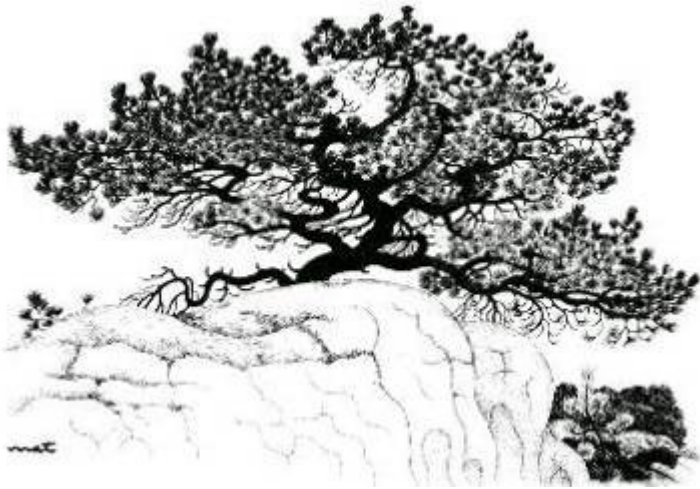




TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 473

December 2024

Tracking the Elusive Brown Pelican

by Dan Hammer

We've all seen Brown Pelicans cruising gracefully up and down the coast, either in small groups or in large, V-shaped formations. But where are they going? How far do they travel? These elegant birds are familiar to us, but their migration and foraging patterns have remained a mystery.

Recently, with the aid of new tracking technology, scientists are beginning to unlock this mystery. At the November TPDS meeting, Dr. Tammy Russell, a postdoctoral researcher at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, explained how this technology works and how she and other researchers have used it to fill in some of the gaps in what we know about "these big, beautiful, charismatic seabirds."

Tammy began with an overview of what we know about Brown Pelicans, including their life history, adaptations, and historic and current impacts from human activities. She noted, "We really don't know a lot about these birds," which has spurred her to learn more.

The California Brown Pelican ranges from Central Mexico to British Columbia. They prefer only coastal habitats; once we get about 10km from shore, "it would be extremely shocking to see a Brown Pelican."

They are large seabirds, with wingspans over 2m. The males are slightly larger than the females, though the difference in size is not apparent to the naked eye. Within



Holiday Potluck Party



We hope you will join us for our annual Holiday Potluck and celebration of our new Docent Class of 2025.

When: Saturday, December 14, 11:00am to 2:00pm

Where: St. James Community Hall, 625 S. Nardo Ave., Solana Beach. Onsite parking available. There will be a docent at a table by the front door if you wish to drop off your potluck dish before you park.

RSVP: Thanks to all who have already RSVP'd and signed up to bring a dish. There's still time to sign up to bring either an appetizer, main dish, salad or side dish, or dessert. RSVP by Dec. 7 by email to **Mary Makowski** with the dish you will bring.

Coffee, tea, and water will be provided but feel free to bring a beverage of your choice. We are also inviting and welcoming our rangers and park staff.

See you there!

Mary Makowski and Carolyn Maclean for the 2024 Holiday Party Planning Committee.

the first three years of its life, through a series of moltings, a pelican's plumage changes from dark brown with a white belly to a white head and neck with a solid dark belly. In between, the bird "looks a little scruffy," like many of us did as teenagers.

"Probably the most entertaining thing about these birds," Tammy said, "is that they are an extreme plunge diving species. They can go tens of meters up in the air and dive down in a very specific way to catch their prey." The deeper the food, the higher they must rise before plunging. When they dive and hit the water, their mouths are always shut. They stun their prey with the impact from their plunge, then scoop them up in their enormous beaks.

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FLASH - Don't forget to donate your nature and conservation magazines to the Museum Shop.

How do they crash into the ocean without hurting themselves? First, they have an anatomy that is designed to protect them. Their air sacs – which all birds have as part of their respiratory system – are “moved up” on pelicans to cushion their organs and bones from impacts. Their esophagus and trachea are positioned slightly to the right of center; to protect these, a diving pelican turns its head to the left in a “fine-tuned diving motion.” The bird dives at specific angles with specific body postures to reduce light refraction and zero in on its prey.

The pelican’s signature bill and pouch are made for scooping up prey in the water, filtering water back out and retaining food. Another “really neat” feature of all seabirds are their feather barbs, which interlock to create waterproofing. They also have glands that produce preen oil to coat their feathers and enhance waterproofing. (When oil spills occur, the birds lose that waterproofing because they can’t coat and maintain their feathers.)

