

# Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

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

## A Newcomer's Experience

Article and photo by Maura Palacios Mejia

*Editors' note: In the 12 years that Diane and I have published the newsletter, this is the first article submitted by a first-time visitor to the Preserve. And quite an observant visitor she is, inspired by one of our best birders, Bob Shanman. Oh, and Maura is no stranger to a good turn of phrase, either. We think you'll enjoy her chronicle, which we didn't have room for in the last issue.-B.A.)*

I drove about 23 miles and 45 minutes in traffic from downtown Los Angeles to make up a missed field trip for the California Naturalist Program. This was a rather chilly, overcast and breezy morning at Madrona Marsh. I arrived a little early for the 8 a.m. birding, and while I explored the grounds at the Nature Center, I snapped some pictures of a very friendly fox squirrel and several species of flies to upload to iNaturalist. Once Bob Shanman, our bird expert,

arrived with his scope in hand we headed across the street, through the gates and into the Marsh. As we set foot on the dusty trail, I was transported from a city environment



Cooper's Hawk

to one of the few remaining vernal marshes in Southern California.

The first sighting of the day was a single rose-ringed parakeet perched on a leafless tree surrounded by ten Red-winged Blackbirds. Although the parakeet is normally distributed in Africa and southern Asia, Bob mentioned how this singleton (a female as determined by her

*"Newcomer" continued on page 3*

### G.O. or No G.O.? Stay Tuned . . .

You may have heard earlier this year of a planned "Grand Opening" to introduce the recent upgrades to the Nature Center made possible through State Proposition 84 Funding. Well, a Grand Opening Event is still planned, but the date is not yet definite. This is what the State calls a "reimbursement project", wherein the City of Torrance pays for all design, materials and installation initially, then requests reimbursement from the State. That delayed these upgrades initially, as we got the grant shortly before the Great Recession. Our current delays are also

*"G.O. or N.O." continued on page 8*



*The Torrance Fire Department responded quickly to an equipment fire that broke out on the Marsh Monday, the afternoon of April 11. See next page for details.*

# Brush Fire Contained on Madrona Marsh Preserve

*Article by Bill Arrowsmith with Steve Ash*

About 1:30 on Wednesday afternoon, April 11th, Assistant Manager Steve Ash was mowing on the northwest quadrant of the Preserve. The mowing is part of the on-going effort to control non-native grasses before they can release their seeds onto the land. Doing so reduces the impact non-native grasses have on the native plants found on the Preserve.

The mower Steve was using is an older zero-radius hydraulic drive riding mower originally donated by the Palos Verdes School District about ten years ago, as a replacement when our own mower was stolen. It has been a great workhorse despite its age and maintenance issues, owing to its unique ability to cut close to native plants.



*What's left of the culprit. The riding mower has seen its last days. -B.A.*

Unfortunately, while Steve was mowing, a fuel or hydraulic line broke and engulfed the mower in flames plus ignited the grass. He called 911 to dispatch the Torrance Fire Department, and requested staff to open the Maple Avenue gate for them.

He hollered at Tony Baker to bring a shovel, and Tony soon joined him in cutting a control line and throwing dirt to slow the spread of fire.

With his several-years of experience with the U.S. Forest Service in wildland fire management, he and Tony did a good job of managing the situation. They were soon helped by Tracy Drake, also experienced in wildland fire management. Together they made a good mini-fire crew and shovel brigade helping slow the spread of flames until help arrived.

Torrance Fire Department responded quickly, bringing the fire under control in about 20

minutes. The fire burned an area approximately 150 feet x 50 feet, roughly 1/6 acre. Steve, Ed Vandever, and volunteer Dave Jamieson continued mop-up duties into the late afternoon.



*Staff checks to make sure all the fire is out. -B.A.*

Besides Tony, Ed, and Dave, additional thanks go out to restoration worker Neil Kalanack, who alerted the Nature Center of the fire, staff member Tracey Dunn who opened the gate, and all staff and volunteers working at the time for helping ensure the Preserve was evacuated and safety protocols followed.

The area where Steve was mowing, and where the fire occurred, is the site of an old oil sump, where waste oil products were dumped during much of the 80-plus years the property was used for oil recovery.

The Observation Berm is all that remains of that sump; one side of a square oil depository that preceded modern environmental regulations. That historically oil impacted soil certainly provided additional challenge to the firefighting crew.

