



TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 420

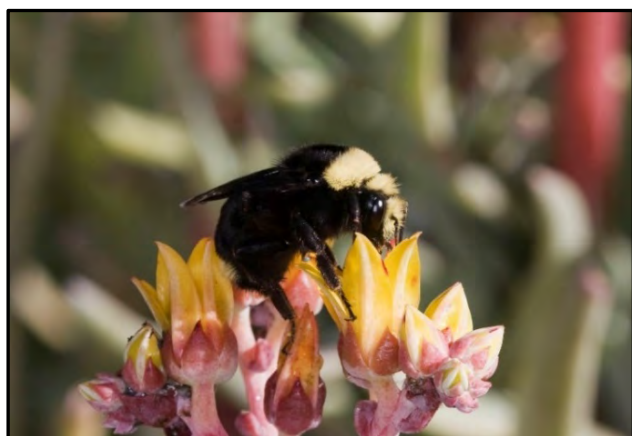
July 2020

Beeline Back to Nature

by Dan Hammer

At the June 13 TPDS Zoom general meeting, apiarist biologist **Amy Geffre** outlined her fascinating research on “the last unstudied honey bee” – considering how feral bee colonies might improve the health of wild and managed bees.

Amy is a second-year Ph.D. student at UCSD, working in James Nieh’s Lab of Honey Bee Health and Behavior. She is a self-proclaimed “social insect enthusiast,” and her enthusiasm was infectious. She said that California is a “really cool” place to do pollinator research because the California Floristic Province is the most florally biodiverse area in North America, with more than 3,500 species of plants exclusive to California. These bowers of flowers support an “insane insect diversity” of more than 28,000 species – including 1,500 bee species, 700 of which are exclusive to San Diego County.



Closeup of wild bee

California is also North America’s leading commercial producer of fruits, nuts, and vegetables. To keep these crops productive, farmers have imported many colonies of European honey bees, which beekeepers move in and out of orchards as blooms occur. (Cont. on pg. 2)

Docent General Meeting

Saturday, July 11, 9 am

Location: Online via Zoom (link to the meeting will be emailed to all docents)

Speaker: Dave Weller

Topic: The Dolphins of San Diego

Dave Weller is Acting Director of the Marine Mammal and Turtle Division at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, a part of NOAA. He received his Ph.D. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University and has been studying the biology and ecology of whales and dolphins for 35 years. His specialization is in the areas of behavioral ecology, population assessment, and evaluation of potential disturbance impacts from human activities.

At approximately 10:15, there will be two Science Fair presentations (abstracts on pg. 8-9).

A business meeting will follow the Science Fair presentations.



Beehives

The Torrey Pines Docent Society publishes the *Torreyana* monthly, edited by Joan Simon and Dan Hammer on alternate months, and is formatted and produced by Roger Isaacson. Submissions are due on or about the 20th day of the preceding month and may be emailed to Editors@torreypine.org.

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FLASH From Joy Inton: Don't forget to hold your ZooNooz magazines to bring to the Museum Shop when it re-opens.

President's Message

Docent Day

It was a beautiful, magical day! Canchalagua, Mariposa Lilies, Monkeyflowers, Snapdragons, San Diego Wreath Plant, Prickly Pear, and Flat-Top Buckwheat were all in glorious bloom. Quail families scurried about. Cottontails, lizards, and birds abounded. A snake slithered across the trail. Pelicans flew in formation above the ocean. I even saw Peregrines soaring over the Guy Fleming Trail. Best of all was the opportunity to share this magnificent experience with friends and fellow docents.

Thanks, Dylan, for giving us Docent Day on June 23.

See you on the trails.

Janet Ugalde

TPDS President

Photo Collage of Docent Day on pg. 3 by Janet Ugalde

(Cont. from pg. 1)

Pollinating communities – flies, beetles, ants, and many species of bees – are deeply intertwined. When flowers bloom, pollinators come rushing in. And with them come pathogens, including viruses that can jump from one species to another.

California agriculture depends on bees and other pollinators. Any threat to bee populations threatens our state's food supply and economy. By studying the biology and behavior of feral honey bees, Amy and her colleagues hope to discover ways to improve the health of managed honey bee colonies.

Honey bees in commercial or backyard hives are very useful for humans but also act according to their biology. From time to time, groups of them swarm, or split from the original colony, and set up shop for themselves. They become feral honey bees (FHBs), colonies of formerly managed honeybees (MHBs) that migrate to the wild to start colonies of their own.

