

Summer 2015

# Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Marsh Mailing is also available in full color at [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com)

## The Smallest of Creatures Carries Sun in Its Eyes

Suzan Hubert, President

In this case it's eight eyes. If I say spider, what's your first thought? "EEEW!" for many, and "Yea!" to everyone who didn't think "eeew" or "ugh" or "yuck". Where did spiders get this bad rep? My guess is the movies, and I recall a particularly scary Nancy Drew tale, but never mind. The real story about spiders is that they are very helpful creatures, just trying to live like everything else. They are not cuddly, pettable animals and I don't want them crawling on me, but I respect their right to live long, productive lives eating



Wolf Spider

flies and mosquitoes. I let one live in my house way up high. He/she catches every fly and moth that slips in the house; all the others get scooped up and put back outside. It is odd that spiders invoke such fear. It's true all spiders bite and inject venom into their prey, but it's not usually harmful to people, so my purpose here is to put a new 'spin' on spiders. First off, spiders are not insects—they are arachnids; spiders have two body parts and eight legs, while for insects it's three and six, respectively. Most spiders also have eight eyes. Spiders can't move their eyes, so they have two that look up, two looking down, two straight ahead and one for each side.

We have several interesting spider species on the Preserve and if we have them, there is a good chance *you* have them, too. **Wolf spiders** are a personal fav of mine because they walk on water; you can observe them walking on the Marsh water. They are also great Moms; they carry the spiderlings on their backs until they are old enough to make a life of their own. That has a familiar ring to it—hmmm.

**Mouse spiders**, on the Preserve, can be found under tree bark or in shrubs. In your house they will live in corners of walls and ceilings. This is a nocturnal hunting spider. It doesn't spin a web; instead it uses its silk for safety lines, egg sacs and little silken daytime retreats. It is basically a free pest-control system inside a house, as it will eat other spiders and any insect.

The Preserve's most dramatic spider is the **Orb Weaver**. These fellows spin the beautiful, and often

photographed, round webs. The spider is fairly large: adult females are 8-20mm and adult males are 4-15mm. They have striped legs in various colors; white/orange, black/brown or red/yellow. They build webs on buildings near outdoor lights. On the Preserve you can find their webs in the willows area. An Orb Weaver eats its web and builds a new one daily. The webs are especially beautiful in the morning when the sun makes the dew drops on the webs sparkle. Males have much longer legs than the females. Both are full-grown by the late summer and fall. I read that their webs have 27 radii and 63 spiral threads, and I plan to check that out this fall.

A few years back I had an Orb Weaver living on my front porch. Every morning his web bobbed in the breeze, so I called him Bob. I didn't have a single moth, mosquito or any other type of flying insect that year. Sadly, Bob passed before winter and I miss him. Actually, Bob was a female. I learned to how to distinguish the sex of spiders when I illustrated a Master's Thesis on spider genetics in college. Perhaps that's when I learned to respect their right to live. What we don't have on the Preserve or anywhere in Southern California is the **Brown Recluse spider**. I have heard all the scary stories about these critters but have it on excellent authority that this is not a habitat for them.

Next time you see a spider, think about the value of your life. They deserve a fair chance at living—untainted by scary movies. It's your house, your rules, but having a spider living in it means you won't have flies wandering around for long this summer. At the very least, scoop them up in a paper cup and take them outside to freedom and let them live their lives; just don't try to pet them.

Come visit the Preserve and observe some of our interesting spiders, and have a happy, fly-free summer!



Mouse Spider



# "This Stinks!"

David K. Faulkner

Insect common names are usually descriptive, but can sometimes be a bit misleading. When someone sees a large, slow-moving beetle and calls it a "stinkbug," there is little doubt as to what is being identified. That is, a large black beetle that elevates its posterior when disturbed and releases a distinctive



Photo courtesy of Kim Moore

smelling liquid. Also known as a clown or acrobat beetle, the correct name is actually darkling ground beetle. Members of the genus *Eleodes* (Family: Tenebrionidae) are ½ to 1 ½ inches long, smooth black beetles that are full time residents in the Marsh.

