

Winter 2017

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Marsh Mailing is also available in full color at www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com

Nature Never Sleeps

Suzan Hubert, President

If you have visited the Nature Center recently you have seen the renovations underway in the classroom and atrium. There is more to come—including a timeline mural, interactive exhibits, a solar cover over the atrium and one-way viewing windows in the classroom. This work is funded through a grant from California State Parks via Proposition 84 to the City of Torrance.

The Friends also recently accepted a grant from the Coastal Conservancy under the auspices of Proposition 1, a water quality improvement act from 2014. This grant funds a Vernal Pool Watershed Restoration Project. You will have the opportunity to see this project in action on the Preserve this spring around April or May. The purpose of the project is restoration of several of our vernal pools, along with the habitat for plants, birds and animals that rely on these unique seasonal pools. Experts believe our Preserve's nine vernal, or springtime, pools are among the last remaining vernal pools in Los Angeles County.

While I was in Oakland in November I met with our vernal pool project manager, Sam, at the Coastal Conservancy. The conservancy is very interested in seeing this project completed because these pools support a myriad of life that makes up the vernal ecosystem. These short-lived pools foster the development of native amphibians and several insect species. As it is now our pools don't fill properly but they would, even with our recent low rainfall levels, if the edges hadn't



An industrial crane lifts an 18,000 pound steel lattice into position above the atrium of the Nature Center. This lattice will support glass solar panels that will provide shade as well as electricity for our center.—Photo by Bill Arrowsmith

eroded. This project will carefully re-grade the edges of the pools to their original (before oil recovery operations) contours so that more water may be captured and retained. The Friends and Nature Center staff successfully restored one of our vernal pools recently using a slow and careful restoration technique, which will be used as a model for this project. It may take two to three wet seasons to evaluate, refine and re-grade the

***Annual Meeting
Friends of Madrona Marsh***

Sunday, January 29, 1 p.m.

See page 2 for details

“Nature ...” continued on page 5

Annual Meeting Friends of Madrona Marsh

*Sunday, January 29, 2017
Madrona Marsh Nature Center
3201 Plaza Del Amo, Torrance, CA 90503
Meeting starts at 1 p.m.*

- ***Welcome and Introductions - President Suzan Hubert***
- ***Election of 3 Board Members***
 Candidates: Sarah Noddings Connie Vadheim
 Bob Shanman (One open position)
- ***Surprise Honoree Introduction***
- ***FOMM Annual Report: President Hubert***
- ***Program: The Mallards of Madrona Marsh***
 Naturalists Jun Saito and Tracy Drake will present Jun's research about mallard families of Madrona from 2014-2016. Jun spent several years tracking each family from the day of discovery to the day when the youngest left the nest. Jun and Tracy will present data, tell stories, share photos and videos and, as a bonus, discuss other birds and mammal families that were observed during the study.
- ***Plans for 2017 and Closing Remarks – President Hubert***

** Light Refreshments Will Be Served **

CNPS Annual Native Plant Sale Moved to February!

The California Native Plant Society's annual native plant sale is usually held in October, but due to recent construction at the Nature Center, the 2016 sale had to be postponed—to February 2017. But that may be a real benefit to local gardeners, as recent rains have greatly improved growing conditions for new plants. And we may have more to come.

As usual, the South Coast Chapter of CNPS is welcoming members of the Friends of Madrona Marsh to their early sale, along with members of



California coastal poppy (*Escholzia californicus*)



Bright Green Dudleya (*Dudleya virens*) which CNPS uses as its logo.

CNPS and PVPLC. And remember, CNPS shares a generous percentage of its net profit with the Friends, so you'll be helping us as well as them.

The new dates are Friday, February 3, from 5 to 7 p.m. - for members of CNPS, FOMM, and PVPLC only; Saturday, February 4, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Main Sale for the general public.

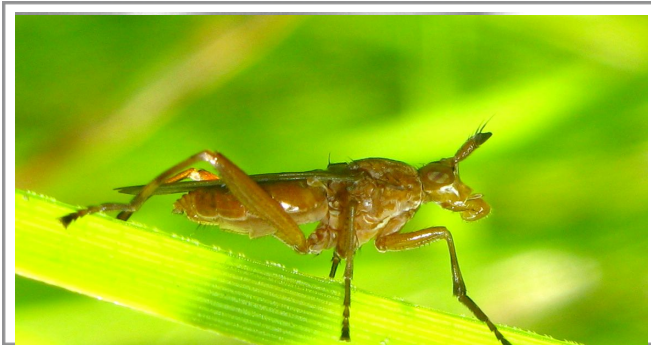
All Sales are at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, 3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance, 90503.

