



TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 483

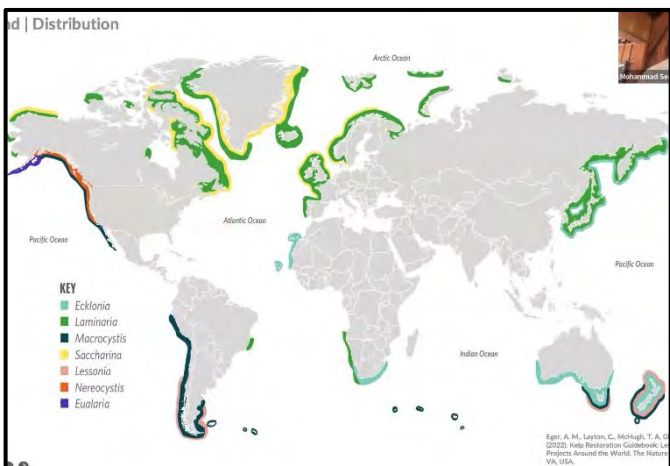
November 2025

“Future-Proofing” San Diego’s Kelp Forests

by Joan R. Simon

On October 11, Mohammad Sedarat, a marine scientist and PhD candidate in the lab of Dr. Jennifer Smith at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, gave a talk on the survival and potential renewal of kelp in San Diego’s coastal waters. He posed this question: When kelp dies off because of an ocean heat wave and we try to replace it, will the new kelp succumb the same way the original kelp did? Can we find kelp that can tolerate an increase in water temperature associated with heat waves and also long-term ocean warming?

Multiple genera of kelp cover about one-third of the global coastline, making them the largest marine habitat on the planet. Mr. Sedarat’s focus is on the large brown seaweed (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) that we typically see in the waters



off La Jolla, including Torrey Pines. They are bottom dwellers that form dense three-dimensional stands, which provide the base of the food web. They are important for fisheries and the manufacturing of toothpaste, shampoo, medicine, even ice cream, and are often farmed for these products. They are also carbon fixers, because they are photosynthesizing and taking in CO₂ all the time. But unlike

Docent General Meeting

Date: Saturday, November 8, 9:00 am

Location: St. Peter’s Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Del Mar

Speaker: Jane Barger, Torrey Pines Docent

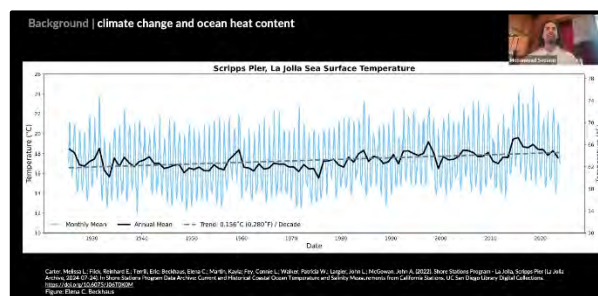
Topic: *The Amazing Gray Whale Migration*

For the past seven years, Jane has been a San Diego Natural History Museum (NHM) "Whaler Naturalist" working on whale-watching boats out of both San Diego and Mission Bays. To expand her knowledge, Jane and her husband, Ray, who is also a TPDS docent and NHM Whaler, visited the lagoons of Baja California to see and touch the gray whales. Jane and Ray created a Beach Interpretive Kiosk in the South Beach parking lot, which post-Covid has developed into the BLIK in the North Beach parking lot.

Refreshments: Docents with last names beginning with **A, B, C, D** will be responsible for providing snacks for this meeting.

seagrasses, they do not have roots, so the carbon they absorb does not get stored in the soil. When the plants die off or are eaten, much of the carbon is once again released and redistributed throughout the ocean.

Climate change is a big driver of kelp loss, not just globally but specifically in Southern California. Water temperatures measured at the Scripps Pier over the past century show a gradual warming trend, punctuated by cycles of El Niños which create periods of higher water temperature and lower nutrient availability. (Cont. on pg. 3.)



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 Angela Bailey and Roger Isaacson. Submissions are due on or about the 20th day of the preceding month and may be emailed to

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

President's Message: Reserve to Close on November 3

Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve will close from Monday, November 3, 2025 until the end of February 2026. The Reserve will reopen on March 1, 2026. During this four-month period:

- The park road, upper parking lots, and most trails within the main reserve will be closed to vehicles and pedestrians.
- **South Beach and North Beach parking lots, Torrey Pines State Beach, and the Extension trails will remain open to the public.**



Lodge and Museum Shop Access

Sunday, November 2 will be the last day the Lodge is open to the public. After this date, a limited number of docents may enter the Lodge to complete approved work.

All access must be pre-planned and approved in advance, including entry and exit times. Please coordinate scheduling directly through Alexandra Latona, Education & Interpretation Manager, CA State Parks. The more lead time, the better.