Unlike members of other beetle Families, the *Eleodes* hardened forewings (elytra) are not used for protection of the flight wings, but are fused and taper over the end of the abdomen, often terminating in what resembles a car's tailpipe. The actual hindwings are reduced or vestigial, creating a cavity between the elytra and the abdomen. Because many of these beetles inhabit arid environments, water is often a limiting resource. Darkling ground beetles conserve water by exhaling into the cavity where water vapor

*Marsh Mailing* is a quarterly newsletter designed to provide information about activities and upcoming events at or relating to the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Contributions are welcome and may be e-mailed to Editorial Advisor, Bill Arrowsmith, [FrاندBill@att.net](mailto:FrاندBill@att.net) or Editor, Diane Gonsalves at [gonwild2@yahoo.com](mailto:gonwild2@yahoo.com) or may be dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.

condenses on the enclosed surface and can then be reabsorbed.

Eggs are laid in the spring in soil or rotting wood, and the light brown grubs, sometimes called false wireworms, hatch within a few weeks and begin to consume seeds and roots in the immediate surroundings. After a larval stage requiring a few years, the mature grub pupates and an adult beetle eventually emerges. Most mortality by predators and parasites occurs during the immature stages.



Photo courtesy of Kim Moore

Adult beetles are present year round, preferring cool or overcast conditions for their primarily nocturnal activities. They feed on a variety of plant material or detritus and can be observed feeding on the trash piles that accumulate around ant nests. During warm weather, the beetles are hidden in available rodent burrows or leaf litter, under stones or bark, and inside rotting logs.

Darkling ground beetles have a limited number of predators that feed on the adults, usually restricted to rodents that can crush the beetle's exoskeleton, access the soft interior, and tolerate the distasteful fluids. Some predators have learned to avoid the higher concentrations of the quinone chemical by consuming the beetles from the head end first and abandoning the meal before they reach the terminal end.

Another hazard for the insects is getting tangled in spider webs where the arachnid traps the beetle, but cannot find a soft spot to inject venom and immobilize the prey. Beetles may struggle for weeks before finally breaking free. In spite of these dangers, darkling ground beetles are known to live as adults for as long as 17 years.

*The Friends of Madrona Marsh and Celestron*

*Present a*

# *Total Lunar Eclipse*

*Viewing and Party*

*Sunday, September 27, 2015*

*6 p.m. until 10 p.m.*

*Madrona Marsh Nature Center  
and Parking lot*

*3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance 90503*

*You are invited to join us for an evening of starry-eyed telescope moon-gazing, an astral power point presentation, starlit docent-led Preserve tours, gift baskets and more. We will have wine, cheese, hors d'oeuvres, and desserts.*

*\$25 per person*

*\$15 for children under twelve, and*

*\$20 per person for groups of ten or more*

*This fundraising event will help sustain and protect the Madrona Marsh Nature Center and Preserve, and all our vital programs sponsored by the Friends of Madrona Marsh and Celestron.*

*Tickets available soon at Madrona Marsh Nature Center, Wild Birds Unlimited, Rolling Hills Plaza, or [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com) PayPal*

*See website for more details*

*Parking is very limited, carpooling is recommended.*

*Only 150 tickets will be available*

# The Red Admiral

*Stephen (Vince) Lloyd*

A few years ago this author was on a birding field trip when one of my companions excitedly called out, "There's a Red Admiral!" Not having heard of such a bird, I wondered if it was some exotic Asian rarity and was chagrined when I was told that it was a butterfly. Not all beautiful flying things are birds, I discovered. And a striking insect it is, with its dark wings decorated with a red semicircle, quite unlike any other butterfly in North



America. Nor is it confined to North America, but is found all over the temperate Northern Hemisphere, including Asia, Europe, North Africa, and even Hawaii.

A closely related species occurs in New Zealand, of all places. In North America it breeds from southern Canada to Guatemala. In the northern part of its range it is migratory, but occurs all year long in South Texas and Mexico. In some areas it hibernates. Occasionally it can be seen flying about on warmer days in the middle of winter.

The Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta*, belongs to the brush-footed butterfly family, Nymphalidae, which includes large, colorful butterflies like the Monarch and the Swallowtails. Its generic name, *Vanessa*, was assigned by Linnaeus' student Fabricius, who pioneered the modern classification of insects. No one seems to know why he chose the name *Vanessa*. I like to think it was the name of a childhood sweetheart.