(Cont. on pg. 4)



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Flower with multiple species

Docent Day 2020



(Cont. from pg. 2)

After they “slip the yoke of domestication,” feral honey bees are subject to different selective pressures than their managed counterparts. In Southern California, most FHB colonies contain a diverse mix of European and Africanized honey bees. Amy and her colleagues are studying whether this genetic diversification might produce certain biodefenses against disease and infection.



FHB colony in knothole

FHBs’ behaviors change, too: Their colonies swarm more than MHBs, thereby interrupting the brood cycle to avoid parasitic mites. They are also considered to be more aggressive, which may improve defenses against disease vectors in ways researchers are still exploring.

As a result of these changes, FHB colonies appear to be better able to deal with disease than MHBs and able to handle a level of disease that is hard on MHB colonies.

Amy’s research has led to two working hypotheses. The first concerns **resistance**: FHB colonies tend to carry fewer viruses than MHB colonies. The second focuses on **resilience**: How an FHB colony might carry higher viral loads but is better able to deal with them. She and her colleagues are currently in the midst of a year-long study of FHB and MHB colonies around San Diego County, measuring and comparing viral loads.

Their preliminary findings indicate that FHB colonies don’t necessarily have fewer viruses on average, but that individual feral colonies appear to have a greater variability in viral loads of deformed-wing virus, which affects many bee species. This variability among FHBs could play a key role, for better or worse, in pollinator health.

One focus of further study is how behavioral differences and genetic diversity affect pathogen defenses in FHB colonies. Other open questions include whether FHBs or MHBs are more likely to transmit viruses to wild bees.

Bee health is vital to all of us, both as lovers of nature and as consumers of agricultural products. We are grateful to Amy Geffre for her pioneering work and for her outstanding presentation to the TPDS. If you missed her talk or want to see it again, it is available online at [Docent Login/DocentDocs](#)

General Meeting Minutes – June 13, 2020

The General Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by President Janet Ugalde, who welcomed Torrey Pines docents to the GM conducted again via Zoom. Close to 110 docents participated.

Speaker

Amy Geffre, PhD student at UC San Diego on Feral Honey Bees (see front page for article).

TPDS Business

President’s Report

President Janet Ugalde shared:

- Purchase of trail maintenance motorized wheelbarrow toter: Janet informed the docents that the TPDS board had authorized the expenditure of \$7K for the purchase of a trail maintenance motorized wheelbarrow toter. The toter had been requested by TP maintenance supervisor Chad van Doren. Janet explained that several large donations to the TPDS, which were specifically earmarked for trail maintenance, made this purchase possible.
- TPSNR opening status: Janet shared that TPSNR, including the TPSNR Extension, remains closed. The City’s free parking strip along N. Torrey Pines Road reopened on June 10, 2020 and the North parking lot and chemical toilets are open. The South parking lot remains closed. Torrey Pines State Beach is open for passive and active recreation. Visitors must have a mask available to wear when within six feet of others.
- The San Diego Health Department and the California Department of Parks and Recreation will determine the opening date for TPSNR. [As we go to press, the Reserve and South parking lot are due to be open soon.]
- Janet reported that as long as the Reserve is closed, Supervising Ranger Dylan Hardenbrook has asked TP docents to refrain from wearing their uniforms and not to interact with visitors in their role as docents when picking up trash at the beach and around TPSNR.
- Resignation from the TPDS Board: Janet informed the docents that **David Walker** has resigned from the TPDS Board. After consulting with the Nominating Committee and the bylaws, the board decided to continue its work for the remainder of 2020 with eight members.
- **Program Announcements**
 - o The Children’s Program will be suspended for the remainder of 2020. TPDS had no other choice because local schools have suspended all field trips for 2020.

- o Because docent training is highly interactive and depends on intensive hands-on interactions and trail hikes, the New Docent Training 2020 Program has been cancelled. The program will resume when it can be conducted in its usual manner, possibly as early as Spring 2021.

- **Museum Shop**

Members of the Museum Shop Committee met and discussed reopening issues, including limiting opening hours and reducing the range of merchandise being sold. At this point, nothing has been resolved. It is clear, however, that for the foreseeable future sales will not resume. The hope is that the shop will be open before the holiday season.

The committee discussed the possibility of creating an online shop. Janet asked docents with experience in online sales to contact her or the shop managers.

