

TORREYANA

A newsletter for
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL
RESERVE

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May 2013

The Afterlife of Whales & Dolphins

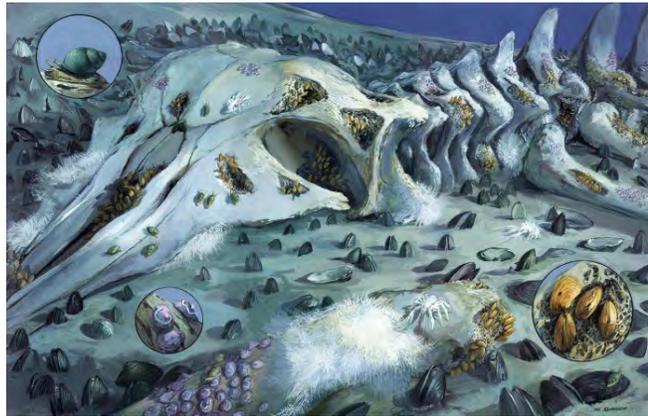
by Joan R. Simon

A year ago, Eddie Kisfaludy, formerly the curator of marine biology and field operations at Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) and an intrepid deep sea explorer, entertained us with his thrilling story of salvaging a dead fin whale stranded on Pt. Loma, towing it out to sea and after much drama, sinking it into the deep ocean (see: [May 2012 Torreynana](#)). His equally exciting presentation at the docent meeting on April 13th explored what happened to that fin whale and much more.



Eddie Kisfaludy and Richard Branson

Illustrating his talk with striking video from National Geographic Television that he and Peter Kragh shot, Mr Kisfaludy introduced us to the concept of “marine mammal falls,” which occur when marine mammals sink to the ocean floor and become part of the benthic ecosystem. This phenomenon has been studied in recent decades



Pictorial drawing of a “marine mammal fall” Website source is tumblr.com/tagged/whale%20fall through “staged” falls by scientists exploring these otherwise natural, but hard to discover, events.

The first assignment Mr. Kisfaludy was involved in required procuring two dead Common Dolphins (*Delphinus capensis*), a project co-sponsored by Sea World, NOAA, SIO, and the National Geographic Society. These dolphins are “easy to come by,” relatively small, and can often be spotted frolicking in our San Diego waters, the spray from their movements being visible sometimes as far out as 10 miles. After a necropsy at Sea World determined the cause of death, the first dolphin was sewn up and taken three miles out to sea. There the carcass was placed in the ocean and floated for a while, becoming a “fish aggregating device.” Initially, it attracted small fish who found safe refuge where

they could be protected from avian predators above and larger fish below. As the hours progressed, the film and scuba crews saw an increasing number of large fish species, such as yellowtail, half moon, and other predatory fish who scared off the smaller

ones. The largest sea life attracted to the site were a sea lion and a mako shark that stalked the area, “cautious and curious.” But “after a while even a floating dolphin carcass gets boring,” Mr. Kisfaludy noted, and the sea life began to disperse.

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The **Torrey Pines Docent Society** publishes the *Torreyana* bi-monthly, edited by Joan Simon. On alternate months, the Society publishes the *Torrey Pinecone*, edited by Pat Finn. Both publications include the monthly hosting calendar, announcements and information concerning membership meetings. Submissions for either publication are due on or about the 20th day of the preceding month and may be submitted to Editors@torreypine.org.

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Extra newsletters are available in the Docent Library.

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Many thanks to Editor Joan Simon and the docents contributing to this newsletter and to faithful Team *Torreyana*. And thanks to Marian Casazza for mailing and distribution.

Roger Isaacson
Publication Coordinator

Message from the President

It's already spring. Flowers abound, the air remains cool and hiking our trails is a joy. T-shirts replace jackets and shorts work just fine. Life here is good.

But we don't control this situation. We docents make neither the beauty nor the weather. We create neither the mystery nor the magic. We contribute our own enjoyment and respect of this wonder. We appreciate what we have and what we see. We also appreciate those who visit and their gratitude, expressed to us for the wonders that *they* experience. We in our khaki vests with blazing emblems of the California Parks System and dusty boots. We receive thanks for what we as well enjoy of the Reserve. Visitors from far and wide give us their trust and their confidence that we will protect this special place with special benefits and special values. Here they see Nature, the effects of millions of years, Nature as it was, as it is and as it will be. This is real. A gem in a beautiful setting, but still vulnerable.

And over the past couple of months we've decided to make a statement for this place we represent. We've selected a group from among our ranks and named it "The Green Team." We've picked some smart and dedicated docents to help shape the message for those who visit our Reserve. We want to point these people in the *right* way. The responsible and respectful way. To do *good* things. This isn't new. It is simply an expanded thing.