The genus *Vanessa* also includes the three North American Ladies: the Painted Lady, the American Lady, and the West Coast Lady, who are all confusingly similar. Compared with them, the Red Admiral is dashingly different.

The species name, *atalanta*, was assigned by Linnaeus and refers to a famous young woman from Greek mythology who was a runner so quick that no man could catch her. No doubt Linnaeus was struck by the butterfly's speed, darting about on a warm spring day. As for the English name, that is something of a mystery, as the butterfly doesn't seem to be connected with naval officers. One dictionary suggests it is a corruption of Latin *admirabilis*, that is, it's an admirable butterfly, not an admiral!

The Red Admiral is found in a variety of habitats, usually near water, such as woods and marshes, where it likes to feed on tree sap and fruit, although it has been known to feed on bird droppings! Only as a last resort will it eat nectar.

The caterpillar is usually dark with black bottle-brush-like spines and yellow marks on the sides. It feeds on nettle (*Urtica*), including stinging nettle. The young caterpillar likes to hide in the folds of leaves; older caterpillars make a bed of leaves fastened with silk. In the northern parts of its range, there are two broods per year. The summer adults are larger and brighter than the winter butterflies.

The Red Admiral and the Ladies have their own website! Hosted by Iowa State University, find it at [vanessa.ent.iastate.edu](http://vanessa.ent.iastate.edu). If you're lucky enough to see a Red Admiral at Madrona Marsh or elsewhere, you can help us learn about its migrations by reporting your sighting. And be sure to point it out to any nearby bird watchers!

*(Image from Wikimedia Commons: "AD2009Aug01 Vanessa atalanta 01" by Ernie - Own work. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AD2009Aug01\\_Vanessa\\_atalanta\\_01.jpg#/media/File:AD2009Aug01\\_Vanessa\\_atalanta\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AD2009Aug01_Vanessa_atalanta_01.jpg#/media/File:AD2009Aug01_Vanessa_atalanta_01.jpg))*

# Ants Are Amazing . . .

**Tracy Drake,**

*Naturalist and Preserve Manager*

I've been waiting to see this for years—I have seen parts of this event, but never the whole thing, that is till Saturday, June 20, at about 11:30 am. I finally witnessed the seasonal time when the ants embark on their "nuptial" flight.

I was with Bill Foss, writer for the *Easy Reader*, when we chanced upon a California Harvester Ant emergence. As we neared the nest located on the central path just past the maps, we could see a swarm of both running and flying insects. I did not imagine, at first, that they were ants! But as we neared the nest, hundreds were swarming—winged ants by the dozens were climbing out of the nest, climbing on each other to mate, climbing on little twigs and leaves—perching while doing so, and vibrating their wings. Within a short time they were airborne—flying with great speed in all directions. I was amazed to watch this phenomenon, that we soon found was occurring Preserve-wide and which was over within an hour.

Curious about this event, I did a little research and this is what I learned about this Genus of ants—about our specific species, California Harvester Ant, *Pogonomyrmex anzensis*, though relatively little is known:

This mating ritual happens on roughly the same day across the country, with some regions following a day or two afterwards.

## Marriott Hotel Introduces Madrona Burger

The South Bay Marriot has a new addition to the menu of its Garden Court Restaurant:

The Madrona Burger!

For every one they sell, they will contribute \$1.00 to the Friends of Madrona Marsh.

The burger is named after the Madrona Marsh, not the street, and the menu includes that clarification.

Stop by the Marriott and enjoy a Madrona Burger while supporting the Marsh at the same time.

The menu offers this description:

*'Madrona Burger, the classic on a butter toasted sesame bun, fresh ground angus beef, cheddar cheese, crisp bacon \$15*

*"We are proudly supporting our community partnership with Madrona Marsh Preserve & Nature Center, located in Torrance with a \$1.00 donation with every Madrona Burger sold."*

The Friends of Madrona Marsh are very grateful to the South Bay Marriot for their support over the years.

The queens emerge first, then a while later the males emerge. In a frenzy, mating begins both on the ground and in flight.

