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TORREYANA

Published for Members of the
Torrey Pines Docent Society

No. 111

September 1984

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, September 15, 8 a.m. at the Visitor Center
September's meeting will feature a walk with veteran birder Jane Mac-Neil, of Penasquitos Canyon Preserve. She will lead us on a walk beginning at 8 a.m. in both the Reserve and on the shore. Refreshments and a business meeting will follow at 10. Meet at the lodge bright and early. The earlier hour means better birding.

FALL CALENDAR

Vice President Judy Carlstrom has been hard at work planning meetings and programs for the balance of 1984.

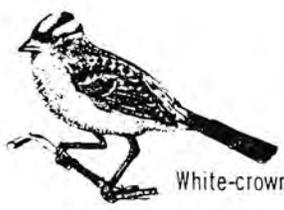
OCTOBER: October 20 and 21 TPDS will have its first annual wilderness weekend (details to follow). (See page 2.)

NOVEMBER: November will find us together on the second instead of the third Saturday of the month, in order to take advantage of a negative tide on November 10. We'll meet at the lodge at 10 a.m. (instead of 9 a.m.) for a lecture by Barbara Moore of Scripps Aquarium. Barbara is a supporting member of TPDS. An optional, but not-to-be-missed, field trip to the tidepools will follow at 1 p.m.

DECEMBER: December will feature our annual Christmas party. This year's theme will be "Christmas the Native Southern California Way." Details on how you can contribute will be forthcoming in the November and December newsletters.



Western Gull



White-crowned Sparrow



Marbled Godwit

WILDERNESS WEEKEND by Judy Carlstrom

During the month of September you will be receiving a telephone call from our membership chairperson, Pam Van Atta, to determine whether or not you will be coming to our wilderness weekend in October. The weekend was conceived as a means of getting to know each other better, particularly our newest docents, and of getting out to enjoy the very essence of nature that brings us to Torrey Pines. The objectives are also educational and so our day will feature a series of lectures by Philip Unitt, author of The Birds of San Diego County, and by some of our own members. The following are activities that have been suggested:

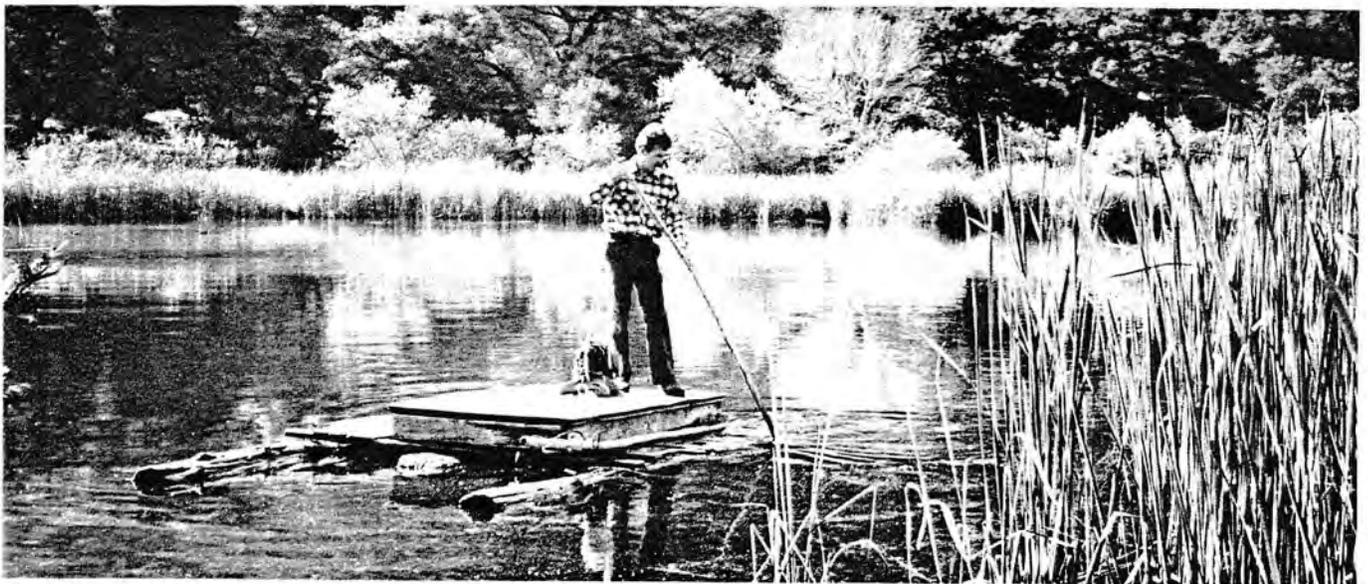
1. Orienteering (navigating by compass and map to a given destination). This can be competitive.
2. Brainstorm sessions on how to improve our guided walks. Bring one idea to share.
3. A scavenger hunt (may have to be done with tags so that actual plant life is not disturbed).
4. Sensory games (sounds interesting, doesn't it?).
5. A cattail harvest (if you attended the seminar on wild edibles you'll know what we mean by this).
6. Nature crafts for children.

