



TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 431

June 2021

Facts about Bats

by Dan Hammer

Another terrific guest speaker, another well-known but misunderstood mammal, another set of common myths refuted.

At the May TPDS Zoom meeting, volunteer naturalist Don Endicott set the record straight on bats, just as our March speaker had done for mountain lions.

Bats are *not* blind. They will *not* attack you or get in your hair. They will *not* suck your blood (unless you run into a vampire bat in southern Mexico). All bats do *not* have rabies, and there are *no* known cases of humans catching COVID-19 from bats. Bats *are* important to humans and life on earth.



Photograph courtesy of MerlinTuttle.org

A few bat facts:

With more than 1330 species worldwide, bats comprise about a quarter of all mammalian species, second only to rodents. There are 45 bat species in the United States, including 22 in San Diego County. Most species would fit

Docent General Meeting

Date: Saturday, June 12, 9:00 am

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

Speaker: Kevin Alison

Topic: In-vitro Conservation of *Dudleya*: Fighting Plant Poaching and Extinction

Kevin Alison is the production manager at Tree of Life Nursery, a native plant nursery in San Juan Capistrano. He holds degrees in Horticulture and Natural Resource Management and recently earned a Masters in Conservation and Restoration Science from UC Irvine.

The genus *Dudleya* is a charismatic group of native succulents with many rare species across California and Baja. Their recent popularity has attracted poachers who uproot these plants by the tens of thousands. Kevin will describe his current project utilizing plant tissue culture (Micropropagation) to produce large numbers of select *Dudleya* species ethically. The goal of this project is to deflate the price incentives for poachers and provide agencies with an additional tool for conservation.

into the palm of your hand, if you and they were so inclined. Most species are tropical and subtropical, but some range into Canada. Most are insectivores, though some also eat nectar, beetles, and scorpions (they are immune to the scorpion's sting).

Bats are the only mammals that can fly, though some others can glide. Bats fly with their hands, using the five finger bones in their wings. Their legs rotate up to 180 degrees for takeoff – and also for roosting or hanging.

As a former naval communications executive, Don chose a worthy subject of study in his retirement. Bats are great communicators. Roosting by day and hunting at night, bats navigate and communicate via echolocation, “seeing” with sound. They call out with squeaks through their larynx and (Cont. on pg. 3.)

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President's Message

In docent training, we learned how plants and animals develop adaptation features in order to survive and thrive in adverse conditions. As hard as it was to adapt to the closure of the Reserve last year, it's not much easier to plan resuming docent activities as the Reserve slowly opens to visitors.



Not knowing when certain interpretive activities can resume makes it difficult to plan, but our committee leads have diligently worked with our rangers on safety measures for the eventual full opening of the Reserve.

With the warmer weather and the easing of travel restrictions, the Reserve will inevitably see an increase in the number of visitors. I encourage everyone to sign up for the TIK and to be present on the trail with your vest and mask on. Outdoors on the trail or at the trailheads is the safest place to engage with visitors. When we have the green light to open the Visitor Center in a limited capacity, we'll really need docents to help the park aides with visitors.

There is light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, but there are still many unknowns, and the only certainty I know is that the plans we make will change. I urge our docents to be patient and flexible as we assist our rangers in protecting the Reserve through our interpretation activities.

Happy trails,

Lynne Truong

TPDS President

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(Cont. from pg. 1.)

listen for the echoes. These squeaks are of such high frequencies that humans can barely hear them, even though they reach as high as 140 decibels (the sound level on an aircraft carrier flight deck). Fortunately for bats, they cannot hear their own squeaks – but a mother bat *can* hear its babies and find them in a cave filled with millions of other bats.

How do bats benefit humans? For starters, they eat *lots* of mosquitoes and other insects – up to a thousand an hour. They pollinate many plants including bananas, guavas, agave, and saguaros. They disperse seeds of these and other plants, which is especially beneficial in rainforests. And bats have played an important role in medical research and medicine – for example, anticoagulants from vampire bats are being investigated for use in human surgery.

Bats have been around for a long time, since the dawn of the Age of Mammals. The oldest known bat fossil dates from the Early Eocene, about 52 million years ago.