For the ants it is the first step in founding a new colony. Female queen ants can sense temperature, humidity and day length. On Saturday at Madrona, the heat and the humidity were both high—about 60 percent humidity—and the temperature was in the mid-eighties.

Warm weather enables ants to fly and mate more easily. Humidity can make the soil softer for mated queens to dig a nest. Scientists still don't fully understand how flights are synchronized between nests.

Flights are synchronized between nests, because the flying ants need to maximize their chances of meeting ants from other colonies to mate with.

Queens mate with males during flight, after which the female will lose her wings and attempt to start her own colony by burrowing into the soil. Males die shortly after mating but queens can live for up to 15 years.

The queens, once they have gone down to burrow, will not eat for six to eight weeks. They will live off the vestige of their wings for energy while they raise their first larvae.

Needless to say I guess, it was amazing to witness this occurrence—ants are amazing . . .

## Artists Corner

View the works of local artists portraying the beauty of the Madrona Marsh. Artists and photographers inspired by the beauty of the Madrona Marsh are regularly on display at the Nature Center.

Through July 10 - "**Pieces of the Marsh**," an Exhibit of Various Mediums by the **Pacific Arts Group**.

July 14 through August 21 - "**Flowers, Bugs and Birds**," A Photography Exhibit by **Paul Blieden**. Artist Reception, Friday, July 31, 6:30 pm.

August 25 through September 18 - "**Billy the Bull Frog**" Illustrations of newly published book by writer **Beth Shibata** and illustrator **Lisa Chakrabarti**. Artist Reception, Friday, September 4, 6:30 pm.

September 22 through October 23-Art Exhibit by **Mark Christiansen and Lala Ragimov**. Artist Reception, Friday, October 2, 6:30 p.m.

## Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center\*

### Schedule of Events for July through October 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 am-Adult Weeders	2 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30Prop.Soc.	3 <b>CLOSED</b>	4 <b>CLOSED</b>
5 <b>CLOSED</b>	6 <b>CLOSED</b>	7 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	8 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30pm-FOMM Mtg	9 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society 1pm-Sr. Nature- alists 35+ 6:30 "Butterfly... Dr. Vadheim	10 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** Art Exhibit Ends***	11 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service ALL DAY-Butterfly Count 10 am-12 n- "Butterfly Rancher"-Dr. Vadheim
12	13 <b>CLOSED</b>	14 9 am-Jr. Naturalists 10 am-Adult Weeders Blieden Ex. Begins***	15 9 am-Jr. Naturalists 10 am-Adult Weeders	16 9 am-Jr. Naturalists 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	17 9 am-Jr. Naturalists 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	18 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
19	20 <b>CLOSED</b>	21 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 9am-Insects...Camp 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	22 9 am-Insects...Camp 10 am-Adult Weeders	23 9 am- Insects...Camp 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	24 9 am- Insects...Camp 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	25 8:30 am-Bird Walk/Dinuk & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk 7:30 pm-Preserve Night Life
26 10 am. Nature Walk	27 <b>CLOSED</b>	28 10 am-Adult Weeders	29 10 am-Adult Weeders	30 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	31 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** Blieden Recept.***	

**JULY**

\*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. \*\*Reservations are required for Friday Fun.

\*\*\*See Artists Corner, page 5. For latest event information, see our newly upgraded website, [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-12 n- "Water Feature,"-Dr. Vadheim
2	3 <b>CLOSED</b>	4 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 9 am-12n-Photog for Kids (fee) camera incl. 10 am-Adult Weeders	5 9 am-12n-Photog for Kids (fee) camera incl. 10 am-Adult Weeders	6 9am-Kids Photog 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc. 1pm-Nature 35+ 6:30-"Water..." Dr.Vadheim	7 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	8 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-12n Watercolors in Nature, fee 10-12-Calif.Condor
9	10 <b>CLOSED</b>	11 10 am-Adult Weeders	12 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	13 1pm-Sr. Naturalists 35+ 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	14 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	15 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 7:30pm-Night Hike-fee
16 2-4pm- Sunday Science- Butterflies. fee	17 <b>CLOSED</b>	18 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	19 10 am-Adult Weeders	20 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	21 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** Blieden Exhibit. Ends	22 8:30 am-Bird Walk/Dinuk & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk 8pm-Star Party
23 10 am. Nature Walk	24 <b>CLOSED</b>	25 10 am-Adult Weeders Shibata/Chakrabarti Exhibit Begins	26 10 am-Adult Weeders	27 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	28 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	29 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service
30	31 <b>CLOSED</b>					