The charter of this Green Team is to encourage our visitors to consider the planet beyond our Reserve as well as within it. We want to encourage their advocacy. We start this effort by minimizing the consumption of single use water bottles and lessening our visitors' waste of resources. We begin here, modestly, but we will continue to be cognizant of additional opportunities to present a respectable and respectful face to the public. We will "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk." Where we can we will expand our interpretation to the value of our planet and its residents. We will continue to do what we have done but in an even greater sphere.

I am proud of us. This undertaking will require additional effort and increased cooperation from our membership. But, I am confident that this growth will continue. I am proud of you and proud to be a member of your group. This is the good stuff!

Thank you,

Bill Eckles

President,
Torrey Pines Docent Society

(cont. from pg. 1)

Why didn't the dead dolphin sink right away? Mr. Kisfaludy explained that bacteria trapped inside initially kept it afloat, but over time as holes develop in the body resulting from wave action and UV light degrading the flesh, the carcass lost its buoyancy and drifted through the "deep scattering layer" toward the bottom of the sea. A second dolphin was used for the actual "fall." National Geographic underwater cameras captured the arrival of the dolphin and Mr. Kisfaludy likened its presence to "a big dinner bell ringing for the deep sea community."

Invertebrates and fish, all with a keen sense of smell, flocked to the site. There were plentiful cancer crabs attracted by the dead food and available shelter and some "sarcastic fringehead" fish found a place to live under the pectoral fin and inside other dolphin parts. Time lapse photography dramatically showed that dinner time for crabs was at night, while the fish took their place at the table during the day.

After six weeks, white blubber was visible and bones were exposed. The carcass had become a structure, a home. "Most fish were here because it was a great place to live," Mr. Kisfaludy said. At three months, the dolphin had morphed into an "artificial, organic reef with fish swimming all around it," a skeleton with 90% of the flesh gone, and an attractive spot for kelp and sea grasses. The sheep crab found it both "jungle gym and buffet bar." Mr. Kisfaludy in scuba gear was part of the underwater team, despite the depth of 170 feet which is well beyond the normal scuba diving range. He said the resulting "nitrogen narcosis" was like "working while being completely drunk."

The next project centered on the fin whale (mentioned above) that was stranded on Pt. Loma in November, 2011 and towed 12 miles off the La Jolla shore where it was sunk 2,700' to the ocean floor. At 70 feet long, the fin whale is known as the "greyhound of the sea," with "almost the same agility

as a California Sea Lion." This was the largest marine mammal fall ever conducted and it was of particular interest to scientists at SIO who were studying a newly-discovered species of worm, *Osedax* sp. or boneworms, which are attracted to dead whales.

Thanks to funding from the Paul Allen Foundation (co-founder of Microsoft), a year after the sinking a specialized remotely operated vehicle (ROV) went on a scouting mission to see what had happened to the whale. Like the dolphin site, a whole ecosystem had developed around the whale, with crabs and other arthropods, the prehistoric hagfish among the myriad fish, and yes, the exciting *Osedax* worms which were working their way through the whale's bones. One question the scientists wanted to answer was whether these worms are "whale bone specialists" or will attach to any bones. So the ROV left a basket of various bones, from fish, sharks, and cows. The Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute will return to the site in May 2013 to recover this basket of bones to determine which bones the *Osedax* worms prefer, along with answering other biological questions. At the same time, they will be looking for new species. Mr. Kisfaludy noted that it will take decades before the whale completely "recycles" back into the ocean.

April 2013 Docent Meeting Minutes

Excerpted from notes of TPDS April 13th, 2013 General Meeting, by Secretary Lynne Truong. Complete minutes are in the docent library.

Meeting called to order at 10:30 am by **Bill Eckles**.

Docent of the Month: Anna-Lena Malm was selected for her work as editor of the *Torreyana* and her many hours as Lodge host and on Trail Patrol.

Joan Simon introduced Pat Finn as our new *Pinecone* newsletter editor. The *Torreyana* and *Pinecone* newsletters are

Docent General Meeting Saturday, May 11th 9 am

Location: St Peter's Episcopal Rec Hall,
Del Mar

Title: State of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon

Speaker: Mike Hastings, Executive
Director of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon
Foundation

In 1985, the California Coastal Conservancy created the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan to deal with a number of human-caused problems. A lagoon management program is now in place to monitor water quality, manage the manual removal of sand and debris upon lagoon mouth closures, give oversight and recommendations for improved usage, and coordinate with other agencies to protect and restore the lagoon. The Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation, formed in 1983, is the non-profit management entity charged with implementing the enhancement plan in coordination with State Parks and the State Coastal Conservancy.