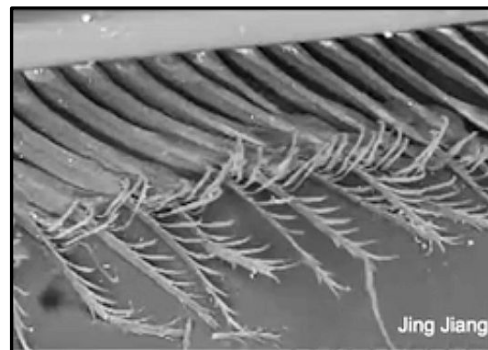


Don Danko



Photo: Casey Neal

Time-lapse photo of diving pelican



Jing Jiang

Brown Pelicans’ diet can vary. They are not specific foragers of any one prey, but they prefer tiny schooling fish that are high in nutrients. In our area, the most abundant of these is the northern anchovy. When fish are scarce, or when they are distributed further afield than the birds can travel, pelican populations can crash.

California Brown Pelicans breed on two Channel Islands (Anacapa and Santa Barbara), on the west coast of Baja California, on islands in the Gulf of California, and along the coast of Central Mexico – though with rising sea temperatures, their nonbreeding range can extend as far north as British Columbia. They are asynchronous breeders, meaning they can breed almost any time, mostly

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from January to October. They build large nests, usually where they are less vulnerable to predators. The female lays up to three eggs and alternates incubation with the male. The baby chicks, which strongly resemble their dinosaur ancestors, take about 13 weeks to fledge and leave the nest.

Following this overview, Tammy laid out a timeline of threats to Brown Pelicans and subsequent remedies. From the 1800s to early 1900s, they were killed for their feathers (which were widely used in the millinery trade) and by fishers who saw them as stealing their catch. In 1918, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to protect all migratory birds.

However, by the mid 1900s, DDT became a major threat to bird populations. This widely used pesticide didn't kill adult birds, but it made their egg shells so thin that nesting parents crushed most of their eggs. For example, in 1970 on West Anacapa Island, only one Brown Pelican chick survived out of 552 nests.

That same year, the Brown Pelican was listed as a federally endangered species. In 1971 it was listed in California. And in 1972, the EPA banned the use of DDT. Even though DDT persists in our environment, bird populations recovered rapidly, and the Brown Pelican was delisted in 2009.

Other threats to pelican populations include climate change, contaminants, and direct conflict with humans. Ocean warming alters the abundance, quality, and distribution of their food. As seawater warms, fish become less nutritious, and some species move off to cooler waters. Pelicans need a lot of nutrition to sustain themselves; if food availability is low, they will abandon their nests and chicks to search for food.

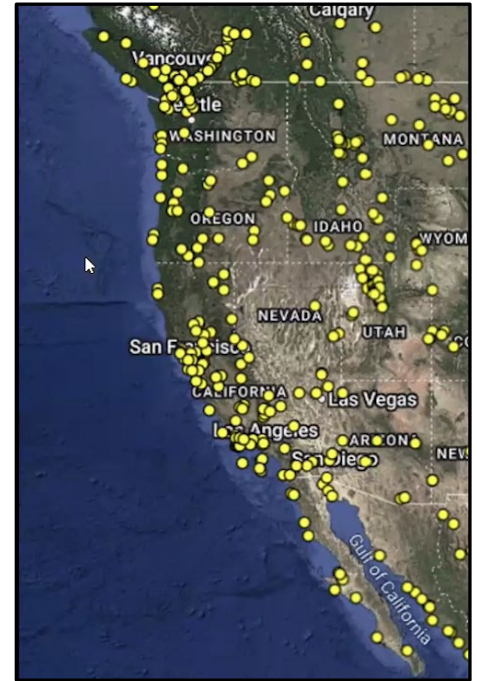
Because pelicans spend so much time on the surface of the water, they are especially vulnerable to contaminants, particularly oil spills. Direct human conflict includes fishing-related injuries and deaths; pelicans love to hang around piers and poach fishers' catch, but they often wind up caught by fishhooks. (Fortunately, their thin pouches, though easily torn, are also easily repaired by bird rescuers, and the recovery rate for these birds is very good.)

What else threatens Brown Pelican populations? This is the focus of Tammy's research. This past spring, we experienced a large pelican die-off, and scientists are still figuring out what happened. As Tammy mentioned at the outset, we don't really know a lot about these birds, largely because early tracking methods did not work for these plunge-diving species, so we weren't able to understand their individual foraging or migration movements until now.

New developments in electronic tags have helped remedy this situation. Putting satellite tags or radio tags on birds enables researchers to follow individuals' movements, what habitats they use, how their timing changes, and so on.

