair:         Joni Ciarletta*
Director:              Tina Mitchell*
Director:              Tammah Watts*
Director:              J.R. Kinander*
Director:              Sally Bickerton*
Director:              Florence Chung*
Birdhouse Auction:     Kelly Deveney*
Facilities:            Danny DiMento*
Gift Shop:             Denise Riddle
Library:              OPEN
Webmaster:             J.J. Springer, Natalie Shapiro
Newsletter:           Bruce* & Patty* Montgomery

KIDS’ CORNER AT THE NATURE CENTER

Sonya and Phoebe’s Clubhouse

Sunday, February 13 from 10:00-noon.

Let Sonya and Phoebe teach you how to make wooden mushrooms!

Preschool Nature Storytime

Monday, February 28 from 10:00-10:45.

What’s buzzing around the Nature Center? BEES! Preschoolers and their families are invited to join us for stories, songs, and activities all about bees and how important they are to our environment. Weather permitting, we will take a walk around the lagoon area to look for bees. Bring your mask and a towel to sit on outside. Questions? Call Sally, 760-525-2351
BVAS QUICK CALENDAR

Fri. Feb. 4  Rancho Carrillo Trail  7:30 a.m.
Fri. Feb. 4  Nature Guide Meeting  10:00 a.m.
Sat. Feb. 5  Whelan Lake Bird Sanct.  8:00 a.m.
Mon. Feb. 7  Garden Crew  9:00 a.m.
Wed. Feb. 9  El Corazon Garrison Creek  7:30 a.m.
Sun. Feb. 13  Phoebe & Sonya’s Clubhouse  10:00 a.m.
Mon. Feb. 14  Garden Crew  9:00 a.m.
Wed. Feb. 16  Program on Zoom: Medicinal Plants of S. CA Tribes with Ami Admire  7:00 p.m.

For Steve Brad's Twice-Monthly Bird Outings, join his notification list by emailing stevanbrad@gmail.com.

Buena Vista Audubon Society
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

Male Northern Shovelers
Photo by Chris Wood. See page 2.

Nature Center Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and occasional Sundays - call first.
(Masks are still required. Please visit responsibly.)