Mike Hastings, in conjunction with the TPA, has been coordinating a series of workshops to define the future of the Lagoon. His talk will focus on the results of those workshops and the plan for the future.

Refreshment Alert: *The Society will continue to provide coffee, tea and fruit snacks as usual. What is new is that docents are bringing baked goods, special treats, nuts etc.*

May will be G, H, I. Check here every month to see when it's your turn.

available on the first day of the month on our web site. Send article submission to editors@torreypine.org

Spotlight On: Bill Sheehan introduced **Judy Schulman** who showed us a clip of a classic movie "The Man Who Understood Women" featuring Torrey Pines Reserve as landscape-double for the French Riviera.

Treasurer's Report (**Bill Eckles**): In lieu of **Carolyn Butterfield**, Bill reported that we are in good financial shape and the monthly financial report is posted in the Library.

General Announcements: **Ken King** announced the existence of a TPDS Strategic Plan which has been approved by the board. Ken summarized that TPDS has a great relationship with the park staff and is in good shape financially, but also said that being a volunteer organization has its weaknesses and the uncertain future of State Parks funding and the increased number of visitors pose threats to the Reserve. There are 13 key objectives in the Strategic Plan, which can be reviewed online. There will be sign-ups for work on various projects at the May general meeting.

Art in the Pines (**Judith Zyskind**):

- There are now 50 artists entered in the Plein Air competition!
- KUSI TV will be filming artists painting in the Reserve at the West Overlook for the Plein Air competition. On May 1st, artists will arrive between 7:30-8:30 am and the first live segment will be at 8:15 am.
- A PA system is needed. **Sara Mussen** has one that we can use during AITP; it just needs a microphone.
- **Cindy Wollaeger** announced that there are 35 pieces of art donated for the raffle, which will be available in a silent auction. There will be three raffle levels, with different prizes.
- Theme for this year's AITP is "Near-Zero Waste Activity." There will be no styrofoam used by the food vendors. There will be no water in disposable plastic bottles. **Bob Doolittle** has ordered 100 reusable bottles with the AITP logo for sale during the event; the Green Team will provide filtered water.
- To ease congestion, the South Parking Lot will be PREFERRED PARKING ONLY - \$20 entrance

fee; NO PASSES accepted. Notice signs will be put up two weeks before the event. Normal parking at North Parking Lot - \$10 entrance fee; all passes accepted.

- The upper parking lots will be closed for set up on Friday. Artists will be allowed up after 3 pm.
- There will be shuttle service beginning at 7 am from the North Parking Lot for docent volunteers. This year the shuttles will be dedicated to North Lot or South Lot and will not be making any stop en route.
- **Ken King** was asked to notify bicycle groups that no bikes are allowed on the road north of the Lodge.
- There will be no left turn into the Reserve coming from the south.
- TPA was asked to notify its members of the PREFERRED PARKING during the event.
- **Janice Barnard** confirmed that the bridge would be open during the AITP weekend.
- **Lillian Lachicotte** has sign-up sheets for volunteers for the event. Please note Lillian's new email address in the new Docent Directory. **Bob Doolittle** needs help with traffic & signage.

Water Bottles (**Bill Eckles**): Bill announced that the trial of selling reusable water bottle and offering filtered water to visitors has been very well received by the public at the TIK. In the 3 weeks trial, we sold the same number of reusable bottles as we previously sold of plastic bottles. The surprise find was that visitors wanted water, not necessarily water in disposable plastic bottles, and were very supportive of the initiative. The Board has approved the Green Team's plan to stop selling water in disposable plastic bottles. The State is planning on providing filtered water to the public but it might take 30-60 days or longer to implement. The Green Team will explore additional options to

immediately offer filtered water to the public. A talented team of docents led us all in the "Recycling Song", sung to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean" (lyrics by **Nancy Walters**, vocals by **Sara Mussen** and **Isabet Yarrington**, conducting by **Sally Whitlock** and accompaniment by **Bill Eckles** and **Hank Beck** on ukulele). See the link below for a video of the sing-along: vimeo.com/64690196

Museum Shop (**Nancy Woodworth**): The shop is very busy; life is good.

Recycling (**Bob Doolittle**): Recycling shed was moved to North Parking Lot.

Children Program (**Marie Johnson**): The program is serving 430 children in April. An evaluation potluck is planned for June 7th. A field trip to the Kumeyaay Center in Poway is planned for August 15th. A training refresher at the Lodge is planned for September 5th.

Lodge Hosting (**Irene Larrimore**): All the slots are filled.

Trail Patrol (**Sherry Doolittle**): Trail patrollers are working closely with the Seabees. Reports of posts down and erosion are quickly repaired by the Seabees. Many big groups are visiting the Reserve.