Madrona Marsh Placed on Scientific Map

by Emile Fiesler

Editor's Note: Readers of the Marsh Mailing may remember that in 2009 the Friends, at Manager Tracy Drake's request, commissioned a biodiversity study of the Madrona Marsh Preserve, to be conducted by two local experts in botany, biology and zoology; Emile Fiesler and Dan Cooper. That study, the first such study of a major scope, ended up being multi-year, and was the subject of presentations at our annual meeting programs in 2010 and 2011.

Our Madrona Marsh Preserve has been placed on the scientific map. During the 2009-2012 time-frame, a biodiversity study of our Preserve was conducted. The invertebrates part of this study, conducted by Emile Fiesler, revealed quite a few surprises, including a number of flightless species that have survived the ages and various land uses of the Preserve.



Marsh Fly (Sepedon (Sphegea) pacifica)

These surprises, as well as the methodology and overall results, warranted publication in the scientific literature.

We prepared and submitted a manuscript to *Biodiversity Data Journal*, a peer-reviewed publication published by Pensoft. After addressing feedback from the scientific reviewers and editors, the final version was published in April, 2016.

Our paper with the title: "Macro-invertebrate Biodiversity of a Coastal Prairie with Vernal Pool Habitat" can be accessed using this link: <http://bdj.pensoft.net/articles.php?id=6732>

The article can also be found by typing, for example, "Madrona biodiversity" in your favorite Internet search-engine, or by its unique Digital Object Identifier: doi: 10.3897/BDJ.4.e6732. *Biodiversity Data Journal* is an Open Access publication, which implies that anyone can access it on-line without cost.

The publication of our results attracted regional, national, and international attention. It was front-page news in the May 5, 2016 issue of the *Daily Breeze*; it has been reported on-line on *Science Daily*:<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/04/160428132250.htm> and on *Phys.org*:<http://phys.org/news/2016-04-flightless-survivors-incredible-invertebrate-diversity.html> and even in Portuguese: <http://www.wilder.pt/historias/descoberta-incrivel-biodiversidade-em-lagos-urbanos-de-los-angeles/>

The article contains the complete list of 689 taxa (species equivalent) that were recorded, together with methodologies and an analysis of the results, as well as a summary of other invertebrate biodiversity studies in our region and associated bibliography.



Yellow Scarab Hunter Wasp (Campsomeris pilipes) male

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, FrantBill@att.net or Editor, Diane Gonsalves at gonwild2@yahoo.com or may be dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.

Not a Creature was Stirring, Not Even The House Mouse

By Stephen Lloyd

Little seen, little loved, and less appreciated is the lot in life of the lowly house mouse. Yet as the most common small mammal on the Marsh, it has an essential role in the ecosystem. Apart from its generally being viewed as a pest, this little mouse seems out of place in a nature preserve because it is not a native animal—it came with the Europeans from the Old World. In an ideal world, one might prefer its place to be taken by native mice, but like human beings, house mice are here to stay. In any event, the hawks and snakes that prey on them don't care where the mice's ancestors came from, and depend upon them to feed their young.



House mice are rodents of the family Muridae, the Old World mice and rats. The Muridae are the largest family of mammals, with some 700 species. Yet only three are found in North America: the house mouse, the Norway rat, and the black rat. The scientific name of the house mouse is *Mus musculus*, "mus" being the Latin word for mouse. The similarity of the words "mus" and "mouse" is not coincidental: they share a common origin in the Proto-Indo-European language, the grandmother of European languages. "Mus" in Latin is pronounced like "moose", but no, the moose isn't a big mouse; "moose" is a native American word. "Musculus" simply means "little mouse", but it's also the origin of the word "muscle". In many Indo-European languages, the rodent-shaped bulge in the upper arm is called a "little mouse".

The house mouse, if you've lived such a sheltered life that you've never seen one, has a body length of 3 to 4 inches and a tail about equally long. It has a pointy snout, ample whiskers, and big naked ears. The upperparts are variable shades of brown and the underparts greyish. There are many native mice it could easily be confused with. Among the more common are the Deer mouse, which has bright white undersides, and the California vole, which has a smaller snout, beady eyes, small hair-covered ears, and a short tail. The Norway rat and black rat, of course, are much larger.