Tammy's Brown Pelican research focuses on understanding their movements and habitat use. She uses citizen scientists' eBird data as well as systematic ship-based surveys to determine when and where they move and how they are distributed. Her collaborator worked with a technology company (Cellular Tracking Technologies) to develop VHF bands (e-Bands) to track individuals' movements. Tammy and the team have now deployed these bands, providing insights on these individual movements for the first time.

The tracking program aims to electronically track Brown Pelicans without impacting their behavior or survival. Tammy and her team began by banding and tracking birds that had been rescued from oil spills. They wanted to find out (a) how well the tracking program works and (b) how rehabilitated birds were doing and where they went after being released – specifically, where



Motus Wildlife Tracking System sensor stations

they went and how far they traveled within a year and, over time, how their movements respond to environmental conditions.

After being tested on a pelican in captivity, the eBand was permitted for release by the USGS bird banding lab, and the first two banded pelicans were released in May and July 2023. The tracking was successful, yielding important data and funding for 20 more tags. Currently 22 rehabbed pelicans from International Bird Rescue are being tracked as well as one chick that was banded by collaborators off the east coast of Baja California.

The pelican tracking system is part of Motus, an international collaborative research network that uses cooperative automated radio telemetry to track birds, bats, and flying insects. This gives Tammy's team access to dozens of Motus tracking stations along the Pacific coast. They also get data from stations operated by USGS and the San Diego Zoo, and they have received funding to install their own Motus station at Pillar Point Harbor in Half Moon Bay.

This experimental research – the first electronic tracking of seabirds – has already been a success. Tammy's team has

detected all of their banded birds, and they are following the chick that was banded in the Gulf of California and is now hanging out on Baja's Pacific coast. Every bit of data they collect is serving to enhance Brown Pelicans' survival.

To see Tammy's engaging and informative presentation click [here](#). For more information on Motus, visit motus.org.

Docent of the Month: Ed Saade

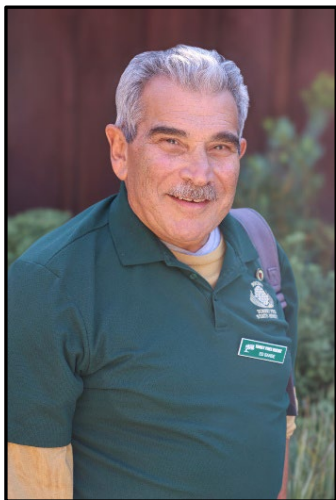
Photo by Herb Knufken

Thanks to all of my fellow docents and to the Board for this truly special honor. Especially my 2023 classmates and the three key leaders of the BLIK - **Gabrielle Wienhausen**, **Rosemary Wareham**, and **Malana Tabak** - who have become my trusted mentors for all things BLIK related.

Throughout my 35 years living in North County, Del Mar beach and Torrey Pines have been the go-to beach and coastal hangouts for my family. In addition, my professional career was in marine geology and geophysics, with lots of experience mapping along the coast and the seafloor offshore, from Point Loma to San Elijo Lagoon. I studied sediment transport and benthic habitats, and I found things the US Navy labs had lost during testing and experimenting.

By 2021, TPSNR North Parking Lot became the destination for my regular bike rides, where I would take a break and enjoy the view and access near the current location of the BLIK. Early in 2023 I noticed the signs offering the opportunity to become a docent. I applied immediately and was lucky enough to become directly involved. I learned so much during the training program last year from so many instructors, volunteers, and classmates, including former Park Aide Louis Sands, **Pao Chao**, **Janet Ugalde**, **Coach Vance**, **Myrna Trust**, and many, many others. All my fellow docents have been incredibly generous with their time and knowledge.

Best of all has been endless opportunities for learning and enjoying all things BLIK related. Especially our visitors' sheer joy and excitement regarding the exhibits and stories we all share related to discovery and beach/ocean/lagoon experiences.



General Meeting Minutes: November 9, 2024

President **Matt Xavier** led off with a heartfelt telling of a piece of his family history. The story left us with warm feelings and a positive outlook. See meeting recording for the details.

Docent of the Month: Ed Saade for his many hours at the BLIK, where he contributes tremendously with his knowledge and acquisition of new interpretive materials. You will also see him at many docent activities around TPSNR.

Nominating Committee: Chairman **Steve Neal** reviewed the bylaws and how the committee functions. He presented the committee's slate for 2025 Board Members and thanked those who are leaving the board. The slate was voted on by members present and was carried with no objections. (See article on pg. 8.)