Onychonycteris finneyi (52 MYO)

Current bat populations are generally healthy, but there are threats to their survival. Like most animal species, they have been negatively impacted by the loss of roosting and foraging habitat. They have suffered harm from pesticides, especially DDT. And thousands of bats are killed each year by wind turbines.

The gravest threat to bat health is now White-Nose Syndrome, a fungus that has ravaged populations in the

northeastern United States and is spreading westward. The syndrome disrupts bats' winter hibernation, leading to 100 percent die-offs in some caves that had been bat habitats for millennia.

Humans can be friends to bats. You can help protect their natural habitats, avoid disturbing them, minimize trimming of palm trees (especially in spring and early summer, when they serve as bat nurseries), and keep pet cats indoors. You can also join a bat organization or contact those, such as San Diego Project Wildlife, that will humanely remove and potentially rehabilitate bats for release back into their natural environment.

If you missed Don's informative presentation or want to see it again, click [here](#).

General Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2021

The General Meeting was called to order at 9:05 am by President **Lynne Truong**.

TPDS President Truong welcomed Torrey Pines docents to the GM, conducted again via Zoom. The meeting was attended by 105 docents.

Invited Speaker

Don Endicott, public educator for the San Diego Natural History Museum and the San Diego Humane Society, and a member of Project Wildlife's "Bat Team," gave a presentation titled "The Amazing World of Bats, Nature's Tiny Fighter Jets."

TPDS Business

President **Lynne Truong** shared the following business items:

- **Docents of the Month (DOM)**

Mary Hohmeyer (Class of 2012) and **Valerie Thomas** (Class of 2011) have been in charge of receiving, labeling, and inventorying the items sold in the Museum Shop and were major players working on the Holiday sales last year. During the pandemic they spent many hours picking up trash in the Reserve and working as Roving Interpreters.

Lynne pointed out to the attendees that the May recipients of the DOM honor were nominated by a fellow docent. She invited all docents to submit names of fellow exemplary docents who should be considered for the DOM.

- **Bear-in-Mind**

Lynne reminded all docents that the Bear-in-Mind training is mandatory and needs to be completed by June. This training can be done online by logging into Better Impact at [MyVolunteerPage.com](https://myvolunteerpage.com) using their login and password. Docents then can click on the *My*

Profile tab, which will show options, including one that is called *training*. Clicking on training will open up the Bear-in-Mind course.

- **Board Meetings**

Lynne reminded the docents that the monthly Board meetings are open to all. Docents interested in learning more about the work of the Board should attend. Docents who wish to join in upcoming Board meetings should contact Lynne.

- **Reopening Updates**

TIK: Janice Barnard and members of the TIK Advisory Committee (**Annette Ring, Harry Proctor, Gabriele Wienhausen**) developed a TIK reopening plan, which has been submitted to Supervising Ranger Dylan Hardenbrook for approval.

Lodge and Museum Shop: Nancy Walters developed a reopening plan, which has been submitted to Supervising Ranger Dylan Hardenbrook for approval.

No updates yet on when Public Walks, Special Walks, or Mindfulness-in-Nature Walks can be resumed.

- **Honoring Head Lifeguard at Torrey Pines State Beach, Ed Vodrazka**

Lynne shared that Ed Vodrazka will retire June 6. TPDS is very happy for Ed and his family, but at the same time we are very sad to lose a committed partner and supporter. A gift basket has been put together for Ed. (See article on pg. 6.)

- **Saying Good-Bye to Johnson Jou and Joy Inton**

Johnson and Joy will end their tenure as park aides in the Reserve at the end of May. Both will work at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park. TPDS deeply appreciates their contributions to the Reserve and TPDS. Lynne shared that a thank-you note and gift are being prepared by the Museum's team. Docents are invited to come to the Lodge and sign the note.

Kristine Schindler updates:

Kristine reminded all docents about the ongoing *80 + Project* and *Why-I-Became-A-Docent Project*. She urged all docents 80 and older to contact her and to schedule an interview with her or with a member of the Care Team. Kristine also encouraged all docents to share why they were motivated to join the TPDS. Kristine is happy to answer any questions docents might have about either project

Live Chat with Ed Vodrazka

Ed joined the GM via Zoom. While sitting outside the Guy Fleming House, Ed shared stories about what it is like to live in an historic house for 18 years. Click [here](#) to see the video on the TPDS Vimeo site.

The meeting ended at 11:05 am.