Road Cleanup (**Kristine Schindler**): Friday May 3rd, 9 am, at the South Parking lot. RSVP to Kristine or just show up. We want a road free of debris to welcome visitors driving to AITP that weekend.

Ranger's Report (**Lou Adamo**): Dylan took a few VIPs (State Representatives, District Supervisor) through the Reserve on the very busy Easter weekend. As a result, the park will receive funding to make the road leading up the Visitor Center safer. In the short term: improve cross walk, repaint white lines, restriping, better signage for walkers. There will be signs for "NO Downhill Bicycles" and "NO Pedestrians on Asphalt."

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.

Docent of the Month

Anna-Lena Malm:

Thank you very much for the recognition!



Photo by Herb Knüfken

Becoming a docent has significantly enriched my life. When I first moved to San Diego from the LA area a few years ago, I fell in love with the Reserve and hiked the trails several days a week. I knew nothing about nature (I called trees "trees" and flowers "flowers"). I just experienced the beauty surrounding me in a very intense way.

One day after more than a year of hiking, I stumbled upon the Lodge (which I hadn't seen before because I always turned right at the top of the hill) and saw an announcement about the upcoming docent training. I really wanted to share my love of Torrey Pines with others, so I signed up for the training. Little did I know how much this would enrich my social life! I met so many wonderful people with similar interests to mine and I immediately felt very much at home in the Docent Society. As an extra bonus, I met three wonderful docent friends who, like me, were born in Sweden. That's more Swedes than I have known in all my 36 years here in the US!

Thank you all for making Torrey Pines such a remarkable place! It is a true privilege to be part of such a well-educated, devoted and warm society.

Art in the Pines Volunteers:

Thank you to all who have volunteered to help with Art in the Pines. Because of your enthusiasm, willingness to work, dependability and spirit of joy, I'm sure our event will be a huge success. Still needed are volunteers who would be able to help at the last minute, so if you're the spontaneous type, sign up on the any place/any time list on the docent bulletin board. Again, thank you so much for your help.

Lillian Lachicotte

Children's Program

by Marie Johnson & Barbara Justice, Children's Program, Co-Directors and Louis Sands, Children's Program Coordinator

In April we had 450 school children attending five Kumeyaay Indian, two Ecosystem & Food Chain, and one Reserve Plants & Habitats topics.

Presenters were **Barbara Wallach, Janet Ugalde, Joellen Barnett, Paul Howard and Kathy Dickey.**

Dates to remember:

- June 7 - Evaluation Potluck at the Visitor Center
- August 15 - Visit to Kumeyaay-Ipai Center in Poway
- September 5 - Getting ready for the school years at the Visitor Center

When you are at the Visitor Center please check out all the beautiful "thank you" letters we get from the children. We even received photos/albums from one school.

And please contact us if you are interested in a special hike or want to join us on our regular hike with the children.

A Rattlesnake at the Lodge

by Barbara Wallach

Not all animals in the Museum are stuffed and dead. Docents, staff and trainees were surprised at a recent Saturday morning training session as they attempted to put a rolling museum display back into position. Yikes! Was that a snake? In the Museum? Yes. "It's only a baby rattlesnake" someone said, as the snake tried to crawl back under the display. Now what? We didn't want to hurt it by moving the case so we did the next best thing: called for a ranger. Ranger Mike Winterton quickly arrived on the scene and demonstrated his skill for catching rattlesnakes using a trash picker (now called a "snake picker"). A sigh of relief was heard and heart rates returned to normal. The snake was taken outside, turned loose and sent on its way. The moving display was put into place and **Laura Lowenstein**, our Park Aide, showed her bravery by reaching down into the case to re-plug-in the bird call system.

How long had the rattler been in the Museum? How did it get in? Did it come in just to hear the lecture that morning? We'll never know; but the conversation was lively during the break with many theories being put forth. *Moral of the story: be ever vigilant especially at this time of the year whether inside or outside of the museum because there are rattlesnakes everywhere and one could just be in the Museum that isn't stuffed and dead.*

Docent Class of 2013 Prepares for Graduation

by Janie Killermann

Since the final Saturday in February, the 28 members of the Docent Class of 2013 have been gathering weekly in the process of gaining factual knowledge about our Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve. These fun and determined learners are sharing experiences and sparking each other with their enthusiasm and sense of

wonder at new discoveries revealed each week.

In responding to an invitation to recall a special moment during our first nine weeks together, trainees have made these statements:

“These weekly visits have enriched my senses. At home I look, I listen a little longer; I turn over a leaf and see what’s under it. I look at the hills nearby and wonder when was this formed. Thanks for the gift of wonder.” -**Patty Hirst**

“Just the week after **Jack Friery’s** bird presentation, I was weeding in the North Grove and looked up to see two falcons in high-speed chase of each other, cartwheeling over the ridge.”