A great deal of thanks to the Torrance Fire Department for their quick response, In a great bit of good fortune we are thankful nobody was hurt in what could have been a bad situation.

*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, [frandbill@att.net](mailto:frandbill@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.

lack of markings) may be a progeny of a pair who were once pets.

The next spotting was a bulky female Red-tailed Hawk about 50 feet from the trail, followed by another raptor—a slender male Cooper’s hawk that was perched on a branch 20 feet from the trail (see photo, page 1).

Bob mentioned how the color pattern on the chest of this bird-preying species becomes rusty orange and horizontal as an adult. He also mentioned that these raptors are resident species in comparison to the migratory Sharp-shinned and Merlin hawks. As we continued along the trail, we observed a group of Bushtits, which were small and very charismatic, mixed in with Blue-gray Gnat-catchers. We then got a treat by finding an American Kestrel female (brown versus blue wings of male) kiting (a method of hunting) and then going in for a strike. Bob mentioned how this is one of the few birds of prey that exhibits sexual dimorphism and it is the smallest American falcon. We then crossed the Marsh to the open area that gets mowed by the grounds-keeper to keep open habitat for the birds that travel across the Pacific Flyway, a major north-south flyway for migratory birds to travel across Northern, Central, and South America.

These open areas serve as stopover zones to obtain nutrients and water. The open area shifted the types of species we observed, which included the Meadowlark, Mourning Dove, Kingbird, Say’s Phoebe, and the California Towhee. We then proceeded to enter a ponded area fed by a small waterfall (*Ed.- storm drainage sump*), which brought different and new species. They included a Green Heron (the smallest North American heron), Northern Flicker, Scaly-breasted Munia, Canada Goose, and Mallard. We also encountered a frog and a lonesome coyote.

Lastly, we explored the area of the Marsh that retains the majority of the water during the rainy season. This area had scattered reed plants, carcasses of crawdaddies, and frogs. The change in habitat brought about an abundance of warblers and sparrows including Black-throated Gray Warbler, Audubon’s Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Lincoln’s Sparrow. We had a total of 31 species in the span of 3 hours in an area of 43 acres. This was a great birding experience! I got to meet retirees, volunteers, and seasoned birders. I also learned about the history and the

## Melissa’s Musings

*Melissa Loeb,*

*Preserve Manager and Naturalist*

Time flies when you’re having fun! I feel overwhelmed with joy as I write this article for the *Marsh Mailing*. It is with great honor I take the time to share my experience over the past six months.

Many of you have been involved with Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center for years. Some of you are new to the Preserve. Others have found it a special place where you enjoy doing research, volunteering, attending programs, gardening, restoring, birding or taking a hike on the Preserve.

One of the greatest observations I have made over the past six months as a manager and naturalist, is the amount of dedication, passion and knowledge that surrounds this incredibly special place. I learn something new each day, and I’d like to thank those who have shared their knowledge and are helping me along the way.

One of the best parts of my job is learning about the many aspects of the Preserve and Nature Center. I have spent time learning about the soils, native plants, invertebrates, vertebrates and programs offered at the Nature Center.

As I get more comfortable each day, I find myself taking a moment to stop and watch the smiling faces of the children in the Friday Fun Class, watching the Kestrel hover above the Coastal Prairie, or getting the chance to see a newly emerged butterfly taking its first flight.

I appreciate watching the Propagation Society and restoration volunteers work very hard to ensure the success of the Preserve and native garden. I also enjoy seeing all the staff and volunteers who work hard managing and preparing for programs, events and tours. The past six months have flown by, but I can’t wait to see what the next six months will bring.

Please stop by the Nature Center and say hello if you haven’t done so already. —Melissa

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successful collaboration between the City of Torrance and community members in restoration, education, and outreach.

Be on the lookout for the next bird-walking event with Bob Shanman every second Wednesday of the month. —Maura

## **A Message from Bobbie Snyder, Gift Shop Manager**

Dear Supporters of Friends of Madrona Marsh,

Thank you for your patronage! Because of it, the FOMM Gift Shop was able to provide \$5000 to the Friends treasury for 2017. Our profits from your purchases help support the Friends' goals of educating the community and of restoring and maintaining the Preserve.

Please remember, also, that all of the gift shop staff are volunteers; and it sometimes gets a little lonely in there. They wouldn't be there if they didn't love the Madrona Marsh. So, stop and say, "Hello!" talk about what you saw on your Marsh walk, and browse our unique little shop.