Farewell to Johnson & Joy

After nearly a decade together at TPSNR, beloved park aides Johnson Jou and Joy Inton are off on safari. Johnson recently announced that he was joining Joy to train as a leader of "Behind the Scenes" private tours at the Safari Park.



In response to Johnson's announcement, docents expressed great affection and appreciation for all this dynamic duo had done for us and for the Reserve. To read the thread of messages on the TPDS Google Group, click [here](#).

Click [here](#) for a profile of Johnson & Joy in the June 2020 *Torreyana* pgs. 7-8.

Torrey Pines Book Club

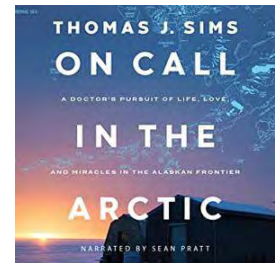
When: Tuesday, June 8, 1:00 p.m.

What: *On Call in the Arctic: A Doctor's Pursuit of Life, Love, and Miracles in the Alaskan Frontier* by Thomas J. Sims

Amazon says:

Imagine a young doctor, trained in the latest medical knowledge and state-of-the-art equipment, suddenly transported back to one of the world's most isolated and unforgiving environments – Nome, Alaska.... There, he had the

awesome responsibility of rendering medical care under archaic conditions to the population of this frontier town plus 13 Eskimo villages in the surrounding Norton Sound area.... In order to do his job, Dr. Sims had to overcome racism, cultural prejudices, and hostility from those who would have liked to see him sent packing. *On Call in the Arctic* reveals the thrills and the terrors of frontier medicine, showing how Dr. Sims had to rely upon his instincts, improvise, and persevere against all odds in order to help his patients on the icy shores of the Bering Sea.



July 13: *Stories from Sea Level: The Heroic and Humorous Adventures of California's Ocean Lifeguards* by Ed Vodrazka (See story on pg. 6.)

Docents of the Month:

Photos by Herb Knüfken

Mary Hohmeyer

I became a docent thanks to four people. One evening, as we were standing around the coffee break room where **Jeannie Smith, Ann Williamson** and I were doing some volunteer English as a Second Language tutoring, Jeannie and Ann said to me, "You should think about becoming a docent at the Torrey Pines Reserve." So I thought about it and signed up for training. I loved learning about the Reserve and enjoyed meeting the other docents and trainees. I had hiked the Extension with my young daughters before it was the Extension, so the training and getting to know other docents was just frosting on the cake. Thank you, Jeannie and Ann.

I'm also grateful to my parents for the early experiences they gave me camping in California State Parks every summer — thanks, Mom and Dad. We always took the guided walks led by rangers or aides in those days. It helped me appreciate the hardy yet delicate plants, elusive animals and available solitude away from the city. It made me treasure the opportunities for enjoyment that State Parks offer to most anyone and how valuable that is, especially for children.

Often over the years, funding for the parks has seemed precarious. Not only do I enjoy meeting the visitors and helping earn money for the Children's Program, but it seems to me like we are helping to keep the Reserve running and available to everyone.



Valerie Thomas

Having spent many vacations in various National Parks attending campfire programs and other interpretive activities, I came to the conclusion that being a park ranger would be a great job. However, being married with a family, it did not really seem feasible. Years later, after retiring from my nursing career, I began devoting more time to playing tennis; I met some great women and came to find out that many of them were



docents at Torrey Pines. In the spring of 2010, **Diane Russell**, one of my tennis-playing friends, was doing the weekly wildflower surveys in the Park. She invited me to join her on her survey walks and later encouraged me to sign up for docent training. So many thanks to Diane and all the other docents who have encouraged and shared their knowledge with me during training and over the years. I completed my training in 2011. Now, ten years later, I still enjoy walking the different areas of the park every week, appreciating the natural beauty and peace it offers in this increasingly urban area. Over this past difficult year, when even picking up beach trash became an enjoyable activity, teaching others to respect and appreciate this local treasure has been a worthwhile goal. I look forward to the day when many other docent activities resume and I can enjoy the company of the wonderful members of the Docent Society.