Announcements and Updates

The annual **Komen Breast Cancer Walk** will proceed through TPSNR Friday, November 15. **Ann Smith Mercandetti**, longtime leader of the docent monitors, related how over the years we have contributed tremendously to the TPSNR by cheering on the walkers and teaching them about respect for nature. The amount of litter, eating, and amplified music has dropped from overwhelming to almost nothing now.

Our annual **holiday party** and new **docent class graduation** is December 14 at St. James Community Hall in Solana Beach. Specific instructions will be sent out to all docents via the TPDS Google Groups. There will be a special drop-off for the potluck food. The December General Meeting will be held at the party and the Docent of the Year will be announced.

Docent dues and **docent hours** must be submitted by the end of 2024. Docent dues are \$25 and can be paid to the TPDS by cash, check, or the Donate tab on the TPDS website. (for more information on dues, see pg. 7).

Ingo Renner announced TPSNR beaches are experiencing a red tide right now, and bioluminescence is visible shortly after sunset. He will lead a Moonlight Walk for docents November 15 from 5 to 7 pm.

Changes to the TPDS proposed 2025 **budget** are available online. They will be approved at the January board meeting.

Barbara Wallach will lead "Let's Hear It for the Birds" on November 23 at 10 am in the Pavilion.

Our **Torrey Pines Falcons** youth group will have an event November 22 to celebrate their work and enable docents to meet them. They help in many ways, including cleaning up around the Reserve.

New Roving Interpreter Training is Tuesday, November 12. Fifteen docents have signed up so far. **Gabriele Wienhausen**, **Matt Xavier**, **Dina Carl**, **Bob Friedman**, **Bruce Gray**, and **Ingo Renner** are on the organizing committee.

Gary McCook is leading a renovation of the **Whitaker Garden**. Docents wishing to help are welcome and encouraged to join his group.

BLIK Lunch & Learn: Lagoon Birds

by Robert James; photos from USFWS

As you may know, Lunch & Learn presentations are provided the first Thursday of each month at the BLIK beginning at noon. On September 5, I gave a talk about our feathered friends at and near the lagoon.

Los Peñasquitos Lagoon/Estuary consists of about 600 wetland acres and hosts an amazing 164 species. Numbers increase here after the breeding season, and many wintering waterfowl and shorebirds are supported. Some species, such as gulls and pelicans, are obvious and seen daily; others like rails and some herons live more discrete lives.

Five species are state and/or federally listed, regulated under the applicable Endangered Species Act: California Least Tern, Western Snowy Plover, Ridgway's Clapper Rail, Least Bell's Vireo, and Belding's Savannah Sparrow. One of my first projects as a wildlife biologist was to co-lead a survey for the sparrow, which is mainly restricted to Southern California coastal wetlands. Interestingly, they have some of the smallest territories of any songbird. You can see them closely perched and singing from pickleweed tops on spring mornings.



Ridgway's Rail

We discussed some identification tips to help interpret these birds for our visitors. Since one can better rely on visual identification, even the hearing impaired can easily appreciate them. For example, the waders from small to large are Willet, Whimbrel/Marbled Godwit, and Long-billed Curlew. I have seen all four around the lagoon mouth and nearby beach. To distinguish among the "white egrets," a Snowy Egret has a black bill with yellow feet, while a Great Egret is the opposite. Gulls as a group are challenging, but three species here can be easily identified, especially as full-grown adults: the Western (grey back feathers), Heermann's (smoky-grey plumage, red bill), and California (red/black bill dots).

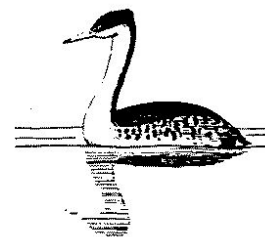


Great Egret

Birds are important indicators of environmental health. Conservation challenges for wetland birds include habitat protection, controlling invasive species, and preventing pollution. Environmental documents (e.g., for CEQA) allow the public to comment on proposed actions that may affect water birds.

Our monthly bird counts at the Reserve help to document avian biodiversity, and with other survey data posted to eBird, document trends for conservation and management. The main Reserve count is generally held on the first Wednesday, beginning at 8 am at the Lodge; other areas are surveyed on different days. If you would like to participate, contact **David Walker**.

I want to thank **Gabriele Wienhausen** for suggesting and obtaining taxidermy mounts from the San Diego Natural History Museum through their loan program. This allowed everyone to appreciate the differences between a gull and a tern (the latter are mostly fish specialists) and to see a secretive denizen: a Ridgway's Rail. If you hear a slow "kik, kik, kik" emanating from dense wetland vegetation in the spring, congratulations! You have probably discovered one.



