

February 2025



What the Lack of Rain Means for the Marsh

Here at the Marsh, we are often fielding questions about “Where is the water?” or “Why don’t I see more birds?” As a vernal marsh, Madrona’s water comes in the form of rainfall in the winter and spring seasons. Typically, once it’s rained at least 1.5”, enough water has penetrated the ground to allow the water to go into ponds and vernal pools. Once the ponds form, that’s when the waterfowl - the geese, the ducks, the herons, and egrets - visit the Marsh to hunt for food and potentially nest in the Preserve.



The moderate rainfall we experienced at the end of January dropped 0.8-0.9” of rain on the Preserve. Water has begun to pond in the South Pond area, although it will evaporate without another good rainfall in the next two weeks. Even so, the ducks

THIS MONTHS EVENTS

Every Friday

[Friday Fun*](#)

10:00 am - Noon

Every Saturday

[Guided Nature Walk](#)

10:00 am - Noon

Thursday, February

6th

[Tyke Hike](#)

10:00 am - Noon

Thursday, February

13th

[Nature Storytime &](#)

[Crafts](#)

10:30 am - Noon

Saturday, February

8th

[Night Hike*](#)

6:30-8:30 pm

Saturday, February

22nd

[Bird Walk PV/SB](#)

[Audubon Society](#)

9:00 - 11:00 am

have arrived and began feasting in the Marsh! Many plants, such as the bladderpod plants, are beginning to break their summer-fall dormancy. This is good news because the bladderpod is an important host plant for harlequin bugs. And it's an excellent sign that many of the Preserve's plants are beginning to "wake up."

* Registration
required



Even in low-rainfall years, the Marsh is still very much alive.

Mourning cloak butterflies are easily spotted amongst the willow trees. The red-shouldered hawks are still patrolling in the eucalyptus trees along the Sepulveda trail. Lizards can be seen sunning themselves on the paths. We all hope more rain comes soon. In the meantime, the plants, animals, and people will adapt to the conditions that we have.

[Learn More About Volunteering at Madrona Marsh](#)

Did you know?

You can borrow binoculars at the Visitor Center

Ask at the front desk and leave your drivers license or ID



Featured Sighting

The Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Photo by Jeanne Bellemin

The crimson underwings and tail feathers of this chocolate-hued woodpecker burst into view during flight. Throughout springtime, its musical calls and staccato drumming resonate across the Preserve.



[Visit Our Photo Gallery](#)

From the Manager



by Liz Evans
Madrona Marsh Preserve Manager

January marked a wonderful start to the year at Madrona Marsh. We saw our first substantial rainfall, dropping almost an inch of water in the Preserve! The ponds are just beginning to form and it did not take long for the ducks to find the water. Mallards, wigeons, ring-necked ducks, mergansers, and ruddy ducks have all been spotted in the ponds or the sump so far this year.



We were thrilled to welcome professionals from USGS, US Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and a host of other organizations as they learned to identify California's 27 different species of fairy shrimp.



The South Bay Parkland Conservancy gave a lovely presentation on the work their organization does throughout the region, planting native plants that support the El Segundo Blue Butterfly in public spaces in the Beach Cities.

We look forward to working with the Parkland Conservancy more soon.



Last but certainly not least, the Friends of Madrona Marsh held their annual members' meeting at the Nature Center. I was honored to present my first annual report as manager of the Madrona Marsh.

It is such a privilege to work with so many dedicated, brilliant, hard-working folks - staff and volunteers alike - who make this place what it is.



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