That evening we will gather 'round the campfire and prepare a communal meal. Then we will enjoy songs and stories until bedtime.

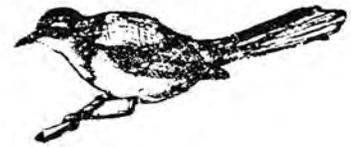
There is only tent camping at the Preserve. If you are short on equipment let us know and we will find you some. This is a family event and children and spouses are welcome.

If you do not wish to camp, then come for the day. No excuse is good enough to miss this event.

We're looking for volunteers to offer their talents in teaching or leading a seminar (i.e., painting or drawing wildlife, woodworking, identifying insects). Whatever your specialty, now is your chance to shine. We need you. If you have any questions or suggestions, call me, Judy Carlstrom, at 748-0181.



Secretary's Notes by Isabel Buechler
(substituting for Betty Andrews)



The regular meeting of the Torrey Pines Docent Society was held on Saturday, August 18, at the Lodge. Approximately 25 members and park staff attended.

Glenn Dunham presided over a short business meeting. He announced that a board meeting would be held after the walk and refreshments. Vice President Judy Carlstrom spoke briefly of the programs being planned for future meetings. Additional information will be published prior to each meeting.

Naturalist Hank Nicol announced the location for the walk, and members carpoled to the area on the east side of old 101. There we had the opportunity to observe the effects of two fires: one caused by arson in 1972, which killed a number of Torrey pines; the other a prescribed burn carried out earlier this summer. Hank pointed out a number of the tests and experiments that were conducted in the recent burn, the results of which may not be known for several years. On the site of the 1972 fire, numerous young trees are growing, more than replacing those that were killed by the fire.

When the group returned to the lodge for refreshments, Judy Carlstrom described the Wilderness Weekend planned for the October meeting. She asked for suggestions and volunteers.



Getting to Know You by Margaret Bardwick

Imagine my surprise when the soft-spoken young man with the Viennese accent asked me to "identify plants and shrubs in Latin, please." As a newly qualified docent leading my first unsupervised nature walk, I was having enough trouble with common names! A botanist from Austria, who was studying the plants in our Mediterranean climate, had joined the group. Luckily, I had a list of plants with their botanical names to give to him, and encouraged him to share his knowledge with the group. Which he did, without hesitation.

When Pete and I retired to San Diego a couple of years ago it was our intention to visit TPSR often, since we had only had the chance to enjoy it on our once- or twice-a-year trips to visit our sons in San Diego. After hearing about the Docent Society, we were thrilled to become members of the group.

The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, was one of our favorite haunts for 30 years, and we attended many courses and lectures there. Torrey Pines offers a different milieu and many chances to learn about the Indians who once lived in the area and about the flora and fauna.

Pete plans to complete his requirements soon and we will work as a team. Our association with the staff and other docents has been most enjoyable.



Notes from the Naturalist

THE BLUE WHALE BLUES by Hank Nicol

At 6:30 I was walking around the South Carlsbad campground drumming up customers for my evening campfire. Somebody asked me if I'd seen the whale. What whale? I didn't know about any whale. Somebody said that a blue whale had washed up at the North end of San Elijo State Beach. "It was on the news!"

Next morning I went to San Elijo. My excuse was that I had to return a pair of bolt cutters. My reason was that I'd never seen a blue whale from near or from far, dead or alive. This might be my only chance. By the time I got to the maintenance shop I was fairly sure I was near the whale. It was another half mile, but the smell made it seem closer, a lot closer. I drove on as far as a non-4WD vehicle could go. I could see the whale down on the beach. A few people were looking at it. It was possible to stay close on the north side. Prevailing winds being how they are, the south side was a bit too fragrant. Nobody was hanging around long.