-**Pete di Girolamo**

Stu Rosenwasser recalls clearly a morning moment “on the Guy Fleming Trail at the ocean lookout seeing a pod of dolphins playing in the surf while a squad of brown pelicans overfly them.”

Lynn Alley and **JoAnna Procter** both share their memories of the sleek baby rattlesnake discovered in the Lodge. “Thinking this snake had fallen out of the display case, I moved in for a closer look. Yikes! It was a live baby rattler!” remarked Lynn. JoAnna added how Ranger Mike Winterton returned the little reptile to its natural habitat. “Then Ranger Mike picked it up with long tongs, took it outside and threw it over the wall” into its natural environment.

Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair

by *Sally Whitlock*

Our TPDS Judging Team enjoyed a wonderful and challenging day at the 2013 Greater San Diego Science & Engineering Fair on March 20, 2013. We are proud to announce the selection of three award winners:

1. Daniel Bruce, “Urban Noise: Effects on Lagoon Bird Density and Species Diversity” His article can be found on this page.

2. Navin Bose, “Leaf Morphology: Precipitation Capture in the Coastal Sage Scrub Community”

3. Daniel Vitenson, “Observing Territorial and Social Interaction of Migratory and Resident Ducks”

Daniel Bruce will present his project at the May 11th meeting. The other award winners will present their projects at the June 8 general meeting and their articles will run in the June *Pinecone*. Each winner will receive a certificate and \$250 and a TPSNR parking pass.

Many thanks to our Judging Team for a job well done!

All three students attend Rhoades School. Daniel Bruce is in 7th grade; Navin Bose and Daniel Vitenson are in 8th grade.

2013 TPDS Judging Team:

Bill Key, Denise Sunseri, Walt Desmond, Jeff Harrison, Sheldon Krueger, Wes Farmer, Joy Inton, Lillian Lachicotte, Frank Burham, Paula Shaw, Sally Whitlock

For more information on TPDS involvement in the San Diego Science Fair, see the June, 2012 issue of the [Pinecone](#).

Urban Noise: Effects on Lagoon Bird Density and Species Diversity

by *Daniel Bruce*

While observing wildlife in San Diego County, it became apparent that some natural habitats are surrounded by noise from highways, railroads and aircraft. I wondered how urban noise might impact birds in the wild. My goal was to document the levels of urban noise surrounding the Peñasquitos Lagoon Natural Preserve and investigate how noise may be affecting birds in this area. My hypothesis was that areas with higher levels of urban noise would have fewer numbers of birds.

Five sites of observation at the Lagoon were chosen along the trail that runs parallel to I-5 Highway. Observations of birds in each area, along with serial measurements of sound levels related to

the highway traffic, passing trains and aircraft, were documented during more than 32 field-hours distributed over 8 days during the winter 2012-2013.

I found a range of 54 to 80 dB of continuous noise from highway traffic, and 66 to 83 dB of intermittent noise from trains and aircraft. Two sites had average continuous noise levels above 65 dB, another averaged 61 dB, and two averaged less than 60 dB. A total of 40 bird species were observed. The two sites with the highest baseline noise were almost devoid of birds, and sites with noise levels at or below 61 dB had a greater density of birds and more bird species. A difference of 6 dB correlates to a difference of twice the volume, so a difference of 4 dB or more is significant.

According to my findings, urban noise **above 61 dB** was associated with fewer numbers of birds and lower species diversity in the Lagoon Preserve. To protect this habitat, which includes **endangered bird species**, further evaluation of the noise effects on birds, including during nesting and breeding seasons, should be performed, and perhaps urban noise control measures should be considered.

The logo for 'Art in the Pines' features the word 'Art' in a large, red, cursive font, 'IN THE' in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, and 'Pines' in a large, green, sans-serif font.

by *Mike Yang and Judith Zyskind*

Art in the Pines is May 4th and 5th, Saturday and Sunday. Plein Air artists who are entering our Plein Air Competition are painting in the Reserve this month. They will enter one canvas with a maximum size of 18” x 22” including the frame to be dropped off the afternoon of May 3rd.

KUSI TV Live Coverage May 1st:

The past couple of years, Mike Castellucci, from KUSI, has come to Torrey Pines very early in the morning a couple of days before Art in the Pines and done live coverage of Plein Air artists painting at the West Overlook. Wednesday morning, May

1st, artists will be arriving between 7:30 am and 8:30 am to set up. Mike's first segment will be at 8:15 am as the artists are arriving.