Western Grebe

Holidays at Torrey Pines

by Judy Schulman, TPDS Historian

What better place than Torrey Pines to have a holiday meal? In addition to beautiful scenery and fresh air, there would be good food. And most important of all, you don't have to do the cleanup afterwards! Here are some of the restaurant holiday ads that John and Frances Burkholder, the first proprietors of the restaurant at the Lodge (1923-34), placed in the *San Diego Union* and *Evening Tribune*.

TORREY PINES LODGE			
12/23/1928			
AFTERNOON TEAS	50¢	NORTH OF LA JOLLA	LUNCHEON, WEEK DAYS... \$1.00
EVENING DINNERS, SUN- DAYS AND HOLIDAYS... \$1.50			
CHRISTMAS DINNER.....\$1.50			
Telephone Pacific Long Distance			

12/31/31	
TORREY PINES	
LODGE	
16 Miles North on Coast Highway	
New Year's Turkey Dinner All Day \$1.25	
Phone Reservations Pacific Long Distance	

TORREY PINES LODGE	
16 Miles North on Coast Highway	
Christmas Turkey Dinner All Day \$1.25	
Phone Reservations Pacific Long Distance.	
12/23/31	

Toyon Berries Ripen

by Rhea Bridy

December can dazzle too -
Just pause and cast those delighted eyes.
For Reserve's wildlife dances -
Having savored their first rain of the season.

Museum Shop Spotlight

by Nancy Walters

It's that time of year again: the docent-made ornaments are back!



A holiday table has been set up in the Lodge, featuring a small tree decorated with the mini-baskets made by creative docents. More of these ornaments will be added in December.

The table also features mini-frame ornaments holding reproductions of Jeannie Smith's beautiful paintings. Keep these in mind for that special Torrey Pines gift!



2025 Dues Are Due!

by Lynne Truong

It's time to pay dues to renew your membership with the Torrey Pines Docent Society (TPDS). Dues are **\$25** if by **cash** or **check**, payable to TPDS; **\$26** by [PayPal \(link\)](#). Dues are waived for Lifetime members.

You can deposit your **\$25** check in the small safe in the Lodge desk* or mail it to:

TPDS, 1155 Camino Del Mar #404, Del Mar, CA 92014-2605.

It is important to pay your dues and log your hours in Better Impact by Dec 31. Your 2024 service hours determine your 2025 membership status within TPDS.

Active: 84 hours

Associate: less than 84 hours; an Associate Member Application must be filled out.

Friends: no service hours required; no parking sticker

If your current status is Active or Associate and you won't have 84 hours by the end of the year, you must fill out an Associate [Application for 2025 \(link\)](#) and pay your dues to get your parking sticker for 2025.

State Park Volunteer (VIP) passes, when applicable, will be mailed to you by CA State Park.

VIP District park pass: 100 hours; free day use to all State Parks in the San Diego Coast District.

VIP State park pass: 200 hours; free day use at all CA State Parks.

*The safe is in the right side cabinet of the desk; insert your check into the small slot at the top.

Bee of the Month: Fine Striped Sweat Bee

by Jess Mullins; photos by Phil Roullard

If you've spotted a Texas striped sweat bee (*Agapostemon texanus*) in San Diego and submitted your observation to iNaturalist, you may have noticed a recent "taxon change" reclassifying it as *Agapostemon subtilior*. A taxon change happens when scientists who study species classifications (called taxonomists) revise how an organism is defined based on new evidence. This helps ensure that species are correctly named and understood.

Within the genus *Agapostemon*, three very similar species form a "species complex": *A. angelicus*, *A. subtilior*, and *A. texanus*. All three have a unique texture on their thorax, which is covered with both small and large pits that look like tiny craters. For years, scientists believed female bees in this group couldn't be distinguished from other *Agapostemon* species, while males were identified by ridges under their "chins." But recently, bee expert Dr. Zachary

Portman discovered that females also have unique features in their subgenal (chin) area that distinguish the species. This breakthrough allowed him to reexamine and reclassify hundreds of bee specimens from across North America.

A. subtilior is the only species from this species complex found at the

Reserve. It can be recognized by its vibrant green body and large, oval, greenish-blue eyes. Males have bold black-and-yellow-striped abdomens, while females are entirely green flying jewels with subtle white hair bands.



A. subtilior male

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/244043516>

This species is slightly larger than the visually similar peridot sweat bee (July's Bee of the Month), which can be distinguished by its kidney-shaped eyes and its shinier body without whitish hair bands.



A. subtilior female

Agapostemon are solitary, meaning each female builds her own nest in the soil.

At the Reserve, *A. subtilior* has been spotted visiting a wide variety of flowers, particularly in late summer and early fall. One of their favorite blooms this time of year is wreath-plant (*Stephanomeria diegensis*), so keep an eye out around these flowers for a chance to see them.