Janet explained that selling merchandise is not an essential function of TPDS and that health concerns and ensuring the well-being of docents are driving the decision to be cautious and not reopen the shop too soon without having proper protection steps in place.

- **New Password**

Roger Isaacson created a new password for torreypine.org/volunteering/docentlogin/. Docents who are not aware of the new password should contact Roger or consult the GoogleGroup postings. Roger has pinned the posting with the new password information at the top of the GoogleGroups list.

- **Trail Conditions**

Janet shared Dylan Hardenbrook's update about the conditions of the trails in the Reserve. All trails are in poor condition because the confluence of gnatcatcher breeding season, late heavy rains, budget and COVID-19 challenges have made it impossible for the maintenance crew to conduct regular upkeep work, including bush trimming and repair of trail erosion. The trail maintenance motorized wheelbarrow toter cannot be used because of the gnatcatcher breeding season noise restriction in place from March to September. Buying an electronic toter would not solve the problem because some of the birds have built their nests in the vegetation adjacent to the trails. This news may mean that some trails may be off limits until the end of the gnatcatcher breeding season, i.e., September. According to Dylan, the Reserve's resource team is preparing a report describing the areas that are off limits and identifying those where trimming will be allowed to happen. Additional information will be forthcoming during the next week.

- **Science Fair Presentations**

Virtual Science Fair Presentations have been scheduled for the July 11 general meeting. They will occur at approximately 10:15 am, after the regular speaker presentation (see student abstracts on pgs. 8-9) and before the business meeting.

- **Refresher Training Survey**

During the June general meeting, **Janice Barnard** and **Roger Isaacson** conducted a survey on the Saturday refresher training classes which showed that docents are interested in continuing this program. See article on pg. 10 for full results and upcoming courses.

Docent of the Month

Eileen Conway, Class of 2004, was named Docent of the Month. Since 2006, she has been the person behind the torreypine.org "Contact Us" button. She answers potential visitors' TP questions or forwards them to the appropriate staff or docent. It has been especially challenging during COVID-19, answering messages (sometimes angry) about why we have not opened our lots, roads, and trails. Thank you, Eileen!

The meeting ended at 11:00 am

Children's Program

by Louis Sands, Children's Program Coordinator

I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and healthy summer, and to thank all docents who participated in our abbreviated 2019-20 school year. We still managed to honor 43 of the 71 scheduled visits, and we gave over 2800 kids some much-needed education and fun in the great outdoors!

A special "shout out" goes to a docent (Class of 2018) who managed to participate in 29 of this year's 43 program days. She is everyone's favorite Delmartian cyclist who wears really cool socks! Know who? **Rosemary Wareham**, of course! Rosemary, you are so much fun to have around, and I hope you'll return with your awesome attitude and creativity when program operations resume.

I also want to acknowledge the following docents who exceeded fifteen days of service for this year's program: **Pao Chau, Serena Grädel, Paul Howard, Marie Johnson, Steve Neal, and Janet Ugalde**. I am so thankful for your dedication. And, Serena, please know that you are the best Swiss export since Roger Federer, and we will welcome you with open arms and smiles should your travels bring you back to San Diego!

Lastly, I need to report that the Docent Society board decided to suspend Children's Program operations until the spring of 2021. Ironically enough, the COVID-19 pandemic has given Children's Program docents the opportunity to walk our talk around adaptation, interconnectedness, and

cycles. And how! Until we gather again, stay well. I pledge to keep you informed of program developments throughout the coming months.

Park Aide: Louis Sands (2005)

I come from the great state of Maryland, home of delicious blue crabs, "Bawlderese", and the perennially-denied Orioles! I give my parents all of the credit for my interest in the natural world. Both of them were born and raised in rural Maryland, and each served, for over a decade, as a scoutmaster. They love the outdoors. Camping trips, visits to National Parks, and hikes along the Appalachian Trail are all fond childhood memories. In fact, our family's first home, built in a wooded area along the Gwynns Falls watershed, had a backyard that was its own nature reserve. White-tailed deer, red fox, beaver, cardinal, and oriole sightings were common, and my friends and I loved to collect tadpoles from the stream and fireflies from the summer night skies. I left Maryland for college and graduate school at the University of Virginia (BA '86, MBA '89). Go, Hoos! After various corporate stints with Procter and Gamble, American Express, and Bristol-Myers Squibb, I moved to San Diego. My management career came to an unexpected, but welcome, end when my ambulatory care services administrator position at UCSD Medical Center in Hillcrest failed to survive the management consultant recommendations. Armed with a great severance package and a desire to make a career change, I applied for the docent training class in the spring of 2005. I also enrolled in two botany classes at Mesa College. Ironically enough, Torrey Pines was where I often spent my "mental health days" prior to the training; you know, when you call in sick because the thought of herding the cats at work gives you pause! I was so impressed by the training. Our training director, Janie Killermann, was such a class act, and many of my fellow classmates are still active today.