If you're looking for something nature or science related, or maybe just a bit of whimsy, come check us out.

**What's new at the Nature Center Gift Shop?** We now have a really nice selection of works from local authors, artists and craftspeople. You will enjoy their craftsmanship.

We also have a really nice selection of books available at the Gift Shop. And come on in and check out our great assortment of retro toys. The hand boiler and the radiometer are two of my favorites.

**Have you considered volunteering at the gift shop yourself?** If you have one or two days a month that you're willing to share with us, we'd be glad to welcome you aboard, and one of our veterans will show you the ropes. Just contact the reception desk (310-782-3989); they'll answer any questions you might have and will forward your phone number to me.

We're closed more days than I'd like right now, and your hour or two a month could make a real difference.

Again, thank you all for your continuing support of the Friends' Gift Shop.

—Bobbie

## **'this place in Torrance'**

*by Joann Bailey*

*(Editor's note: Joann Bailey is one of our fine docents for school tours, and she and her husband, Brian, also volunteer for weekend tours of the Preserve. She sent me the following note last fall.)*

I have to tell you about the 'Marsh encounter' Brian and I had earlier this summer while walking the Esplanade here in Redondo Beach. It was a warm weekend morning; we were walking along and there was this fellow photographing into the 'weeds' along the walkway. I could not resist, so I stopped and asked, "Harvester Ants?"

After he recovered from his startlement, he said that when there's nothing much to photograph in the waves and such, he focuses on the ground around him—and that morning he'd found little tiny baby lizards (they were about 1-1/2 inches long!). A short discussion followed and suddenly he is showing me the photographs he's taken at 'this place in Torrance' that a friend told him about . . . the Madrona Marsh, of course!

His photos were amazing—down to the one of a Snowy Egret with a crayfish dangling from its mouth. incredible! He'd had only one visit of about 45 minutes. . . and he was going back sometime soon.

I shared about visiting in various seasons, times of the day, etc., then told him about our ongoing display of artwork that has been done out on the Marsh. He was, of course, amazed to have found this treasure here in the South Bay.

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The Nature Center and Preserve are open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 310-782-3989 for more information. or consult the website:  
[www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com).

# Birds of Madrona

Tracy Drake

## Manager, City of Torrance Park Services

This list, representing sightings from Jan. 1, 2018 - April 11, 2018, was compiled with help of Mark Rubke, David Moody, Tracy Drake, Melissa Loeb, Jonathan Nakai, Dinuk Magamma, Tony Strangarity, the Tour de Torrance group and various visitors who love to bird the Preserve. \*\*

### Birds

Canada Goose	Common Raven	European Starling	Pacific-slope Flycatcher
Cinnamon Teal	Northern R-winged Swallow	Wilson's Warbler	Say's Phoebe
Gadwall	Bushtit	Chipping Sparrow	<b>Eastern Phoebe</b>
American Wigeon	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Golden-crowned Sparrow	Dark-eyed Junco
<i>Mallard</i>	Western Bluebird	Western Meadowlark	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Green-winged Teal	<b>Black and White Warbler</b>	Wilson's Snipe	Brown-headed Cowbird
Ruddy Duck	Orange-crowned Warbler	Peregrine Falcon	Brewer's Blackbird
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Common Yellowthroat</i>	Red-shouldered Hawk	Rufous Hummingbird
Great Blue Heron	Yellow Warbler	Ring-billed Gull	Nuttall's Woodpecker
Great Egret	Yellow-rumped Warbler	California Gull	Cliff Swallow
Snowy Egret	Black-throated Gray Warbler	Cedar Waxwing	Rock Pigeon
Green Heron	White-crowned Sparrow	Lincoln's Sparrow	Townsend's Warbler
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Savannah Sparrow	Bullock's Oriole	Blue-winged Teal
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Song Sparrow</i>	White-throated Swift	Marsh Wren
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>California Towhee</i>	Downy Woodpecker	<b>Tropical Kingbird</b>
Sora	Red-winged Blackbird	Northern Flicker	American Pipit
American Coot	Great-tailed Grackle	House Wren	<b>Phainopepla</b>
Killdeer	<i>House Finch</i>	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<b>European Goldfinch</b>
Western Gull	Lesser Goldfinch	Nashville Warbler	Double-crested Cormorant
Mourning Dove	American Goldfinch	Tree Swallow	California Scrub-Jay
<i>Anna's Hummingbird</i>	<i>House Sparrow</i>	Barn Swallow	Fox Sparrow
<i>Allen's Hummingbird</i>	Scaly-breasted Munia	Hermit Thrush	Osprey
Black Phoebe	Northern Shoveler Duck	Northern Mockingbird	Rose-ringed Parakeet
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Hooded Oriole	Red-naped Sapsucker
<i>Cassin's Kingbird</i>	American Kestrel	Lark Sparrow	Bewick's Wren
Warbling Vireo	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	Northern Red Bishop	Brewer's Sparrow
American Crow	Western Kingbird	Ring-necked Duck	
<b>Bold = uncommon sighting</b>	<i>Italics = breeding</i>	<b>this list is compiled in the order the birds were spotted on the Preserve</b>	
<b>Butterflies</b>			
Mourning Cloak	Western Pygmy Blue	West Coast Lady	Sandhill Skipper
Western Tiger Swallowtail	Marine Blue	Painted Lady	Cabbage White
Anise Swallowtail	Acmon Blue	Fiery Skipper	Cloudless Sulphur
Funereal Duskywing	Gray Hairstreak	Umber Skipper	Monarch
<b>Dragonflies</b>			
Common Green Darner	Blue-eyed Darner	Variagated Meadowhawk	Flame Skimmer