The people who had seen the whale rolling in said they had seen sharks feeding on it. I could see bite marks. The sharks had cut a huge gap in the middle of the whale. Some pieces of gut were farther out toward the surf. I paced off the length and estimated the whale to be 55 feet long. That wasn't too bad a guess. A later, more careful measurement made it 57 feet. That's short for a blue whale, so it must have been young. Blue whales are about 24 feet long when they are born, so this one must have been less than two years old when whatever happened happened.

After I'd seen, and smelled, all I wanted, I left. On my way out I met three people from regional headquarters coming down for a look. At the park office somebody asked if I wanted to be the spokesman for the State Parks on Channel 39. I said there were two regional ecologists and one interpretive specialist down there. One of them could have the honor. They must have declined the nomination too. Ranger Leroy Ross got to be the personality.

Who would remove the whale? State Parks, Fish and Game, Marine Fisheries, and the Coast Guard were candidates. Nobody had experience. After all, fifty-ton critters don't wash up dead on the beach every day. Maintenance Supervisor Ray Brenner drew the short straw for Parks, but the Coast Guard would help.

The maintenance gang managed to point the flukes out to sea. Then they swung the head around and tied the two ends together as best they could. As the tide rose, the Coast Guard came in and hooked on. The cutter pulled, and maintenance pushed with a bulldozer and a front-end loader. With the pushing, the pulling, and the incoming tide, it took about 45 minutes to refloat the whale. The Coast Guard cutter took it out about 20 miles. We all hope it's not in the U.S. when it hits again.



Docent Doings

Congratulations to the newlyweds! Bill Brothers, long-time docent and last year's V.P., and Denise Ripley were married August 11 in a beautiful ceremony in TPSR. We wish them every happiness.

A thank you to Irina Gronborg for another of her drawings, the wand chickory that appears on this page. We hope to continue brightening our pages with her excellent work.

Since we all enjoy the refreshments after meetings, let's not forget to do our part in providing them. Please call Joan Jollet (226-0482) if you can contribute goodies for a meeting. It doesn't seem to matter what--everything is promptly devoured. Cash donations are welcome too (drop them in the slotted can near the coffee urn) to help defray the cost of coffee, cups, napkins, etc. Let's all contribute one way or another to show our appreciation and to help make Joan's job a bit easier.

PRESS RELEASE FROM QUAIL BOTANICAL GARDENS

A photography and art show will be presented by the docents of the Quail Botanical Gardens on October 6 and 7. Photographers and artists, age 18 and over, are invited to submit their entries on October 5. The works of art and photographs must have been done in the gardens and botanically identified if it is appropriate and possible. Art entries should be suitably framed, no larger than 24 x 30 inches, and be ready to hang. Photographs should be 8 x 10 inches, in color or black and white, and matted.

A panel of professionals in the fields will judge the entries, and cash prizes will be awarded in all categories.

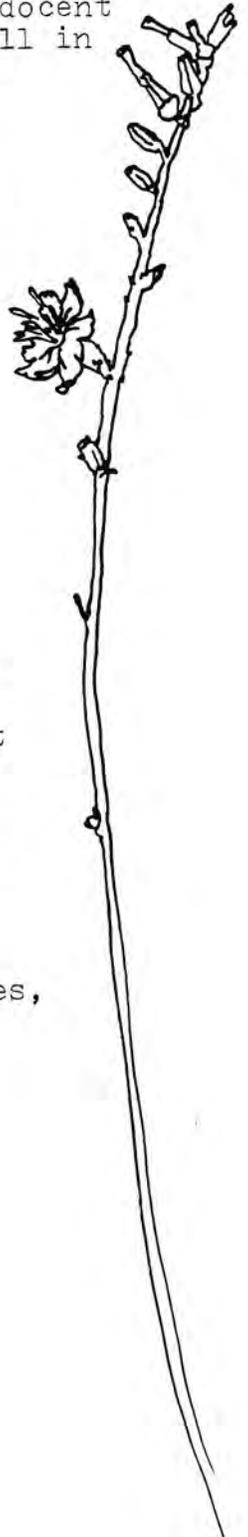
Entry blanks are available at the Quail Botanical Gardens Sunday plant sales table, 3-D Photo and Appliance Shop, the North Coast County Libraries, and photography shops in the area. For further information, contact Elisabeth Yearsley (telephone 436-3813).

OCTOBER TORREYANA: NOTICE FROM EDITOR

Once again Milli Horger is going to bail me out while I go on another vacation trip (and she thought she was rid of this job!). Please send all items for the October issue to

Millicent Horger
13130 Carousel Lane
Del Mar, CA 92014

or contact her by phone, 481-5994.