A Farewell to Ed Vodrazka, Lifeguard *Extraordinaire*

by Joan R. Simon

It will be a sad day for Torrey Pines when Ed Vodrazka, State Parks Peace Officer and Lifeguard at Torrey Pines State Beach, retires on June 6; and an even sadder day in early July when he, his wife Jennifer, and their two children, Jade (15) and Charlie (12), move out of the Guy Fleming House, where they have been our neighbors and friends for the past 17 years.

Ed's retirement will mark the end of a remarkable 45-year lifeguarding career that started when he was 17, with stints in San Clemente, the Sonoma Coast, and currently at Torrey Pines. Ed also served as a lifeguard training officer at the lifeguard academy in Huntington Beach for 24 years and has conducted EMT training for LA County lifeguards and in San Diego City. He is a registered nurse and has taught college-level emergency medical technician courses at Miramar Community College for many years. Over his career he has participated in more than a thousand ocean rescues and about as many major medical emergencies.

Always a seasoned raconteur, Ed has collected a lifetime of lifeguarding stories for his newly published book, *Life at Sea Level**, which contains 39 stories of rescues and other seashore mishaps. Ten of the rescues were awarded the Medal of Valor by the state; and many others, Ed maintains, were equally deserving. Twice Ed has shared his experiences at TPDS monthly meetings, and we guarantee his stories should not be missed! The *Torreyana* summaries are here:

[\[torreypine.org/wp-content/uploads/nl/2014/1410.pdf\]](http://torreypine.org/wp-content/uploads/nl/2014/1410.pdf);

[\[torreypine.org/wp-content/uploads/nl/2009/0902.pdf\]](http://torreypine.org/wp-content/uploads/nl/2009/0902.pdf)]

In addition to Ed's extraordinary lifeguarding career, he has been our neighbor, living in the Guy Fleming House. When he and his wife first moved there in 2004, the house was in "severe disrepair," with State Parks having serious thoughts of bulldozing it. After putting the house back into "livable"

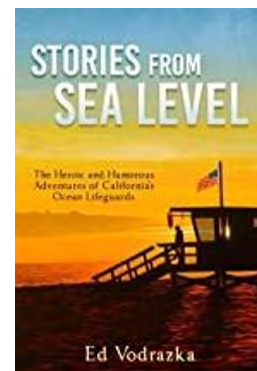
condition, they launched a long-overdue renovation of virtually every major system of the house: electric, septic, asbestos removal, leak repairs, the removal of beehives in the walls, and much more. "We were in it for the long haul," Ed remarks, "and now it looks pretty good." Indeed, it does!

Over the years, the Vodrazkas have hosted a dozen or so fundraising events to support the repair work and other Torrey Pines projects. They have also offered numerous opportunities for TPDS and TPC members to experience this very special home. Originally built by Guy Fleming in 1927, several years after the Torrey Pines Lodge (both funded by Ellen Browning Scripps), it served as Guy and Margaret Fleming's home until 1959, when Torrey Pines became a state park. Between then and 2004, six or so Torrey Pines rangers have occupied the house, but the Flemings and the Vodrazkas are the only families to have enjoyed extended tenures.



Ed will be moving in July to a house in Carmel Valley only 2 miles from the Reserve and will continue teaching at Miramar College. He is thinking about writing another book, this one on Guy Fleming and his celebrated house. With his firsthand knowledge, we very much hope he will pursue this project.

**Stories from Sea Level* is available through the Torrey Pines Conservancy (torrey-pines-boutique.myshopify.com), where part of the proceeds will go to the TPC. (It can also be purchased from Amazon.)





CEED Event: A Visit to the San Elijo Ecological Reserve and Nature Center

by Cresencio Torres

The first CEED event of the year was a visit to the San Elijo Ecological Reserve on May 19. It was attended by 25 docents. **Barbara Wallach, Susan Elliott, and Stu**

Rosenwasser were designated group leaders. Docents explored the wetland habitats of the lagoon, visited the Nature Center, and hiked Annie's Canyon. It was a day to celebrate and join in the community, mask-free, after 14 months of COVID restrictions. A special thank you to all who participated in the event.



Prickly Pear Cactus by Rhea Bridy

Amid the spiny needles
Spring's cactus pads burst open
Bees are enraptured:
Pineapple-colored blossoms
Glowing cups of sunshine
Not only bees are dazzled.