Shortly before the training ended, former Supervising Ranger Jody Kummer offered me a park aide position, and to this day I remain grateful for that opportunity!

Currently, I serve the Reserve as a senior park aide, Children's Program coordinator, and docent training team member. When not working, I love traveling, skiing in Utah, and teaching meditation.

Docent of the Month: Eileen Conway

With degrees in psychology, math and instructional design, I worked as a statistician for the National Center for Health Statistics, as a research associate in cognitive science at UCSD, in various telecomm environments, such as Nokia and LSI, and auditing businesses to ISO 9001 quality standards. With all that left-brain activity in my work life, I always enjoyed walking/hiking/European bicycle touring (always pressing flowers in any book I was reading). I often walked in Torrey Pines and noticed the sign soliciting docents. I was looking for volunteer opportunities at the time so I took the training in 2004, when Jody Kummer was the supervising ranger, and loved it. Initially I worked in the Lodge but, introvert that I am, I was happy to help **Roger Isaacson** with handling Contact Us emails on the newly upgraded TPSNR website, starting in 2006, because I could do it from home



Many years later, I am still at it. Very little left-brain use for me now. I bought a home, dug up all of the grass and put in a native garden, and became a percussionist for jazz/Latin/pop/Middle Eastern music. Although I miss walking in the Reserve, I actually enjoy all the alone time the pandemic affords me. Introversion has its benefits!

Thomas Nuttall, “Old Curious”

by Kathy Dickey

To my delight, a 19th century scientist of great accomplishments, I recently became interested in, turned out to have significant San Diego “roots” (a noun apropos to him). You might like to meet Thomas Nuttall, too, if you have not had the pleasure.

Perhaps you’ve heard of our most common TPSNR woodpecker, the Nuttall’s Woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttallii*)? Or, Nuttall’s Scrub Oak (*Quercus dumosa*)? I could go on and on with species named after him. So, who was this busy guy, Nuttall? I dug deeper, and found a fascinating story about a brilliant naturalist.

Thomas Nuttall (1786–1859) was born in Yorkshire, England and came to America in 1808 to study botany and zoology at the University of Pennsylvania. He ventured out on many “collecting trips” around the eastern U.S., and in 1811 he joined the Astoria Party, the first group to explore the West after Lewis and Clark. Many of the specimens collected by Lewis and Clark had been lost on that trip, so Nuttall located the same species and collected them, along with many new discoveries.

Other solo trips to the Southeast followed in 1818-1820, resulting in numerous publications. In a book about the Arkansas River region, he wrote about his malaria as “miseries of sickness, delirium, and despondence.” His experiences with the native population were interesting. Once, he had to flee when they tried to steal his horse. On the other hand, other Indians who rescued him when he was lost were described with great appreciation and compassion. He had foresight as to their unhappy future. He said, “the unfortunate aborigines...so rapidly dwindling into oblivion.”

In 1820 he befriended botanist **Dr. John Torrey** (yes, “our” Torrey) of New York, and continued to correspond and share collections with him throughout his life. Later, in 1825, Nuttall became the curator of the Harvard Botanical Gardens and a lecturer in Natural Sciences.

In 1832 he started a lasting friendship with **John James Audubon**. Turning his studies toward birds, Nuttall published his *Manual of the Ornithology of the United States and of Canada* (1832 and 1834), a book highly recommended at the time by the eminent **Ralph Waldo Emerson** and many others.

After an unhappy position at Harvard (he called it “vegetating”), Nuttall longed to travel back to the West. He was never happier than when “out collecting.” In 1834 he jumped at the chance to come to California along what became the Oregon Trail. After collecting in the Rocky Mountains and Northwest, he spent two years sailing and collecting along the Pacific Coast, and even visited Hawaii, before returning to Boston.