**AUGUST**

**Nature Center & Gift Shop**

**(310)782-3989**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		8:30 am-Tour <u>1</u> d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>2</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	10 am-Tyke <u>3</u> Hike-donation 10:30-Prop. Society.	10 am--12 n- <u>4</u> Friday Fun-** Shibata/ Chakrabarti Reception	<u>5</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>8</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>9</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>10</u> 10:30 a..m.- Prop.Society 1pm-Sr.Natur- alists- 35+	<u>11</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>12</u> 8:45am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>13</u> 10am-12n- Grandparents Day Stroll	<u>14</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>15</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>16</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>17</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>18</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun-** Shibata/ Chakrabarti Exhibit Ends	<u>19</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 7:30pm-Star Party
<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>22</u> 10am-Home Schoo Nature Class 10 am-Adult Weeders Christiansen/Ragimov Exhibit Begins	<u>23</u> 10am-HomeSchool Nature Class 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>24</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>25</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>26</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk/Dinuk 8:45 am-Hab.Restor. 10 am-Nature Walk
<u>27</u> 10 am- Nature Walk	<u>28</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>29</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>30</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders			

**SEPTEMBER**

*\*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. \*\*Reservations are required for Friday Fun. \*\*\*See Artists Corner, page 5. For latest event information, see our newly updated website, [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com).*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				10 am-Tyke <u>1</u> Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc.	10 am--12 n- <u>2</u> Friday Fun** 6:30- Christiansen/ Ragimov	<u>3</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>6</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>7</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>8</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Soc. 1pm-Sr.Natur- alist 35+	<u>9</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>10</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am-Tortoises,Turtles
<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>13</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>14</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>15</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>16</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>17</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am-Nature Water- colors-fee
<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>20</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>21</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>22</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>23</u> 10 am-- -Friday Fun** Christiansen/ Ragimov Exhibit Ends 6:30-Night Hike	<u>24</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk/Dinuk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student Service 10am-Make a Diff. Day 10 am.Nature Walk
<u>25</u> 10am- Nature Walk 2pm-Sun. Sci.-Reptiles fee	<u>26</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>27</u> 10am-Home School Nature Class 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>28</u> 10am-Home School Nature Class 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>29</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>30</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>31</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service

**OCTOBER**

# Madrona Marsh Preserve Species List

June 2015

## Birds

Canada Goose	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Wilson's Warbler
Mallard	Black Phoebe	California Towhee
Pied-billed Grebe	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Song Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Cassin's Kingbird	Lincoln's Sparrow
Great Egret	Western Kingbird	Dark-eyed Junco
Snowy Egret	American Crow	Black-headed Grosbeak
Green Heron	Common Raven	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-crowned Night Heron	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Great-tailed Grackle
Cooper's Hawk	Tree Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Barn Swallow	Hooded Oriole
Common Gallinule	Cliff Swallow	House Finch
Killdeer	Bushtit	Lesser Goldfinch
Western Gull	Marsh Wren	American Goldfinch
Rock Pigeon	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	European Goldfinch
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Western Bluebird	House Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Swainson's Thrush	Northern Red Bishop
White-throated Swift	Northern Mockingbird	Scaly-breasted Munia
Anna's Hummingbird	European Starling	
Allen's Hummingbird	<i>Phainopepla</i>	Bold = bred this season
Downy Woodpecker	Orange-crowned Warbler	
Peregrine Falcon	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Italics = uncommon visitor/rare</i>
Mitred Parakeet	Yellow Warbler	
Western Wood-Pewee	Yellow-rumped Warbler	

## Butterflies

Monarch	Western Swallowtail	Acmon Blue
Gulf Fritillary	Giant Swallowtail	Umbler Skipper
Mourning Cloak	Dainty Sulfur	Fiery Skipper
Painted Lady	Cabbage White	Sandhill Skipper
American Lady	Orange Sulfur	Funereal Duskywing
West Coast Lady	Cloudless Sulfur	Common Checkered-Skipper
Buckeye	Sara Orange-Tip	
<i>Pale Swallowtail</i>	Marine Blue	<i>Italics = uncommon/rare</i>