The house mouse originated in Asia. Genetic studies have identified India as the likely original home of *Mus musculus*. Before the beginning of recorded history, it moved onto farms and tied its fate with that of *Homo sapiens*. From India it spread westward to the Near East and Europe and eastward to Southeast Asia and China. In modern times, ships have carried it around the world. European settlers brought it to North America, but recently it has been found that some Southern California mice came here from China.

The sex life of the house mouse is worthy of a soap opera. Typically, the family unit consists of a male and two or three females, usually related females. The females, however, are not beyond the occasional fling. To read the textbook, one gathers that they reason to themselves that they will rear more healthy young if they have a variety of genes from different fathers. Sure. Whatever the motivation of the females, you might wonder what is it about the rather drab female that excites the males. It's the smell. Mice live in a technicolor world of odors. Pheromones announce when the female is in estrus and stimulate the male's hormones. Pheromones are detected by the vomeronasal organ, otherwise known as Jacobson's organ, which is in the bottom of the nasal cavity. Human beings lack this organ. From a mouse point of view we must seem half blind.

House mice have a flexible social structure. In open areas where food is sparse, they are territorial, the males defending a territory from other males. Where food is plentiful, as in buildings, the males form a hierarchical social structure and defend only a small territory; male-male aggression is reduced and females co-operate to raise the young.

The gestation period is about three weeks. The young, typically six to eight in number, are born naked and earless. Ears appear after four days and hair starts growing a couple of

“House Mouse...” continued on page 5.

“Nature...” continued from page 1

pools to ensure that we have the proper drainage patterns. The grant actually allows us up to five years to ensure the viability of the pools. While the grant is awarded to the Friends, the grant application was the fine work of Jill Mohler of the City using information provided by Manager Tracy Drake. Tracy attributes much of the success of this year’s application to the fact that it’s a joint effort of the City and the Friends, and to the great restoration that has already been performed by the Friends, especially the recent work done by Dan Portway and his crew.

We also have our Board Treasurer, Ellen Peterson, to thank as she is the one who manages the complexities of grant funds awarded to the Friends.

Donations of \$100 or More Summer-Winter 2016

Date	Donor	Donation
June	David Moody	\$100.00
June	Hermosa Garden Club	\$300.00
June	Juno & Ethel Uyematsu	\$100.00
June	Elaine Endres	\$105.00
July	F1 Key Foundation	\$500.00
August	Robert Ashley	\$150.00
September	James and Yoko Justiss	\$500.00
September	Kathleen Buchanan	\$100.00
September	Stephen West	\$100.00
October	Clark Mitchell	\$1,078.00
October	Mike Heard	\$100.00
November	James Whitman	\$100.00
November	Chudy Family Trust	\$3,000.00
December	Stettenheim Foundation	\$500.00
December	Regine Snitzer	\$100.00
December	Ellen & Chris Velline	\$1,000.00
December	Rebecca Moore	\$300.00
December	Peter & Pamela Major	\$100.00

What may we watch for on the Preserve during this project? At first we will see some earth moving equipment to create the improved berms. But most of the later work will be carefully done by Dan Portway and his team so as not to disturb the hibernating fairy shrimp living on the bottom of the pools, waiting to be revived by the spring rains.

If you bring a friend to the Preserve during this work you can extend your arm expansively and say knowingly, “vernal pool restoration is now underway”. Perhaps you might also want to elaborate on the pools’ benefits to wildlife. The restoration of these pools will pave the way for a return of animal life. Despite being dry most of the year, a well-functioning vernal pool teems with life: Pacific Tree Frogs, Spadefoot Toads and fairy shrimp. These small critters enjoy life and in doing so are also food for a variety of birds and small mammals. You will sound so cool as you present this information to your friends.

There is also a third project to watch for in the Nature Center: new reptile habitats. These habitats are funded by donors who have asked to remain anonymous, and by the Friends.

We believe all animals should live free; however, sometimes animals must be rescued because they have encountered problems living in the wild. Many of the animals you see in the Nature Center are these rescued critters. They are particular favorites with our children visitors, who are often fascinated to find another living creature—so different from themselves yet living a life.

Come and visit us, please excuse the mess, and watch our growth through the generous grants and donations from those who believe in the value and power of nature...which never sleeps.



“House Mouse...” continued from page 4

days later. The eyes open at two weeks and the young are weaned at three weeks. Breeding can occur all through the year if food is plentiful, so the females can have five to ten litters per year. If all the young survived, the population would explode, so it's good there are plenty of predators to keep the population within healthy limits. For an individual mouse, though, it is a dangerous life; the average house mouse lives about a year—although the lucky ones can live to be two or three years old.
-S.L.