By better understanding the unique features of *A. subtilior*, we learn more not only about the bees themselves but also about the ecosystems they help support. Observations such as yours on iNaturalist play a key role in helping scientists study and protect these amazing creatures.



New TPDS Board for 2025

by the Nominating Committee

The slate for the 2025 TPDS Board that was recommended by the Nominating Committee was approved at the November General Meeting.

The new Board consists of:

- President - **Matt Xavier**
- Vice President - **Harry Proctor**
- Treasurer - **Lynne Truong**
- Secretary - **Rosemary Wareham**

Directors at Large:

- **Umesh Bellur**
- **Bob Friedman**
- **Roger Isaacson**
- **Connie Jaffe**
- **Ed Saade**

The Docent Society would like to heartily thank three members who will be exiting the board: **Lisa Kakone**, **Gary McCook**, and **Gabriele Wienhausen**. Gabriele served on the board for five years, two of them as Secretary.



Meet the TAC (TIK Advisory Committee)

by Lisa Kakone

The purpose of the TAC is to engage interested and committed docents in the management of the TIK (Trail Interpretive Kiosk). This includes the physical structure (kiosk), inventory (interpretive tools), and staffing. Each member of the TAC is responsible for one or more of these functions.

TAC docent members are **Tony Mondini**, **Allan Heryet**, **Gary McCook**, **Harry Proctor**, **Kathy Simmons**, and **Lisa Kakone**.

While the TPDS is responsible for the trail kiosk, State Parks retains oversight of the map board and its contents. To ensure integration in our public-facing communication, we are fortunate that TAC membership also includes Ranger Stephanie Adams and Senior Interpretive Park Aide Zuzana Volny.

The TAC meets every other month and as needed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the TAC, please feel free to reach out to any of our members.

New Class of Roving Interpreters

by Gabriele Wienhausen

Roving interpretation involves welcoming visitors, giving directions, answering questions about the Reserve's natural features, and encouraging people to protect those features by following the Reserve's rules. This might feel daunting. What do I need to know? Do I know enough? How do I not lose my cool when visitors blatantly disrespect Reserve rules? How can I make visitors feel welcome? How do I encourage curiosity and interest?

Drawing on substantial input from the docent community, the Docent Society's Trails Committee (**Dinah Carl**, **Bob Friedman**, **Bruce Gray**, **Matt Xavier** and I) reshaped the Roving Interpreter (RI) program, developed RI resources and made them available on the docent website. These new resources include a collection of FAQs, as well as information about dog-friendly beaches and parks, trail lengths and features, and ADA-accessible trails. The committee also updated the RI training, which is now three-pronged: an initial group training session, individualized training with a mentor, and lastly monthly Zoom meetings for trainees to continue to learn from each other.

On November 12, thirteen docents* were the initial beneficiaries of the new training.

First, highly experienced docents discussed key areas of roving interpretation: the most frequently asked questions (**Bruce Gray**), non-confrontational communication of Reserve rules (**Ingo Renner**) and emergency procedures (Ranger Kyle Knox), inspiring appreciation of nature (**Barbara Wallach**), and understanding and communicating beach safety (**Bob Friedman**). In the second part, learning by doing, each roving interpretation trainee shadowed an experienced roving interpreter (the trainee's mentor) out on the trails.

Monthly RI Zoom meetings, which will commence in January, will provide opportunities to learn from each other, to exchange ideas on improving interpretation skills and handling challenging situations. These meetings are open to all roving interpreters and are intended to foster a sense of community among this important group of volunteers.

Roving interpretation is one of three distinct trails programs aimed at enriching visitors' experience, understanding, and appreciation of the Reserve. The other two – the Ambassador Program and the Interpretive Station Program – will be developed during the next few months. Stay tuned.

***Umesh Bellur, Susan Daniel, Susan Elliott, Karen Gordon, Brian Griffith, Allen Heryet, Dee Huang, Laura Jefferson, Carolyn MacLean, Barney Moore, Sherry Ledakis, Kristine Schindler, Janice Taylor, and Cindy Tozer**

CEED: Point Loma Tidepools

by Mukesh Mehta and Lisa Kakone

Our first November CEED event was part of an educational exchange with Cabrillo National Monument, whose park ranger and volunteers had previously visited TPSNR. A total of 14 docents attended the walk to the tidepools at Point Loma Ecological Reserve. We were greeted at the tidepools building by park ranger and volunteer coordinator Dan Wieder, community volunteer Bob Nydam (who is also a Torrey Pines docent trainee), and two other tour guides.