While in California he collected specimens in San Diego during the Spring of 1836, spending most of his time in the Point Loma area, nearby bays and beaches, as well as in Old Town. During this time he collected and named numerous marine species and plants. **Richard Henry Dana**, author of *Two Years Before the Mast* and a former student of Nuttall’s, was surprised to see his former Harvard professor walking barefoot one day along a beach. Nuttall told the curious Dana his travel stories while he collected stones, shells, and flowers. His collections extended to dozens of barrels. The two later traveled together around Cape Horn to Boston. Shipmates called Nuttall “Old Curious.”

In his very prolific life, Nuttall collected and named 246 new taxa. Nineteen of them were plants from the San Diego visit, including: Laurel Sumac, Lemonadeberry, Bladderpod, Lady-fingered Dudleya, Chalk Dudleya, Mission Manzanita, Deer Weed, Monkeyflower, Nuttall Snapdragon, Wart-Stem Ceanothus, and San Diego Bedstraw. The next time you see these familiar botanical wonders, think of Thomas Nuttall. And, if he had only gone a little farther north from San Diego harbor, perhaps our tree would be called Nuttall Pine. John Torrey wouldn’t mind.

Source:

Graustein, Jeannette E. 1967. Harvard University Press. *Thomas Nuttall, Explorations in America, 1808-1841*.

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Torrey Pines Book Club

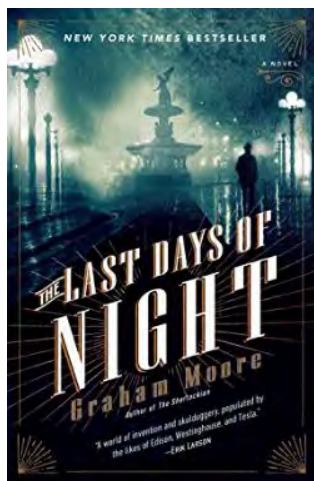
We will continue to meet via **ZOOM** at our regularly scheduled time. Please notify **Ken King** if you plan to participate and if you need any extra help getting connected.

When: Tuesday, July 14, 1:00 pm

What: *The Last Days of Night: A Novel* by Graham Moore
A New York Times bestseller

Amazon says:

New York, 1888. Gas lamps still flicker in the city streets, but the miracle of electric light is in its infancy. The person who controls the means to turn night into day will make history—and a vast fortune. A young untested lawyer named Paul Cravath, fresh out of Columbia Law School, takes a case that seems impossible to win. Paul's client, George Westinghouse, has been sued by Thomas Edison over a billion-dollar question: Who invented the light bulb and holds the right to power the country?



The case affords Paul entry to the heady world of high society—the glittering parties in Gramercy Park mansions, and the more insidious dealings done behind closed doors. The task facing him is beyond daunting. Edison is a wily, dangerous opponent with vast resources at his disposal—private spies, newspapers in his pocket, and the backing of J. P. Morgan himself. Yet this unknown lawyer shares with his famous adversary a compulsion to win at all costs. How will he do it?

In obsessive pursuit of victory, Paul crosses paths with Nikola Tesla, an eccentric, brilliant inventor who may hold the key to defeating Edison, and with Agnes Huntington, a beautiful opera singer who proves to be a flawless performer on stage and off. As Paul takes greater and greater risks, he'll find that everyone in his path is playing their own game, and no one is quite who they seem.

August 11: *Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time* by Dava Sobel

San Diego Science Fair Winners

The TPDS's judging team chose two winning projects at the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair held on March 11, 2020.

Willa Norvell is an 8th grader at The Rhoades School. Her project was to analyze the factors for native plant regrowth following the Woolsey Fire in the Santa Monica Mountains. Rohan Keswani and Elias Samada are 7th graders, also at The Rhoades School. Their project was to document the prevalence of invasive species at the Batiquitos Lagoon in Carlsbad. Each winner received an Award Certificate and a year pass to California State Parks. Each project was awarded \$250.

Members of the Docent Society's judging team this year are **Wayne Kornreich, Lillian Lachicotte, Karen Lisi, and Leigh Fenly.**

Woolsey Fire Burnt Soil: Analyzing Factors for Native Plant Growth

by Willa Norvell

Recently, California has suffered from some of the worst wildfires in West Coast history, including the Woolsey Fire. My goal was to discover more about the soil status in the Santa Monica Mountains. I wanted to find out if the burned soil might still support the growth of fast-growing native plants, such as Yerba Santa, a native species. Based on my research, I believed that the burned soil might be deficient in nutrients necessary to support the growth of this native plant.