ANIMAL TALK

by June Harburton

MALLARD (Anas Platyrhynchos)

Of all the migratory fowl that take up temporary residence in our lakes, ponds, and lagoons, none are more readily recognized than the Mallards. With his dark head and neck which shines a metallic green in the sunlight, his snow white neck band, and reddish brown chest, the Mallard is usually what comes to mind when one hears the words "wild duck."

The Mallard is the most abundant and widely distributed duck in the Northern Hemisphere, ranging from the Arctic to the Subtropics in Europe, Asia, and North America. Often migrating from great distances, their flocks are well formed, usually in V's or U's, with from 40 to several hundred in a flock.

Most Mallards breed late in their first year, and begin to establish loose pair bonds as early as August. By January, 80% of the flock has mated. Nesting begins the first week of April and peaks between the first and third weeks of May.

For nest sites, Mallards prefer "upland" to "marsh", and normally within 100 yards of water. The female Mallard forms a nest in soft earth or in old plant litter, and then lays one egg a day until the clutch is completed, with an average of 9 in a clutch.

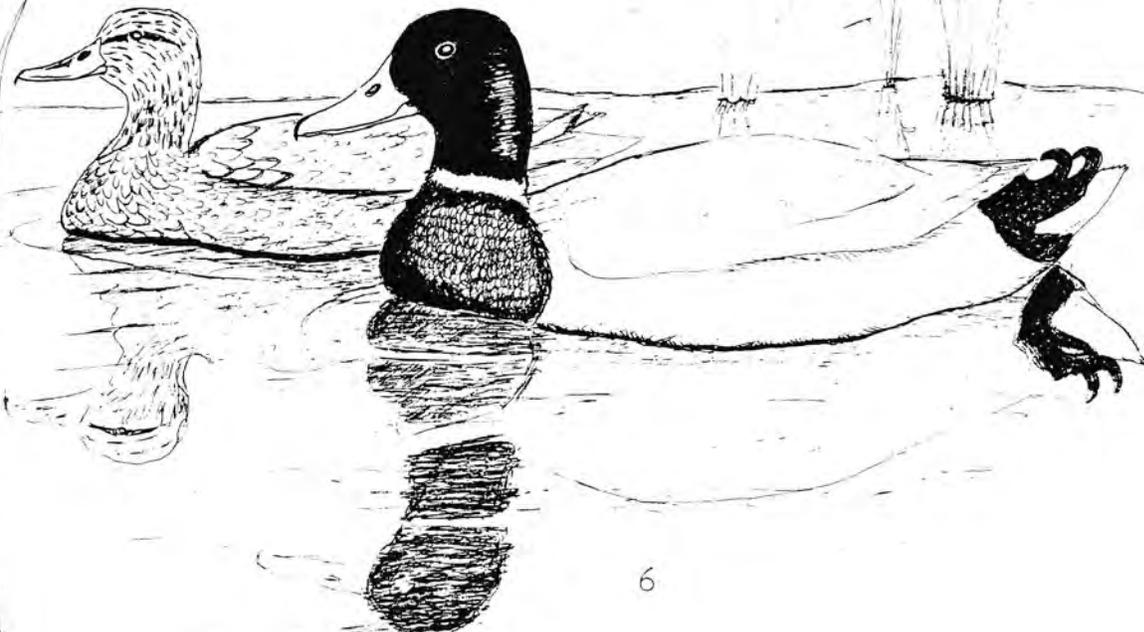
The pair bond begins to weaken as incubation begins and the mother (whose mottled coloration acts as camouflage) broods her young. The father takes no part in brooding or raising the young. Within 12 hours of hatching, the hen leads her ducklings to water, and about 40 days later, they are able to fly. Most nest losses are caused by Crows, Skunks, Ground Squirrels, Foxes and Coyotes, but flooding, fires and plowing also take their toll.

Both Drake (male) and Hen go through a molt after the breeding season is over which leaves them flightless until their lost flight feathers are replaced. During this molt, the Drake loses his characteristic coloration and takes on the same mottled appearance of the female.

Mallards are highly adaptable in their use of the natural and domestic foods available in the localities they visit, with wild and domestic seed being favored.

Very easily domesticated, the Mallard often grows to almost twice his normal size when.....

THE LIVIN' IS EASY.



Report from the Ranger (Well, the Park Aide) by Jim Bittner

Shark attack?