Bird of the Month: Marbled Godwit

by Jack Friery; photo courtesy of Herb Knüfken

Our highlighted bird this month is the **Marbled Godwit**, *Limosa fedoa*. This very large sandpiper (about 18 inches long, and weighing about a pound) is a wintertime visitor to Torrey Pines. In season, they are common on our beach, probing the sand for crustaceans. Their long, upturned bills are diagnostic; similar large shorebirds such as the Long-billed Curlew and Whimbrel have downturned bills. Also noteworthy is the fact that their bill is two-toned: pink at the base (when we see them in winter) and black at the end.

In summer, the Marbled Godwit migrates to the prairies of north central U.S. and Canada to nest. Some may reach Alaska and Hudson Bay. Returning after breeding, Marbled Godwits inhabit both coasts of the U.S. and Mexico, and may fly as far south as Panama.



The origin of the name *godwit* is unclear. It may be an ancient Anglo-Saxon word, or it may be imitative of the bird's call. (*Marbled* refers to the mottling on its back.) Its Latin generic name, *Limosa*, means "muddy," attesting to its feeding habitat. But the origin of its specific name, *fedoa*, is as mysterious as that of its common name.

Sources: allaboutbirds.org/guide/Marbled_Godwit/overview; Choate, *The Dictionary of American Bird Names*; Unitt, *San Diego County Bird Atlas* (2nd ed.)

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: May 2021

Number of species: 97
(4 other taxa)

Cinnamon Teal 4
Gadwall 12
American Wigeon 2
Mallard 15
Surf Scoter 5
Bufflehead 1
Red-breasted Merganser 1
Ruddy Duck 6
California Quail 4
Western Grebe 15
Eurasian Collared-Dove 1
Mourning Dove 52
Vaux's Swift 4
White-throated Swift 9
Anna's Hummingbird 55
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 24
hummingbird sp. 3
Ridgway's Rail 1
Virginia Rail 1
Killdeer 2
Whimbrel 2
Long-billed Curlew 5
Marbled Godwit 1
Heermann's Gull 1
Ring-billed Gull 4

Western Gull 51
California Gull 3
gull sp. 1
Royal Tern 5
Double-crested Cormorant 7
Brown Pelican 22
Great Blue Heron 4
Great Egret 10
Snowy Egret 6
Green Heron 1
Turkey Vulture 1
Osprey 3
White-tailed Kite 1
Cooper's Hawk 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 8
Belted Kingfisher 2
Downy Woodpecker 1
Nuttall's Woodpecker 8
American Kestrel 2
Peregrine Falcon 4
Olive-sided Flycatcher 1
Pacific-slope Flycatcher 12
Empidonax sp. 1
Black Phoebe 16
Say's Phoebe 3
Ash-throated Flycatcher 5
Cassin's Kingbird 8
Western Kingbird 14
Hutton's Vireo 2

Warbling Vireo 22
California Scrub-Jay 13
American Crow 15
Common Raven 16
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 34
Tree Swallow 4
Barn Swallow 1
Cliff Swallow 5
Bushtit 37
Wrentit 72
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1
California Gnatcatcher 13
House Wren 6
Marsh Wren 2
Bewick's Wren 22
European Starling 1
California Thrasher 7
Northern Mockingbird 11
Western Bluebird 2
Swainson's Thrush 1
Cedar Waxwing 3
Phainopepla 6
Scaly-breasted Munia 1
House Sparrow 3
House Finch 82
Lesser Goldfinch 51
White-crowned Sparrow 1
Savannah Sparrow 3
Song Sparrow 47

California Towhee 81
Rufous-crowned Sparrow 2
Spotted Towhee 27
Yellow-breasted Chat 8
Hooded Oriole 4
Red-winged Blackbird 32
Brown-headed Cowbird 1
Orange-crowned Warbler 35
Common Yellowthroat 18
Yellow Warbler 7
Black-throated Gray Warbler 1
Townsend's Warbler 1
Hermit Warbler 2
Wilson's Warbler 30
Western Tanager 14
Black-headed Grosbeak 10
Lazuli Bunting 5

Observers: Kathy Dickey, Nancy Richardson, Andy Rathbone, David Walker, Marty Hales, Tsaiwei Olee, Rosemary Wareham, Gabriele Wienhausen, Phyllis Kuszner, Anonymous, and Robert Turner

View this checklist online at ebird.org/checklist/S83405201

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



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