**\*\*Note:** It is important to mention that this is an unusual list. To have this diversity and number of birds, butterflies and dragonflies this early in the year is a direct reflection of the lack of rain and unusually warm winter we have had. Much of the Preserve never did green - though the wetlands are doing ok -- the upland areas are struggling. Through time, I am sure this is not the worst drought, but this is the first year since I have been at Madrona that the land did not fully green. As a result, later in the year there will be fewer flowers, fewer pollinators and fewer birds than usual. Maybe more rain will come. I sure hope so... In the meantime, our native plant gardens, because we can provide water, become more and more important.—Tracy

## Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center\*

### Schedule of Events for April through July 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<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-Dr. Vadheim-
<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<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 6:30Dr.Vadheim	<u>13</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>14</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 10 am-Turtle/Tortoise Day
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>17</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance Vadheim/Sattler Exhibit Begins 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**	<u>21</u> 8:30-12-Earth Day 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 9am-H.B.Nature Walk 1-Intro toFlourescents 7 pm-Star Party
<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>24</u> 10am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>25</u> 10am-Home School Nature Class/Reid-\$	<u>26</u> 8:45 am-Nat.Journal\$ 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>27</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>28</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk
10am-NatureWalk 1-3 pm-Vadheim/ Sattler Recept. <u>29</u>	<u>30</u> <b>CLOSED</b>					

### APRIL

*\*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
		<u>1</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc.	<u>4</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>5</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 10 am-Dr. Vadheim-
<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>10</u> 10:30 Prop.Soc. 1pm- Naturalist 6:30Dr.Vadheim-	<u>11</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>12</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor.& Student.Service 11am & 12 pm-Ravishing Raptors\$
<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>15</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>18</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>19</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. 9am-H.B.Nature Walk
<u>20</u> 1-3-FOMM Annual Ice Cream Social <b>free</b>	<u>21</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>25</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun-donation**	<u>26</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk
<u>27</u> 10-NatureWalk	<u>28</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>29</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>		