Willa Norvell

I travelled to two sites in the Santa Monica Mountains. One was a burned site and the other was a control site. I collected six boxes of each soil type and I used the Harris Seeds Soil Testing Kit to assess soil quality. The kit tested soil pH, nitrate, phosphorus, and potassium levels. The

methods included adding barium sulfate or other compounds to test the soil. I performed 24 soil tests to compare quality. I planted seeds in 40 soil samples, 20 burned and 20 unburned in a mini-greenhouse and purchased a grow light kit. I kept the light on for 12 hours each day and every three days, I watered the plants.

I repeated the processes from the Harris Soil Testing Kit three times on three different boxes for each kind of soil. Overall, the results that exhibited the greatest differences between the soils were the pH and potassium levels. The unburned Santa Monica soil averaged a pH of 7.5 and revealed a surplus of potassium. The burned soil's pH averaged 6 and was extremely deficient in potassium. The unburned soil contained levels of phosphorus and nitrogen that were averaged at the lower limits of adequate. The burned soil contained less phosphorus and nitrogen, and both were on average at the upper limits of deficient. The seeds took longer to germinate, but the regular soil was absorbing more moisture, leading me to believe that those seeds are making the most growth progress.

Through my observations it seems there are many factors in the burned soil that may impede its full recovery. Perhaps we could experiment with additives that would increase the amount of N, P and K, such as bone meal, dried blood or muriate of potash and see if this makes a long-term difference.

Documenting the Prevalence of Invasive Species at the Batiquitos Lagoon

by Elias Samada and Rohan Keswani

All over California there are ecological communities suffering due to the constant threat imposed by the ever-growing number of invasive species. Examples of these include Russian Thistle (commonly known as Tumbleweed) and Black Mustard, which can both be found right here in San Diego County along with many places in North America, Europe, and Asia. Destruction of native plants has a lasting effect on the habitats of native species and how the local ecosystem functions.

Since the soil in the areas surrounding the Batiquitos Lagoon has been disturbed (graded and used as a road) over the years, many destructive plants have appeared and begun to take over the area once occupied by native plants. In our project, we will be documenting the prevalence of invasive species in Batiquitos Lagoon and examining which areas are most at risk. The results of our project could give scientists and other people who are associated with the Batiquitos Lagoon insight as to where the problems lie.

For our materials we used a laser rangefinder, a log form we created to document the plant species, a notebook for recording findings and a camera. We used these tools to record the types of invasive plants and native plants we observed in the sites along the trail. We also estimated the

percentage of the site that appeared to be overwhelmed by invasive species. We divided the 2.6 kilometer (1.61 mile) region into 23 sites where we documented the presence of the plant species. We formed the 23 sites by using a laser rangefinder which allowed us to come up with interval measurements and dimensions for the plots.



Elias Samada and Rohan Keswani

We documented data in 23 contiguous sites in the Batiquitos lagoon. At the 23 sites we documented, 17 native species and 20 invasive species were observed. Sites 1-12 we named Region A, and sites 13-23 we called Region B. In Region A, the estimated percentage of soil coverage overwhelmed by invasive plants ranged from 75% in Site 1 to only 10% in Site 6. The average percentage of soil coverage overwhelmed by invasive species was 38%, and the median was 33% of the site covered by invasives. For Region B, the estimated percentage of soil coverage overwhelmed by invasive plants ranged from 90% in Site 13 to as little as 8% in Sites 5 and 8. The average percentage of soil coverage overwhelmed by invasive species was 41%, and the median was 35% of the site covered by invasives.

After documentation, we discovered that Region A had fewer sites with more than 50% of the soil coverage overwhelmed by invasive species. We noticed specific plant species like Black Mustard were frequently found in dense groups, allowing no space for native growth. Region B allowed more room for native plants, but still there were multiple areas where the prevalence of invasive plant species was far too great and was interfering with the surrounding native plant growth. Throughout the course of our experiment, we discovered that invasive plant growth is actually very serious and is affecting the growth patterns of essential natives. Scientists can use the information we have derived to come up with plans of action as to where to focus their efforts. We hope this will help the environment as a whole and provide a better future for the plant life.