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center*

Schedule of Events for January through April 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u> CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY	<u>2</u> CLOSED	<u>3</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30 Prop.Soc.	<u>6</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>7</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 10am-"Beautiful Bowls"-Dr. Vadheim
<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> CLOSED	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>12</u> 10:30 Prop.Soc. 1pm- Naturalist 6:30-"Beautiful Bowls,- Dr.Vadheim	<u>13</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>14</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> CLOSED	<u>17</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>20</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun-donation** DeRidder Exhibit Ends***	<u>21</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 9 am-H.B.Nature Walk 1:30 pm-Nature Origami 6:30-8:30-Night Hike
<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> CLOSED	<u>24</u> 10am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$ Magammaana Exhibit Begins***	<u>25</u> 10am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>26</u> 8:45am-Nature Journaling- \$ 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>27</u> 10 am-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>28</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk 1:30-Magammaana reception***
<u>29</u> 10-Nature Walk 10-GRAND REOPENING 1pm-FOMM Annual Mtg. free	<u>30</u> CLOSED	<u>31</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance				

JANUARY

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 10. For latest event information, see our newly upgraded website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-Prop. Society.	<u>3</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>4</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10am-"Foreground..." Dr.Vadheim 6:30-Star Party
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> CLOSED	<u>7</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>8</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>9</u> 10:30 a.m.- Prop.Society 1pm-Naturalists 6:30pm-Dr.Vadheim	<u>10</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>11</u> 8:45am-12 n-Hab.Restor. Student.Service 2-4pm-Valentine Potpourri Workshop-\$
<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> CLOSED	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>17</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>18</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Res & Student.Service 9 am-Nature Walk-Henrietta Basin
<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> CLOSED	<u>21</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$ 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>22</u> 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>23</u> 9 am-Nature Journaling-\$ 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>24</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>25</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-Hab.Restor. 10am-Nature Walk& Student.Service 6:30 pm-Night Hike
<u>26</u> 10 am-Nature Walk	<u>27</u> CLOSED	<u>28</u>				

FEBRUARY

Nature Center & Gift Shop

(310) 782-3989

Sunday		Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30Prop.Soc.	10 am--12 n- <u>3</u> Friday Fun-donation** Magammaa Exhib.ends***	<u>4</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.&StudentServ. 10am-"Espalier.." -Dr. Vadheim
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> CLOSED	<u>7</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance Osborne Exhibit Begins	<u>8</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30pm-FOMM Mtg	<u>9</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society 1pm-.Naturalists 6:30- Dr. Vadheim	10 am--12 n- <u>10</u> Friday Fun-donation**	<u>11</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 1:30-3:30pm-Osborne Reception***
<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> CLOSED	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12n- <u>17</u> Friday Fun-donation**	<u>18</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9 am-H.B Nature Walk- 1:30-Nature's Origami
<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> CLOSED	<u>21</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>24</u> Friday Fun-donation**	<u>25</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk 6:30 pm-Night Hike
10 am. <u>26</u> Nature Walk	<u>27</u> CLOSED	<u>28</u> 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>29</u> 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>30</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>31</u> Friday Fun-donation**	

MARCH

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 10. For latest event information, see our newly upgraded website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<u>1</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10am-"Birds" Dr. Vadheim 8 pm-Star Party
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> CLOSED	<u>4</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc. 6:30--"Birds" Dr.Vadheim	10 am--12 n- <u>7</u> Friday Fun-donation**	<u>8</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>9</u>	<u>10</u> CLOSED	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	1pm-Sr. <u>13</u> Naturalists 35+ 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	10 am--12n- <u>14</u> Friday Fun-donation**	<u>15</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9 am-H.B.Nature Walk
<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> CLOSED	<u>18</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10am-Wildflowers 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>21</u> Friday Fun-donation** Osborne Exhibit Ends***	<u>22</u> 8:30am-EarthDay 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk 6:30 pm-Night Hike
10 am. <u>23</u> Nature Walk <u>30</u>	<u>24</u> CLOSED	<u>25</u> 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>26</u> 10 am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>27</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>28</u> Friday Fun-donation**	<u>29</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 1:30-Geology

APRIL

Dorothy Comes Home for Christmas

by Tracy Drake

Preserve Manager/Naturalist

The early evening was crisp, but neither Steve Ash nor I had walked on the land for several days—we needed to check the water level in the sump and on the Preserve so that we could make pumping plans for the incoming rain. When we arrived, the Sump was nearly empty of water, the bio-filter pump was running, and the Preserve pumps were set to turn on.