### MAY

**Nature Center & Gift Shop**

**(310) 782-3989**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					10 am--12 n- <sup>1</sup> Friday Fun-\$** Vadheim/Sattler Exhibit ends	8:45 am-12 --Hab.Restor. <sup>2</sup> 10am-Dr.Vadheim-
<sup>3</sup>	<sup>4</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	8:30 am-Tour <sup>5</sup> d'Torrance Niles Exhibit Begins	<sup>6</sup>	10 amTykeHike <sup>7</sup> 10:30 Prop.Society 6:30pm-Dr. Vadheim	10 am--12 n- <sup>8</sup> Friday Fun- donation**	8:45am-12-Hab.Restor. <sup>9</sup> Student.Service 10am-Turtle&Tortoise Day 1:30-Niles Reception 2pm-Chytrid-Decline of Amphibians
<sup>10</sup>	<sup>11</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	<sup>12</sup>	8 am-Bird Walk/ <sup>13</sup> Bob Shanman 11am-Senior Stroll 6:30--FOMM Meet	10:30-12:30- <sup>14</sup> Propagation Society 1pm Naturalist	10 am--12n- <sup>15</sup> Friday Fun- donation**	<sup>16</sup> 8:45 am-12 - Hab.Res.. 9 am-H.B.Nature Walk 8-10 pm-Star Party
<sup>17</sup>	<sup>18</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	8:30 am-Tour <sup>19</sup> d'Torrance 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<sup>20</sup>	10:30-12:30- <sup>21</sup> Prop. Society	10 am--12 n- <sup>22</sup> Friday Fun- donation**	8:30 am-Bird Walk <sup>23</sup> 8:45 am-Hab.Restor. Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk 7-9-pm-Night Hike
10 am- <sup>24</sup> Nature Walk	<sup>25</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	<sup>26</sup>	<sup>27</sup>	10:30-12:30- <sup>28</sup> Prop. Society	10 am--12 <sup>29</sup> Friday Fun- donation**	8:45 am-Hab.Restor. <sup>30</sup> Student.Service

**JUNE**

*\*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
<sup>1</sup>	<sup>2</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	8:30 am-Tour <sup>3</sup> d'Torrance	<sup>4</sup>	10 am-Tyke Hike <sup>5</sup> donation 10:30 Prop.Soc.	10 am--12 n- <sup>6</sup> Friday Fun- donation**	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. <sup>7</sup> & Student.Service 10 am-Dr. Vadheim-
<sup>8</sup>	<sup>9</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	<sup>10</sup> 9 am-ArtistAdventures\$	8 am-Bird Walk/ <sup>11</sup> Bob Shanman 9am ArtistAdventure\$ 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	10:30 Prop.Soc. <sup>12</sup> 9am- ArtistAdventures\$ 1pm- Naturalist 6:30Dr.Vadheim-	9am- <sup>13</sup> ArtistAdvent.\$ 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation** Niles Exhibit Ends	<sup>14</sup> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<sup>15</sup>	<sup>16</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	8:30am-Tour d'Torrance <sup>17</sup> 10am-Jr.Naturalist.\$ 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	10am-Jr.Naturalist.\$ <sup>18</sup>	10:30-12:30- <sup>19</sup> Prop. Society 10am- Jr.Naturalist.\$	10 am--12n <sup>20</sup> Friday Fun- donation** 10am- Jr.Naturalist.\$	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor <sup>21</sup> 9am-H.B.Nature Walk
<sup>22</sup>	<sup>23</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	9am-Art in Nature\$ <sup>24</sup>	9 am-Art in Nature\$ <sup>25</sup>	9 am-Art in <sup>26</sup> Nature\$ 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	9 am-Art in <sup>27</sup> Nature\$ 10 am-Friday Fun- donation**	8:30 am-Bird Walk <sup>28</sup> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk 7-9 pm--Night Hike
10-NatureWalk <sup>29</sup>	<sup>30</sup> <b>CLOSED</b>	8:30 am-Tour <sup>31</sup> d'Torrance				

**JULY**

# Farewell, Walser's

The Friends have had a wonderful partnership with Walser's Art Supplies and Recycling Center since Torrance's first Environmental Fair in 2009 when Jack Walser suggested that, if we would run an ad for his operation to recycle and refurbish electronic equipment, he would share a very generous 25 percent of the entire proceeds from that activity.

Jack has been true to his word, through good times and bad for the last nine years, building our

coffers while performing a valuable service for the community.

But in the current economy Jack finds that he must close the art and recycling portion of his store and focus on his newer product line – guns and ammunition. We wish Jack success in his new venture and will be forever grateful for his support of the Friends of Madrona Marsh.

—Bill Arrowsmith

## Donations of \$100 Or More Spring 2018

DATE	DONOR	DONATION
Jan.	Richard Kuhns	\$100
Jan.	Diane Hattori	\$150
Jan.	Linda Gonzales	\$100
Jan.	Michele & David Wilson	\$150
Jan.	Friends of Rancho San Pedro	\$150
Jan.	Mr.&Mrs. Frank Miles	\$200
Jan.	Peter Mason	\$2,500
Jan.	Rebecca Moore	\$200
Jan.	Patrick Furey	\$100
Jan.	Ruth McConnell In memory of Sue Randall	\$100
Jan.	Kathleen Buchanan	\$100
Jan.	Elizabeth Robinson	\$500
Jan.	Norman & Suzanne George	\$100
Feb.	The Shanman's	\$250
Feb.	Harry Koltun	\$100
March	Virginia Massey	\$150
March	Anne Forsyth	\$150

*"G.O. or N.O." continued from page 1*

partly due to the economic climate, plus outside factors such as threatened or real tariffs on steel and aluminum.