Refresher Training Poll Yields Positive Results

During the June 13 general meeting, **Janice Barnard** and **Roger Isaacson** conducted a survey on the refresher training courses that have been held via Zoom over the preceding 4 Saturdays. Close to 90% of the docents at the meeting participated. The results were as follows:

How many retraining sessions attended:

None	3%
One	3%
Two	6%
Three	26%
Four	62%

Have you viewed a recording?

Yes	65%
No	35%

Did you find the retraining valuable?

Valuable	83%
Sort of	16%
Not Really	1%

Should we continue the retraining?

Yes	97%
No	3%

How often?

Weekly	49%
Every Other Week	30%
Monthly	21%

Upcoming Refresher Courses will be held on Saturdays at 9:00 am.

June 27: Native Peoples with Kathy Dickey

July 25: Birds with Marty Hales

August 22: TPSNR History with Mark Embree and the Historical Characters Group

Looking Back on the Birds of Torrey Pines

by Jack Friery, Class of 2000

For years, we've published a monthly bird tally in the *Torreyana*. Because of the unfortunate closing of the Reserve caused by the pandemic, we have no tally to offer this month. Instead, let's look back at some of the birding highlights we've experienced over the many years we've recorded our bird sightings at the Reserve.

All the following is taken from eBird, an online birding database maintained by Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology. Every month we submit our findings to eBird before we publish the list in the *Torreyana* and post a hard copy at the Lodge.

- Our monthly reports recorded with eBird go back to 1995.
- We've submitted 336 checklists.
- The total number of bird species we've recorded is 247.
- There have been a surprising number of birds we've recorded only once. These are usually birds that are accidental or way out of range in our coastal habitat. Here are some examples:
 - o Golden-crowned kinglet
 - o Green-tailed towhee (a desert bird)
 - o Calliope hummingbird (a mountain bird that's the smallest bird in America)
 - o Reddish egret
 - o Black swift
 - o Pacific golden plover (a bird found in Hawaii)
 - o Rose-breasted grosbeak (an eastern bird)
 - o Indigo bunting
 - o Common merganser
 - o Marbled murrelet
 - o Brown booby (three individuals at once, only once)
 - o Cactus wren (the state bird of Arizona)
 - o Summer tanager
 - o Black and White warbler
 - o Burrowing owl (a marvelous diurnal owl that stayed for a couple of weeks near the South parking lot)
 - o American robin

- o Pectoral sandpiper
- o Franklin's gull (a bird of the Midwest)
- o Bell's sparrow
- o Solitary sandpiper
- o Prairie falcon
- o Mandarin duck (an Asian species that's extraordinarily beautiful, although probably an escaped caged bird)
- o Brewer's sparrow

As I write this, I've heard that the Reserve will be reopening soon. With a little luck, we'll be recording and reporting our common birds and an occasional rarity again very soon.

[Editor's Note: Our eBird records are available to any TPDS docents. In order to access our account, which is password protected, you can contact Jack Friery by email -- see the Membership List for his email address.]

Bird of the Month: Brown Pelican

by Jack Friery; photo by Herb Knüfken

Our featured bird this month is the **Brown Pelican**, *Pelecanus occidentalis*. The Brown Pelican is found on the western and southern coasts of the U.S. In our area, it is most plentiful in late summer and early fall; at other times, they are breeding on the offshore islands. They rarely breed in San Diego County, if at all. The nearest breeding colony to Torrey Pines is on the Coronado Islands off Tijuana.

The Brown Pelican is a very large and ponderous bird — it's about 50 inches long, with a wingspread of about six and a half feet. Despite its bulk, it only weighs a bit more than eight pounds — a little less than your typical house cat. The pelican is a plunge diver, using the force of its impact on the water to stun small fish before scooping them up.

Watch for the changes in the adult birds during nesting season --- their white heads take on a golden sheen, their throat patch turns a fiery red, and they develop a chocolate brown patch down the nape of their necks.

Given America's current political climate, it's appropriate to end with a pelican political quote: "The carping and bickering of political factions in the nation's capital reminds me of two pelicans quarreling over

a dead fish." William Tecumseh Sherman, 1820-1891. (He's also famous for the quote, "War is hell.")

Note: this is an update of an article on pelicans that appeared in the May 2011 Torreyana.

Sources: Unitt, *San Diego Bird Atlas*

Choate, *The Dictionary of American Bird Names*
allaboutbirds.org/guide/Brown_Pelican/overview



Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: June 2020 cancelled

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



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