## Dragonflies

Common Green Darner	Flame Skimmer	Red Saddlebags
Blue-Eyed Darner	Wandering Glider	Pacific Forktail
Variegated Meadowhawk	Spot-winged Glider	

# Birds of the Season - Hooded and Bullock's Orioles

(*Icterus cucullatus* & *icterus bullockii*)

*Bob Shanman*

I was not quite sure how to start this article. Is it late March, and we're out birding, when suddenly this orange, black and white flash goes by ("WHAT was that?!" we exclaim)? Then we realize it was the first Bullock's Oriole of the season, a bright male with that big white patch in his black wings. Or do I start with the customer from the east coast coming into the store in mid-April stating that we have no pretty birds here?



*Male Bullocks Oriole*

At that point, I whip out a very shop-worn copy of the "Birds of the Los Angeles Region" and show him one of the most gorgeous birds in North America on the tattered cover—the Hooded Oriole. We love our special spring/summer visitors whose stay is all too short!

Orioles begin arriving, normally, about mid-March, with the Hooded usually being first. It's always exciting, especially when a male perches in the open and everyone can get a good look. By early April, the big push is on, with both species coming to oriole feeders and dishes of grape jelly as they migrate through the South Bay. Many birds of both species stay and nest; others will move north. Review of e-Bird data (ebird.org) shows that the Hooded Oriole only moves as far north as the Sacramento region. The Bullock's is reported as far north as central British Columbia, and as far east as the east coast (scattered sightings). It is regularly seen in the Rockies and eastern slopes, headed onto the Great Plains. By about mid-July, both species have fledged their young and begin heading south for the winter. Most Hooded

Orioles are gone from the South Bay by the end of August. Most of the Bullock's Orioles are also gone, but a look at the e-Bird data shows that Bullock's Orioles overwinter in our area regularly. They are almost always found on the Palos Verdes Christmas Bird Count.



*Male Hooded Oriole*

Seven species of orioles occur in the United States: Hooded, Bullock's, Scott's (all in California); Baltimore, Orchard, Altira and Audubon's (the latter two in southern Texas). At one point, the Bullock's and Baltimore were classified together as the "Northern" Oriole, as they do hybridize where their ranges overlap. It was that way just long enough for some field guides to get reprinted with that name before they were split back to separate species! All the male orioles are striking in their colors, while the females are more subdued for camouflage.

The two local species are easily identified. The Hooded has a bright orange crown that wraps down around a black patch on the chin and upper chest (like a colorful ski hood). The wings are black, with one bold white wingbar, and white edges on the outer wing feathers. The young male will be colored more like mom, but will show the large black chest/chin patch and the outline of the hood. The white in its wings is not so bold. The female is an olive yellow color, with two small wingbars on black wings, and shows white edges to most of the wing feathers.

The male Bullock's Oriole has a black crown, and an almost neon orange patch over the eye, with a "black mask" line through the eye. He has a small black patch under the chin, and the rest of the underparts are bright orange. The big identifying mark is the bold white patch in his wing, visible when he is perched or flying. The immature male shows the outlines of the head markings of dad and is orange

*Orioles" continued on page 10*

“Orioles..” Continued from page 9

down to his tummy, with grey underparts and some orange in the outer tail feathers. The belly and vent areas are more grey, like mom. She has some orange in the head and throat, but is all grey underneath. She has strong white feather edgings, but lacks the male’s bold wing patch.

Both species weave neat, cuplike, suspended nests. The work is done mainly by the female, taking up to 6 days (Hooded) to as long as 15 days (Bullock’s). In the spring and early summer, always remember to look up in palm, banana, rubber, and eucalyptus trees for these hanging nests. They are usually high, so you likely won’t see the young, but can often see the parents bringing them those delicious insects to eat! Mom does most of the incubation. Clutch size can vary from 3-4 (Hooded) to up to 7 (Bullock’s). Little is known about the incubation period and time in nest till fledging.