Well, so it seemed to some visitors from Maryland.

If sitting in the park entrance booth strikes you as a bit dull, this story might surprise you.

A bright, warm morning at the beach had brought several family groups to our parking area. The fact that they had Maryland license plates on their three station wagons didn't strike me as unusual, since many of our visitors are from other states.

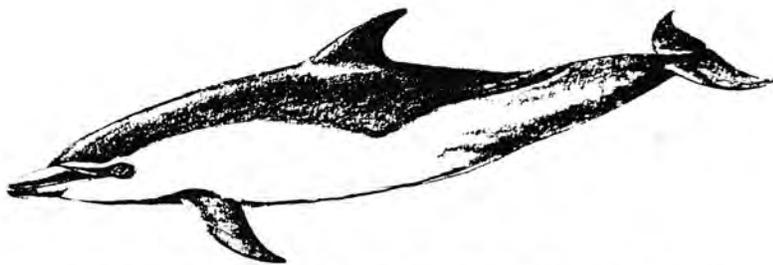
The parents busied themselves with setting up umbrellas and spreading blankets on the sand, while the children ran down to and right into the gentle surf. I turned away to mind some business in the kiosk, when I heard screaming--real honest-to-goodness shrieking. Looking toward the ocean, I watched seven genuinely frightened kids run out of the water to their concerned parents. The lifeguard on Tower Two was pointing out beyond the surf line, at several fins that were plying the water. Sharks? The folks from Maryland were shouting "Shark!" for the entire beach to hear.

No. They were our playful dolphins, a common sight almost every morning at the park entrance. The lifeguard ran over to explain, and to calm the children. Ten minutes later, the kids were splashing and swimming, enjoying the day.

And I was back at work once more.

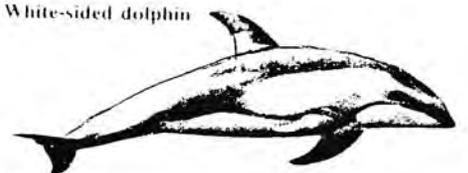
COMMON DOLPHIN

Delphinus delphis



To the California fisherman, this is the "white-belly" dolphin. It is a long-beaked form, rather strikingly marked and very beautifully shaped. Dolphins of this group have been depicted in art for thousands of years, and are among the most familiar to people because of their habit of running with ships and leaping out of the water.

White-sided dolphin



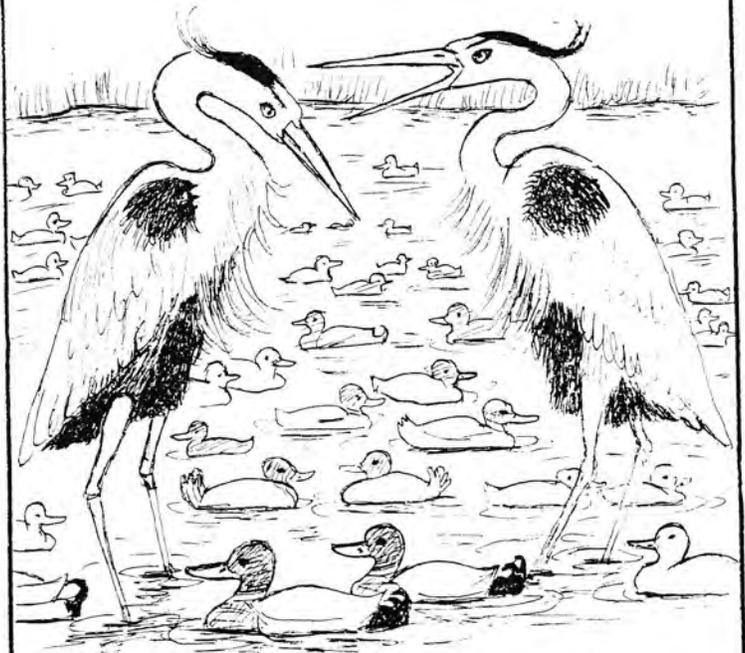
TORREY PINES DOCENT SOCIETY

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he blue whale, largest animal ever to inhabit the earth, can approach 100 ft in length and weigh over 140 tons (the record is 142.8 tons, determined by weighing one piece by piece, in a factory ship). Blues can devour 8 tons of krill a day! Hunted into near extinction, the blues are making a slow comeback under international protection.

Torrey Titters



I will sure be glad when all these
damn tourists go home!!!

W. BURTON

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