After a short introduction and safety briefing, we were offered hiking poles because of the expected slippery conditions on the wet, rocky reef.

We were divided into four smaller groups and led down to the tidepools. As we descended to the intertidal habitat, we walked over the Point Loma Formation,

which is approximately 70 million years old, much older than our Del Mar Formation.

The tide was low, and we saw many of the amazing marine animals that call this federally protected area home. Our guides pointed out colonies of solitary sea anemones, which catch their prey using stinging cells; soft-bodied sea slugs called sea hares, which are reddish-brown in color and produce a thick cloud of ink to distract predators when disturbed;

mussels firmly attached to rocks; and gooseneck barnacles, which have a fleshy, muscular stalk and feed on plankton when the tide is high using small hair-feathers.

Among the plants we saw were green seagrass, which forms large clumps in the intertidal zone; wireweed, brown algae that form thick strands in the intertidal zone; and deadman's fingers, green algae that forms drooping clumps with cylindrical branches that are spongy in texture.



Overall, it was a picture-perfect day on Point Loma. We thanked the ranger and volunteers and offered another visit to Torrey Pines in the future.

CEED: Kumeyaay Ipai Interpretive Center

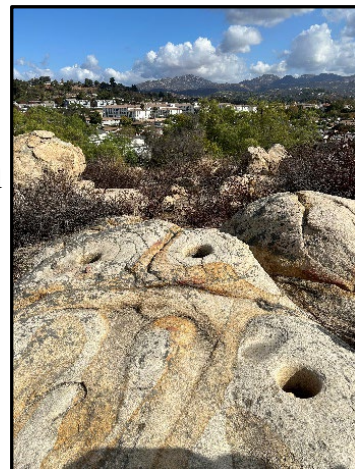
by Mukesh Mehta

How did the city of Poway get its name? It comes from the Kumeyaay word *Pauwai*, meaning “arrowhead” or “merging of two creeks.” As the area’s first inhabitants, the Kumeyaay have been living here for about 10,000 years according to archaeologists.

November’s second CEED event was a tour of the Kumeyaay Ipai Interpretive Center in Poway, a five-acre site rich in Kumeyaay-Ipai local history. Owned and operated by the City of Poway, the center was founded by a partnership of the City, the Friends of the Kumeyaay, and the San Pasqual Band of Indians. Twelve docents and trainees attended the November 16 event. After a short introduction by center volunteers, we were split into two groups for guided tours.

We saw many of the native plants we know from Torrey Pines and learned how they were used by the Kumeyaay. Toyon berries were dried and made into jelly or added to other dishes; toyon bark and leaves were used to treat infected wounds. The flowers of mountain lilac *ceanothus* were rubbed together with water to make soap. Chalk *dudleya*’s fleshy leaves were heated and bound to the feet to treat corns and calluses. *Manzanita*’s ripe fruits were soaked in water to make cool drinks; its leaves were boiled and drunk as tea to treat kidney problems. Elderberry was an important medicinal plant with strong antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. Its branches were used to make musical instruments such as flutes and clap sticks. *Yucca*’s strong fibers were used to create ropes and baskets, its flowers were used for food, and the root ball was used to produce a shampoo. California sagebrush’s aromatic branches were used as a body rub to control insects and disguise hunters’ scent; its leaves were boiled for tea to treat colds and congestion.

At the high point of the site, we saw *morteros* (grinding holes) in dense rock formations. This is where Ipai women gathered to pound and grind food for their families. After the acorns were ground to flour, it was leached of tannic acid and then cooked. Some *morteros* were 14 inches deep, indicating that people lived here for multiple generations.



Further along the trail we arrived at a Kumeyaay replica village, which had 'ewaas (homes) made of young sycamore or willow tree branches that were covered with cattails and fastened with yucca or agave string. The doors face east to help residents wake up at sunrise.



We thoroughly enjoyed the Kumeyaay-Ipai Interpretive Center in *Pauwai*. It is located at 13104 Ipai-Waaypuk Trail and is open for docent-led and self-guided tours on the third Saturday of each month from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. For more information, call (858) 668-4781 or visit <https://www.poway.org/369/Kumeyaay-Ipai-Interpretive-Center>

Docents Monitor the Komen Walk

Photos by Marian Edelbrock

On Friday, November 15, Torrey Pines docents monitored the Susan B. Komen 3-Day Walk to Cure Breast Cancer as the participants walked the 1½ miles through the Reserve on the park road. We enthusiastically welcomed the walkers and shared our rules with them: no food, no feathers, and no amplified music.