On the water were three Ring-necked Ducks and a few coots—seemingly relaxing at the end of a cold day. Up to the Preserve we went. There was a lot more water on the Preserve than usual for this time of year—and about a hundred ducks. Taking the middle road, we passed through the meadow and into the south pond area. The willow trees, now devoid of leaves, looked as cold as we felt. At the shoreline we stopped and admired the newly-created duck island. It made us happy to see it already being used by several Wigeons and Mallards. It would provide a safe haven for future ducklings.

As we turned to go, peering through my binoculars, I spotted a Mallard with a band! “Oh!” I thought, “maybe this is Dorothy, one of the female Mallards that Jun Saito has been tracking the last three years.” As I aimed my camera at her, I tried to let go of the thought that it may be she. Life is very hard on a Mallard, especially females; they don’t live long—maybe three years.

Because Dorothy was banded, we could tell she was born on the Preserve in 2013. She bred in 2014, 15 and 16. She was considered old last year! “Click, click, click,” went my shutter as I fired off maybe 60 shots. The light was poor so I knew to get any good pictures would be very lucky. And she was tucked in on the shoreline with several other Mallards whose movement frequently blocked my view of the tiny silver band securely affixed to her left leg. Looking occasionally at my viewfinder, I could see that I was getting mostly blurry, dark, useless photos.

Steve and I headed north to look at the other new island we designed for killdeer breeding in the north pond area. Along the way we were treated to a spectacular brilliant orange sunset.

Just before midnight, as I was retiring for the evening, I recalled the photos I had attempted. Much to my surprise, three of the nearly 60 shots were clear enough to see a total of six of the nine numbers on the band. Carefully I made out 7-84711. Would this be enough to send

to the Bird Banding Laboratory to get a positive identification? No. Shoot. I shut down the computer and headed off to bed. I had walked two steps before I realized I could ask Jun! I flew to open the computer and attach my meager photos to an email. “Maybe I saw her!” I explained, “I hope so!”

I was on my email at 5:24 a.m. the next morning, 12/24/16, when Jun replied:

“Yes!!!!!! She is Dorothy!!!! Oh my goodness!!! She already return in Madrona!!!

Thank you for your great job.

Is she with male duck? She become 4 years old on next year April.

I have to go Marsh on today then gonna say to her 'Merry Christmas'.

Can you report to USGS ? 2047-84711 is whole number.

'Dorothy return' is big Christmas gift from the Madrona Marsh.

Merry Christmas --Jun.“

What else could I do but be at the Preserve at first light to meet Jun? Actually I got there before he did; I wanted to let him know where Dorothy was. But the overnight rain brought even more ducks to the preserve. Carefully scanning over more than 250 ducks, I could not find her. It was hard, a little while later, to tell Jun I had had no luck. But he was determined as he turned and headed off—leaning heavily on his cane, his camera and notepad stowed in the folds of a thick army jacket. I watched him descend into the wetland area, then I headed for the Sump to turn on the pump.

Thirty minutes later he came looking for me. When we met, a broad, slow smile swept across his face. In careful measure, in a quiet voice, he described her, where she was and how he had found her. He shared photos of his dear friend and showed me how he could tell her from all the other Mallards even if her band was not visible.

For a long moment we stood in silence at the wonder of all of this. Then he broke the silence. *“Dorothy, best Christmas present for me...”*

Now, just a week later, I wonder. Did the folks who saved the land from development have any inkling that, in the distant future, a gentle and

“Dorothy” continued on page 10

Birds seen December 2016

Contributors: Mark Rubke, Tracy Drake, David Moody, Bob Shanman and the
Tour de' Torrance Group.