Near-Zero Waste:

We are making efforts to reduce the footprint of our event this year. For instance, there will be no Styrofoam used, limited plastics with a focus on recycling, and reusable stainless steel water bottles for sale. If you want to learn more about our Near-Zero Waste efforts and/or volunteer to support them during the event days please talk with **Kristine Schindler**.

Artists:

There are 68 booth artists, seven sharing a booth and one artist with two booths, making a total of 62 booths at \$180 each. There are 50 artists who entered the Plein Air Competition, and 21 of those are booth artists. The total number of artists in AITP this year is 97.

Parking and Shuttles:

Friday, May 3rd, the road up the hill will be closed to traffic except for docent volunteers until 3:00 pm when booths are set up and Plein Air art and raffle prizes are dropped off in front of the Lodge.

On May 4th and 5th parking in the South Beach Parking Lot will be **preferred parking (\$20, no passes accepted)**.

We hope this will decrease the all-day parking by people with passes in the South Lot and especially decrease the congestion caused by the constant closure of South Lot that occurred last year. Parking in the North Beach Parking Lot will be as usual, either \$10 for all day parking or use of a park pass.

We strongly encourage docents to park in the North Lot and use the shuttle.

Setting up Saturday morning, May 4th from 7:00 am until 9:45 am, a smaller shuttle will transport docents from the North lot to the top. Parking all day Sat. or Sun. on the road south of the Lodge is available to docents if they

come before 10 am and leave after the event ends.

Each year we try to improve deficiencies of the previous year. Hopefully this change will cause little disruption and will make South Lot more available to those visitors whose purpose is to come to Art in the Pines. During the event, we will have four shuttles available to transport passengers, two from the North Lot and two from the South Lot for use from 9:45 until 6:00 pm on Saturday and 9:45 until 4:30 pm on Sunday. All the shuttles will be marked as to their appropriate lot and will make continuous circles to their lots.

Spread the word:

Please pick up AITP bookmarks found on the table in the Docent Library and give them to your friends! Also, download the flyer from our website and distribute it. THANKS!!!

GREEN TEAM: Environmental Impact Task Force

by Frank Burham

At the TPDS Board meeting, on Wednesday April 10, the Board approved the formation of a GREEN TEAM to address all Environmental Impact Issues at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve. The assignment, current action items, and member list are given below. The newsletters will carry updates of their progress as they occur. The meeting schedule for the next few weeks is every Tuesday morning, 9:30 to 11, in the Docent Library. Any docent may attend and participate in the discussion. However only the Team Members can make motions and vote on issues.

GREEN TEAM:

Environmental Impact Task Force Assignment from the Torrey Pines Docent Society Board of Directors:

Expand the educational and supportive activities with regard to environmental issues at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve to embrace proactive activities in addition to current issues of recycling and cleanup.

The GREEN TEAM environmental task force, reporting to the TPDS Board, will provide research and direction to



assist the implementation of programs selected by the Board.

Initial Action Items:

- Provide interpretive and educational displays
- Provide low-cost refillable bottles
- Provide water refill stations
- Discontinue the sale of disposable water bottles
- Assure near-zero waste behavior at all public events at TPSNR
- Expand recycling efforts to reduce impact on landfill

The Board has requested submission of estimated budgets and time lines on these action items.

GREEN TEAM Members:

Frank Burham	Team Leader
Bob Doolittle	TPDS Board VP
Joy Inton	Park Aide
Johnson Jou	Interpretive Displays, Data Research
Ken King	Strategic Planning
Jake Mumba	Park Aide
Bill Sheehan	TIK
Kristine Schindler	Art in the Pines
Lynne Truong	TPDS Board Sec. and Board Liaison
Sally Whitlock	TIK, Interpretive Displays
Isabet Yarrington	Supplier and Vendor Liaison
Nancy Woodworth	Museum Shop

Docent Trip to Borrego Springs

By Ken King

On Friday March 22nd, a group of docents drove out to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park for the weekend. The participants were **Bill Eckles, Wes Farmer, Marty and Gary Jacobson, Lily Lachicotte, Jan Lombardi, Molly McConnell, Shana Norell, Diane Stocklin, Cindy Tozer, Mike and Viv Yang and Ken King.**



Some of the docent group- See more photos at Ken's [smugmug site here](#). The trip is the featured gallery.

Several of us left San Diego early and took advantage of the interpretive trail guide furnished at the 1.6 mile Yaqui Well Nature Trail, which provided information on plants, native cultures, early settlers, and geology.

We all met up at the park's Visitor Center to enjoy its exhibits, as well as the Visitor Center shop which had several docents busy at work. If only we had as much space!