So, as we go to press, a May or June Grand Opening Event is still planned, but we don't yet have a firm date to share with you. Such is the disadvantage of a quarterly publication. But we do have a suggestion: We encourage you all to visit the Friends' website, [friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://friendsofmadronamarsh.com), a little more frequently; we will post the details of our Grand Opening there as soon as they are available. If you don't have computer access, ask another "Marshan" to let you know when the champagne will be popped. — Bill Arrowsmith

## Artist's Corner

Tuesday, April 17 - Friday, June 1 - **"Native Dyed Art," an Exhibit by Connie Vadheim and Barbara Sattler.** Artists' Reception- Saturday, April 29 from 1 - 3 p.m.

Tuesday, June 5 - Friday, July 13 - **An Exhibit of Acrylics by Clara Niles.** Artist's Reception Saturday, June 9 from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

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.

# The Four Seasons: Spring

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills

Spring is from the end of March through June 22. Typically it's our greenest period. The temperatures begin to warm up. Vernal pools and marshlands begin full of water – then start to dry out. There's lots of activity in the plant and animal worlds. It's a great time to visit Madrona Marsh with friends and family.



Photo by Dr. Vadheim

insects in the open areas, perching above the grasses.

Western Bluebirds - brilliant blue - are a joy to behold. Common Yellowthroats add a touch of bright yellow and wonderful song in the woodland edges and tule patches.

**What to see:** The Preserve is very pretty and the overwhelming color is green. California poppies are bright yellow-orange. Other wildflowers include fiddlenecks, lupines and smaller sunflowers. Look for fuzzy seeds on the large willow trees. (They look like cotton and float on the breeze.) The seeds of the Sycamore tree hang in spikey, dangling clusters.

Many plants are growing in and around the water. Tiny Duckweed and Mosquito fern float on the water. Tules, the grass-like Spikerush and Water plantain flower as the water recedes.

**Birds:** Watch for the water birds: the ducks (Mallards, teals and others), geese and coots. You may see and hear Red-winged Blackbirds in the Tules. Water fowl have young offspring— so please respect signs that protect sensitive nesting areas.

Large, white, long-legged egrets and Great Blue Herons hunt in shallow water. Smaller Green Herons are more secretive—you might see one in the morning. Watch and listen for Red-tailed, Red-shouldered and Cooper's hawks in the larger trees or soaring above. You'll also hear doves cooing. Sparrows are busily eating seeds on the ground before they migrate.

Look for Anna's and Allen's hummingbirds perched or gathering food. Also busy are the Black and Say's Phoebes, catching insects on the wing. Western and Cassin's Kingbirds hunt

## Insects and animals:

Warm weather brings out the insects. Watch bees (including large and small native species) and other pollinators visiting flowers. This is a good time to see many butterflies, including brown Mourning Cloaks, orange Monarchs, yellow and black striped Tiger Swallowtails and Red Admirals. Small, golden Fiery Skippers and brown Umber Skippers can be seen perched or visiting flowers. The early dragonflies like the red Flame Skimmer and the green and blue Common Green Darner are flying.

Watch your step: the (good!) red ants that live in the path are Red Harvester Ants (native). Late or early in the day you may glimpse a skunk. Search for tracks of skunk, opossum and other creatures.

## Things to do at the Preserve:

- Get out and walk to clear your head.
- Take pictures on an overcast day. The colors seem to glow!
- Notice tree reflections in the water.
- Take part in Earth Day activities; activities at Madrona Marsh this year are 8:30 a.m. – 12 noon on Saturday, April 21.
- Bring binoculars to watch birds, insects and animals. Learn more about them in the Nature Center.
- Purchase a guidebook from the nice selection in the Gift Shop—including Common

***“Spring” continued on page 10***

# South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills

Photos by Dr. Vadheim



## Nevin's Barberry *Berberis (Mahonia) nevinii*

Visit the native plant garden in early spring and you'll be drawn to a bush covered in yellow flowers. Later, the same bush will be laden with small, yellow-red berries. What is this shrub that's attracting all the attention?