Orioles are insect, nectar and fruit eaters. Both our local orioles eat a large variety of insects, mostly gleaning them from trees and bushes, sometimes flycatching, but rarely eating from the ground. The Bullock’s will eat bees, removing the stinger before swallowing the critter. Both nectar from a variety of nectar-producing flowers, and the Hooded is known to actually pierce the base of a flower to get at the nectar deep inside. Both are easily attracted to hummingbird or oriole feeders in the yard. The Bullock’s will plunge his beak into fruit, bill closed, and then open it against the pulp to get at the juice released by this action.

So as we head into July, keep your oriole and jelly feeders going. You might be graced with oriole families on the move as they start to move south. And once you have seen them in your yard, next spring can’t get here soon enough for you as the cycle starts all over---again! Happy Birding!-**B.S.**

## Gift Shop Seeks Volunteers

Have you visited the gift shop lately? Drop by, say hello. Browsers are always welcome.

You’ll find we have a varied assortment of science and nature related, fun, whimsical, elegant, unique, ‘ooh shiny’... local artist’s artwork, books and Tee-shirts, science kits, art supplies, crafts, desk toys, sun catchers... You get the idea. Just keep us in mind when you need to gift shop.

We thank you and appreciate your patronage, and gift shop sales help to sustain the Friends of Madrona Marsh projects and programs.

We’re still looking for volunteers for the gift shop on Tuesdays and Saturdays. If you have four hours you can share with us, once or twice a month, and would enjoy sharing duties with a dozen of the nicest ladies that you’ll rarely see, call me at 310-532-8493.

--**Bobbie Snyder**, Gift Shop Manager

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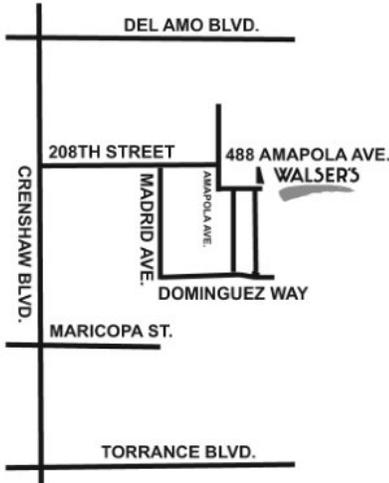
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# South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



**Southern California Grape**  
*Vitis girdiana*

Summer is special. The days are long, birds/insects are active and summer fruits ripen in local gardens and in the wilds. Among the most productive native summer fruits are the wild grapes.

Southern California wild grape (also known as Desert grape) is native to southwestern North America. It grows along streams and shady canyon bottoms, forming a natural ground cover and climbing into riparian trees like willows. You can see it wild on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and in the Santa Monica Mountains and Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve. It also grows on the fence surrounding the sump on the Preserve.

Another grape species, *Vitis californica*, is native to Northern California; the 'Roger's Red' cultivar is found along the east wall in the native plant garden. You've likely noticed its bright red leaves in the fall!

Both native grapes make wonderful garden habitat plants. They are dense vines, providing excellent hiding places for birds; some even nest among upper vines. Their tiny flowers attract many native insect pollinators. And who can resist a tasty ripe grape in summer or fall? Not the orioles, waxwings, mockingbirds and other fruit-eating birds.

Native grapes can be grown in most local gardens. They grow best in part-sun and need a little summer water. They do get big and sprawling if left to their own devices; most gardeners choose to prune and train them (like any other grape) during the winter dormant period.



Native grapes are a great way to hide an ugly fence or wall (they will need some support). They are wonderful vines to grow over arbors and pergolas; and they make good native ground covers.

The small purple grapes—similar to a Concord grape—are tasty out of hand or in jellies, syrups, wines and other grape recipes. Make grape wreaths out of fall prunings; and use the leaves in recipes calling for 'grape leaves.'

For more information on wild grapes see: <http://www.slideshare.net/cvadheim/gardening-sheet-vitis-girdiana> and <http://www.slideshare.net/cvadheim/vitis-girdiana-web-show>

Learn about local native plants at our "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" series on the first Saturday of each month.

Plant Information Sheets and Plant Lists are also available at the Nature Center.



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