After a short walk in the Visitor Center Garden, we drove to Borrego Springs to visit the ABDNHA (Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association) shop and the Anza-Borrego Foundation shop, which it shares with a State Parks shop in town. The ABDNHA shop is a great resource for books, clothing, and other items and once again, MUCH larger than ours!

Most of us then went out to Font's Point to view the badlands. It's always amazing that you can drive to this spot and have a 270 degree view of rugged desert for dozens of miles!

We then decided to check out the Swainson's Hawk migration. Borrego Springs is a major stopover on the Swainson's Hawks' 6,000-mile spring migration from Argentina to their breeding grounds far north of us. Local "hawkwatchers" are stationed at strategic locations in the valley every morning and evening to count them as they overnight here. Hal Cohen ("Hawkguy"), the key figure in this event, was there when we arrived to watch about 40 hawks "kettle" high above us, gradually circling down to

Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Is Closed

For more than a month, the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon has been blocked and water has not been flowing into or out of it. This happens almost every spring ([see June 2012 Pinecone pg. 5](#)) and the entrance requires dredging before the lagoon can be brought back to a healthy state. Mike Hastings, Executive Director of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation, has written the following:

"We are working with State Parks to have an emergency plan in place. Since San Diego Coast District does not have any equipment and their equipment operator is out, we are working to have equipment and operators from Orange County District come down. We are aiming for the week of April 29th or May 13th, as we have to work around grunion spawning and tides, as well as the availability of equipment and operators. We did receive a grant from SANDAG to perform inlet maintenance next year, but will not be able to use those funds until fall at the earliest."

land in a nearby field. We were lucky. Recently, only one or two hawks have been seen.

After spending the night at Palm Canyon Resort, we embarked on our hike up Palm Canyon, home to native palms and *borregos*, the bighorn sheep. To quote a reviewer: "Borrego Palm Canyon is the most popular trail in California's largest state park. It leads to the third-largest palm oasis in California, which was the first site sought for a desert state park back in the 1920s. It's a beautiful, well-watered oasis, tucked away in a rocky V-shaped gorge. If you're lucky, you may glimpse a bighorn sheep, in a canyon vegetated by California's only native species of palm... the trail is relatively easy to access and hike (three miles round trip with 600' elevation gain)." We didn't see any sheep on our walk, but we did sight another docent, **B.J. Withall!**

Since we are all docents, we couldn't pass up the guided walk through the garden adjacent to the Visitor Center. A knowledgeable park aide taught us a lot about the creosote bush, a signature desert plant. Did you know some think it's the longest-lived plant in the world?

On Sunday several of us hiked "The Slot," which is about a dozen miles from Borrego Springs plus a couple of miles on a sandy road. The 3-mile hike takes one through a very narrow slot canyon filled with photo opportunities. Following that, some of us visited the newly refurbished Tamarisk Grove campground for lunch (it's been closed for a couple of years). On the way home, Julian's apple pie called out to us, creating a sweet ending to our trip.

Benefits were not only the natural history education of the desert biome, but the camaraderie that the trip engendered. When is the next trip and where is it? Let's do this again!

Did you know?*

Northern Harrier

by Tom Polakiewicz

You might see one swooping low and slow over the Peñasquitos Lagoon, a few wing beats and then a glide, wings held up in a marked “V” shape.

If it detects prey, usually by sound trapped in the owl-like facial disk over its ears, it may drop to the ground suddenly to pick up a small rodent or frog, or even a small bird. It’s the Northern Harrier,

Circus cyaneus hudsonius, one of Torrey Pines’ rarest and most beautiful birds. Northern Harriers, sometimes called Marsh Hawks, were once far more common in San Diego County. Early in the 20th century it was a common breeding resident. Today, it is primarily a winter visitor, with only a few nesting pairs. Los Peñasquitos Canyon is one of the best breeding areas for harriers in the County.



Photo by Herb Knüfken

Male and female harriers are very different in appearance. The smaller males are mostly gray on their heads and backs, and mostly white on their bellies and the underparts of their wings. The tips and trailing edges of their wings are black. The larger females are mostly brown on their heads, backs and the top of their wings.

Their bellies are buff colored, and the under parts of their wings are banded brown and white. Both males and females have a white patch on the base of their tails. Harriers nest on the ground in marshes and grasslands, so urban development and free roaming dogs and cats have taken their toll on harrier numbers. Count yourself lucky if you see one gliding over the Lagoon. It is a rare and beautiful sight.