Nevin's barberry is in the same family (*Berberidaceae*) as the Oregon grape. It once was common in the foothills of the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys; it was first collected there by Dr. J.C. Nevin in 1885. It grows only in Southern California and is well-suited to our climate. It's a declared Federal and State endangered species due to its current rarity.

The first thing you notice this time of year are the tiny, bright-yellow flowers that literally cover the branches. They provide a welcome spot of color and food for insect pollinators. Later, the berries are eaten by birds and small animals. They can also be picked and eaten raw or used to make syrup and jelly. Berries are ripe when they turn dark orange; just watch the birds – they know ripe fruits and may beat you to them!

Nevin's barberry grows and produces new leaves in spring, a common trait among evergreen shrubs of the Southern California chaparral. It grows to about 5 feet tall and wide in the first 4-5 years. It then grows more slowly, up to 8-12 feet. It can easily be pruned to keep

it smaller; or even trained as a small tree.



Nevin's barberry has small, leathery leaves with prickly edges. Their color is an attractive blue-green or gray-green, making this a useful background plant. It likes full sun and can take hot conditions. It can be grown in most local soils and needs only occasional summer water (but good winter water) once established.

Nevin's barberry is an excellent shrub for a bird or pollinator garden. It provide food and cover for many species. It can be pruned for a hedge—it's dense, prickly foliage making it a great barrier plant. It's also useful as an evergreen shrub.

For more on this plant see: <http://www.slideshare.net/cvadheim/mahonia-nevinii>

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

*"Spring" continued from page 9*

Birds of the Madrona Marsh Preserve, published by FOMM.

- Close your eyes. Listen to the sounds.
- Volunteer for Saturday restoration: every Saturday, 8:45 a.m.
- Enjoy flowers in the Native Plant Gardens.
- Take a spring class, walk or workshop.

# Pretty, But Invasive: the Garland Chrysanthemum

*(Editor's Note: The following is a response by Tracy Drake several years ago, when she served as Manager of the Madrona Marsh, to visitor Robin Oh's question about a very pretty, but invasive, weed that we have always had on the Preserve.)*

Hi Robin,

To answer your questions, the Garland Chrysanthemum, commonly called Garland Daisy, is an invasive weed at the Madrona Marsh Preserve. This plant was likely brought to America from Europe via Asia where it is used as a green in many common food dishes. (Below are three links to internet resources about the Garland Chrysanthemum that may be useful to you.) Nonetheless, it is not native to California.

Introduced to the Preserve by a well-meaning volunteer, it has overtaken many areas of Coastal Sage Scrub/back Dune habitats of the Preserve. When this weed overtakes an area, it basically kills the native species in the area by overcrowding and out-competing them for resources such as nutrient and light. The plants it kills are mostly perennials that provide food and shelter for much of our native wildlife.

The chrysanthemum is an annual, and once it drops its seeds it dies, leaving seeds in the soil for the coming growing season—and leaving no native plants where it was.

Another reason to remove the chrysanthemum is written about in our Management Plan. Within the plan is a restoration plan for the Preserve. Part of this plan allows for concentrated effort, on a weekly basis, to restore the land to how it was pre-European contact. This means we will, to the best of our ability, remove non-native plants and replace them with native ones. As a result of this process, we see not only beautiful new native plants, but also native wildlife, returning to the Preserve. At least four species of butterfly and

one bird species have already returned. Also, many native insect species have returned, taking their place in the food chain.

Lastly, thousands of people just like you have helped us remove

weeds and plant natives in many areas of the Preserve. Unchecked, the chrysanthemum will overtake those areas and the plants grown from seed, and carefully planted by volunteers, will not survive. Part of our responsibility as stewards of the land is to honor the work done by our volunteers and ensure the native plants can survive and thrive.

I hope this helps answer your questions.

Take care,

Tracy

You will need to copy these into your browser to access them:

<http://www.soenyun.com/Blog/2009/05/13/the-chrysanthemum-problem/>

[http://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species\\_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=2067](http://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=2067)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garland\\_chrysanthemum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garland_chrysanthemum)

—Tracy Drake



# Friends of Madrona Marsh

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