For the twelfth year in a row, the Reserve was left in pristine condition. Thanks to **Ann Smith Mercandetti** and **Lynne Truong** for organizing this activity and to all the docents who participated: **Patti Montgomery, Bruce Montgomery, Janice Barnard, Thomas Holland, Myrna Trust, Sarton Chani, Betsy Seible, Annette Ring, Rosemary Wareham, Darlene Farnes, Allan Heryet, Karen Gordon, Paul Howard, Medi Denker, and Marian Edelbrock**. Also helping out were docent trainees Pamela Burdt, Barbara Gunning, Elaine Vuong, Tulay Muezzinoglu, and volunteer Mary Walker.



Torrey Pines Book Club

We will continue to meet via Zoom at our regularly scheduled time: the second Tuesday of each month at 1 pm. Please notify **Annette Ring** if you plan to participate or if you need any extra help getting connected.

When: Tuesday, December 10, 1:00 pm

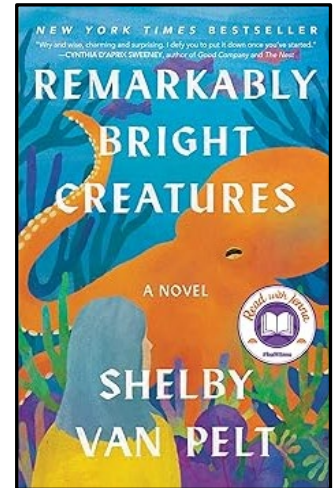
What: *Remarkably Bright Creatures: A Novel* by Shelby Van Pelt

Amazon says:

A charming, witty and compulsively readable exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope that traces a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus. After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors and tidying up. She becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine, but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors – until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova. Shelby Van Pelt's debut novel is a gentle reminder that sometimes taking a hard look at the past can help uncover a future that once felt impossible.

All TPDS docents are welcome. Meetings usually last an hour and a half.

January 14: *The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year* by Margaret Renkl



Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: November 2024

Number of species: 78
(+2 other taxa)

American Wigeon 20
Mallard 4
Northern Pintail 8
Mourning Dove 22
White-throated Swift 85
Anna's Hummingbird 26
Allen's Hummingbird 8
hummingbird sp. 2
American Coot 4
Killdeer 1
Whimbrel 1
Long-billed Curlew 1
Marbled Godwit 5
Willet 13
Parasitic/Pomarine Jaeger 1
Heermann's Gull 4
Ring-billed Gull 1
Western Gull 13
California Gull 9
Royal Tern 9
Pied-billed Grebe 3
Western Grebe 72

Common Loon 4
Black-vented Shearwater 300
Brandt's Cormorant 5
Double-crested Cormorant 7
White-faced Ibis 3
Black-crowned Night Heron 1
Snowy Egret 4
Great Egret 4
Great Blue Heron 2
Brown Pelican 27
Turkey Vulture 1
Osprey 1
White-tailed Kite 3
Cooper's Hawk 4
Northern Harrier 3
Red-shouldered Hawk 3
Red-tailed Hawk 11
Belted Kingfisher 1
Nuttall's Woodpecker 7
Northern Flicker 2
American Kestrel 7
Peregrine Falcon 2
Black Phoebe 15

Say's Phoebe 5
Cassin's Kingbird 8
California Scrub-Jay 21
American Crow 37
Common Raven 54
Tree Swallow 2
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 1
Bushtit 59
Wrentit 71
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 5
California Gnatcatcher 7
Northern House Wren 16
Bewick's Wren 6
California Thrasher 17
Northern Mockingbird 2
Western Bluebird 9
Hermit Thrush 4
Scaly-breasted Munia 24
American Pipit 1
House Finch 134
Lesser Goldfinch 68
Dark-eyed Junco 2
White-crowned Sparrow 33

Savannah Sparrow (Belding's) 6
Song Sparrow 54
Lincoln's Sparrow 2
California Towhee 63
Rufous-crowned Sparrow 3
Spotted Towhee 15
Red-winged Blackbird 4
Orange-crowned Warbler 3
Common Yellowthroat 14
Yellow-rumped Warbler 209
Townsend's Warbler 1

Observers: Donna Mancuso, Kathy Estey, Manolo Turner, Robert Turner, Karen Masser, Tsaiwei Olee, Andy Rathbone, Gabriele Wienhausen, Steve Neal, Robert James, Nancy Richardson, Marty Hales, Gail Gasior

The Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for January 4, 2025. Since we need to do the entire Reserve all in one day, we will need as many birders as possible! Check in with your leaders and let them know if you can make it. Thanks.

Herb Knufken's photo gallery includes many birds: pbase.com/herb1rm



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