*This “Did You Know?” tidbit is one of an occasional series of submissions from Tom Polakiewicz

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: April 6, 2013

Number of species: 78

Gadwall 32	White-tailed Kite 2	Peregrine Falcon 1	Orange-crowned Warbler 2
American Wigeon 26	Northern Harrier 3	Olive-sided Flycatcher 1	Common Yellowthroat 13
Mallard 21	Red-tailed Hawk 3	Black Phoebe 4	Yellow-breasted Chat 2
Green-winged Teal 9	American Coot 31	Cassin's Kingbird 6	Spotted Towhee 13
Lesser Scaup 12	Willet 41	Western Kingbird 1	Rufous-crowned Sparrow 1
Bufflehead 35	Whimbrel 34	Western Scrub-Jay 3	California Towhee 36
Red-breasted Merganser 1	Least Sandpiper 3	American Crow 12	Savannah Sparrow 1
Ruddy Duck 9	Heermann's Gull 59	Common Raven 12	Song Sparrow 36
California Quail 33	Ring-billed Gull 7	Northern Rough-winged Swallow 43	White-crowned Sparrow 10
Pacific Loon 9	Western Gull 21	Bushtit 43	Black-headed Grosbeak 1
Common Loon 4	California Gull 17	Red-breasted Nuthatch 1	Red-winged Blackbird 31
Pied-billed Grebe 2	Caspian Tern 9	House Wren 1	House Finch 53
Western Grebe 51	Royal Tern 5	Marsh Wren 3	Lesser Goldfinch 38
Double-crested Cormorant 4	Eurasian Collared-Dove 2	Bewick's Wren 10	American Goldfinch 1
Brown Pelican 127	Mourning Dove 8	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1	House Sparrow 2
Great Blue Heron 1	Greater Roadrunner 1	California Gnatcatcher 3	
Great Egret 11	White-throated Swift 19	Wrentit 25	Observers: Jack Friery,
Snowy Egret 4	Anna's Hummingbird 25	Northern Mockingbird 4	Herb Knüfken, Blair Francis,
Black-crowned Night-Heron 4	Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 2	California Thrasher 6	Kathy Dickey, Gary
White-faced Ibis 3	Nuttall's Woodpecker 9	European Starling 1	Grantham, and Anonymous
	Northern Flicker 3	Black-and-white Warbler 1	
	American Kestrel 1		

Previous Bird Surveys may be found at torreypine.org/activities/bird-sightings.html

Herb Knüfken's amazing photo gallery may be found here: pbase.com/herb1rm



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May 2013 TPDS Lodge Docent Hosting Calendar- Updated 4/27/13

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Lodge hosting hours: L- 9-12 L- 12-3 L- 3-6	Walks: W Sat/Sun/Hol 9:30 (Start 10:00) W Sat/Sun/Hol 1:30 (Start 2:00)		L-Sogo L- L-	1 L-Griffith L-Dewhurst L-	2 L-Sheehan L-Tozer/Stocklin L-	3 L-EG Lawrence W - L- W -Sheehan L-	4 AITP
5 AITP L- W - L-E&G Lawrence W - L-E&G Lawrence	6 L-Hroutas/ Walker L-F Doolittle/ Buckley L-Colwell	7 <i>Maids</i> L-Sheehan L-Fiorentino L-Small	8 L- L-Phillips L-	9 L-Tarkington L-Beck L-Bogan	10 L-Sheehan L-Stehlik L-A Paa	11 Meeting L-Burke W -Sanseverino L- W -Sheehan L-Geist	
12 L-E&G Lawrence W -Fillius L- W - L-	13 L-M Lewis L- L-	14 L-Sheehan L-Fiorentino L-Small	15 L- L-Humphrey L-B&F Eckles	16 L-Griffiths L-Dewhurst L-	17 L-Colwell L-Stehlik L-Martineau	18 L-McGee W -Sanseverino L- W -Kamen/Yehushua L-Hartung	
19 L- W -Schindler L- W - L-Hartung	20 L- Hroutas/Walker L-F Doolittle/ Buckley L-Bogan	21 <i>Maids</i> L-Colwell L-Phillips L-Bogan	22 L-Tarkington/ MacConnel L-Small L-	23 L-M Lewis L-Beck L-Bogan	24 L-Schindler/ Martineau L-Simon L-A Paa	25 L-Mussen W -Sanseverino L- W -Polakiecicz L-E&G Lawrence	
26 L-E&G Lawrence W -Fillius L- W -Kamen/Yehushua L-	27 L-Mussen W - L-E&G Lawrence W - L-Bogan	28 L-Hroutas/ Walker L-Phillips L-Bogan	29 L-Humphreys L-Small L-	30 L-M Lewis L-Dewhurst L-S&S Rose	31 L-Burke L- L-		

To sign up for an opening, call the hosting docent (858-755-8219) to confirm the time and write your name in the Logbook. If you cannot do your session, please try to find your own substitute by switching with another docent or using the short-notice list. Then call the hosting docent to make the change in the Logbook. Coordinators: Irene Larrimore & Jan Lombardi