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Yellow Warbler
Gadwall	Northern Flicker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Eurasian Wigeon	American Kestrel	Black-throated Gray Warbler
American Wigeon	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	Townsend's Warbler
Mallard	Mitred Parakeet	Wilson's Warbler
Cinnamon Teal	Black Phoebe	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Eastern Phoebe	Brewer's Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Say's Phoebe	Lark Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Fox Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	Cassin's Kingbird	White-crowned Sparrow
Green Heron	American Crow	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Common Raven	Savannah Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Bushtit	Song Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk	House Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Marsh Wren	California Towhee
American Coot	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Red-winged Blackbird
Killdeer	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Western Meadowlark
Wilson's Snipe	Western Bluebird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Ring-billed Gull	Hermit Thrush	House Finch
Western Gull	American Robin	Lesser Goldfinch
California Gull	European Starling	American Goldfinch
Rock Pigeon	American Pipit	House Sparrow
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Cedar Waxwing	Northern Red Bishop
Mourning Dove	Black-and-white Warbler	Scaly-breasted Munia
Anna's Hummingbird	Orange-crowned Warbler	
Allen's Hummingbird	Common Yellowthroat	BOLD = UNCOMMON SIGHTING
Butterflies		
Monarch	Painted Lady	American Lady
Red Admiral	Cloudless Sulphur	Fiery Skipper
Eufala Skipper	Mourning Cloak	
Dragonflies		
Common Green Darner	Blue-eyed Darner	Variegated Meadowhawk



The Docent Class of 2016

From left to right and back to front: Kathy, Steven, Peg, Manola, Kathryn; Cindy, Rachel; Sheridan, Jane, Bobbie, Kathleen, Karen; Celina, Lore (and Suzan, who took the photo). Watch for us leading tours of students and at outreach events!

Artist's Corner

View the works of local artists portraying the beauty of the Madrona Marsh. Exhibits are on display daily in the Nature Center. To display your art at Madrona Marsh, call 310-782-3989.

Through January 20 - **Flashcard Project: The Flora of Madrona Marsh III**, by Estelle DeRidder.

January 24 - March 3 - **Marvels of Madrona**, by Dinuk Magamma. Artist Reception Saturday, January 28, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

March 7 - April 21 - **Landscapes of Madrona, A Photography Exhibit** by Patrick Osborne. Artist Reception Saturday, March 11, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

“Dorothy” continued from page 8

quiet man would gaze into the crisp Madrona morning and, with all of his heart, wish his Mallard friend – “a very Merry Christmas”?


Thank you to all who made this moment possible... -T.D.

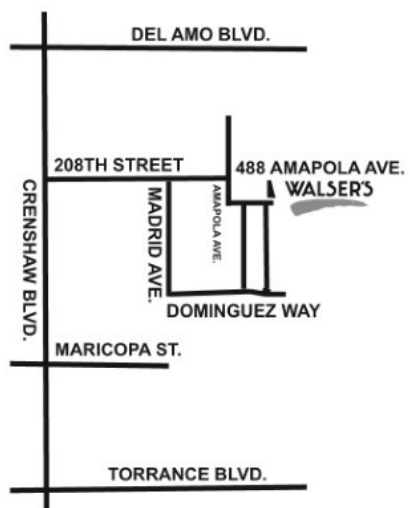
Ed. Note: For more about Dorothy don't miss the January 29 annual meeting of FOMM. See page 2 for details.

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South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



Catalina silverlace
Constancea nevinii

Foliage is often more important than flowers in the winter garden. Several native bush sunflowers provide both winter foliage interest and seeds for birds and other creatures. One of the prettiest, which can be seen in our Native Plant Garden, is the Catalina Silverlace.

Constancea nevinii (formerly *Eriophyllum nevenii*) is native to the South Channel Islands, where it grows on rocky coastal bluffs in the coastal sage scrub plant community. It's the only species in its genus and one of our showiest shrubby sunflowers. The plants are three to five feet tall and wide, part-woody and mounded.

The foliage is one of the most distinctive features of Catalina silverlace; white-silver in color and softly hairy. The leaves are highly dissected, giving a fern-like appearance. The foliage makes this a striking—and unique—plant any time of the year. It's a sophisticated version of the old garden favorite, the 'Dusty Miller'.

But the flowers and seed heads are equally decorative. Catalina silverlace blooms anytime from April through summer. The flower heads, which have golden-yellow flowers, are in flat

clusters atop flower stalks above the foliage. This is a very attractive plant in bloom! And as seeds dry, the seed heads turn a showy dark brown—somewhat like the buckwheats—which adds nice contrast in the fall and winter garden.

Constancea nevinii is not particularly difficult to grow. It likes a well-drained soil (or plant on a slope) and a little afternoon shade in most gardens. It looks best with occasional summer water (perhaps once a month). Trim off seed heads in winter, and prune back if plants get rangy. That's about it.



Use Catalina silverlace as an accent against darker green shrubs, or mixed with other interesting plants like the native buckwheats. It looks nice with most other locally native plants. You could even try it in a container or planter.

For more on this plant see: <http://mother-natures-backyard.blogspot.com/2014/08/plant-of-month-august-catalina.html>

Learn more 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.

Friends of Madrona Marsh

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