Examples of approved projects:

- Shop inventory
- Museum cleaning
- Library maintenance

Museum Shop Closure

We recognize that Sunday, November 2 is quickly approaching, and the Museum Shop Committee may require additional time to complete their work. If the Committee needs to close the Visitor Center early to finish preparations, please notify Alexandra as soon as possible. If access is needed after the closure, please contact Alexandra directly to arrange entry.

Ongoing Docent Opportunities

We appreciate the many ways docents have supported the park throughout this transition. As construction progresses and we gauge public response to the closure, we may revisit access for certain volunteer activities, such as weeding. At this time, however, we ask that docents focus efforts on interpretation and education, particularly through:

- Beach walks and educational programming at the BLIK
 - Beach clean-ups, geology- and bird-focused walks, and sea-level rise education
- Rowan Jackman (our new Interpreter 1 park aide) and Alexandra Latona look forward to working with us to coordinate these efforts to enhance engagement at the State Beach.

Upcoming Opportunities

- We anticipate holding Roving Interpretation and Mindful Walks in the Extension in December, following completion of trail repairs.
- Docents will also be invited to assist with the trail repair project planned for November.

Matt Xavier, TPDS

President

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(Cont from pg. 1.)

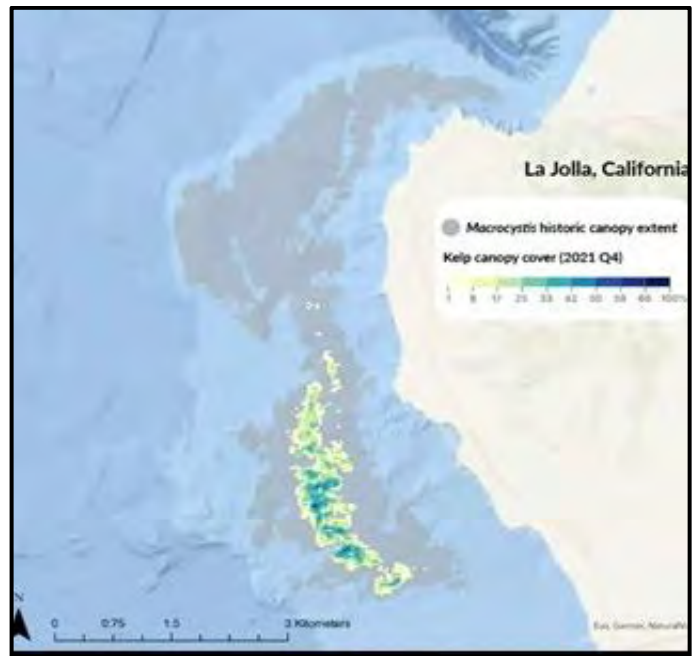
There is only a limited (40-year), satellite-based data set of kelp abundance, but it does reveal a marked decline during the last decade. Not only is there a lower average amount of kelp, but the “highs” have a much lower ceiling than in previous decades.

A large percentage of the local kelp canopy lies off the coast of La Jolla. In the winter of 2013, it was near an all-time high, with over one million square meters (250 acres) of plants. At the time, the kelp forest was so dense and expansive that “you had to divert all marine traffic from the Cove far offshore” to avoid getting stuck in it. In the years following the 2015 El Niño, the area lost over 90% of its kelp – and it hasn’t recovered yet (historically the recovery period has been a few years). And strikingly, almost all of the recovery has been in the south. (See maps below and at right.)



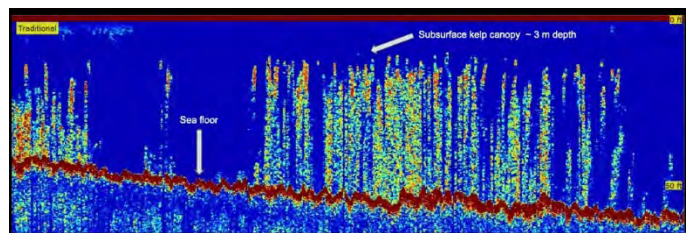
Kelp forest in 2013 kelpwatch.org/

How do scientists measure kelp abundance? The easiest and broadest method is through satellite imaging, which does a great job of showing large swaths of the ocean. (A publicly available portal for this data is: kelpwatch.org). The main problem with satellite surveys is that they show kelp only at the surface. But a lot of smaller kelp species lie well below the surface, and strong currents and high tides often hide *Macrocystis* below the surface. Acoustic recording can help to survey this kelp, using an everyday “fish finder.” Unfortunately, this process is laboriously slow. You must travel at no more than 5 knots, going back and forth in rows that are 10 meters apart – not unlike mowing a lawn. The challenge during these surveys is to stay at the helm for 10 hours a day, all the time avoiding other boat traffic (“it’s La Jolla, after all”), and without a break so there are no gaps in the data collection. It is one of only a few ways to capture what the satellite data misses at large scales, and it takes a whole summer to map a region of kelp the size of La Jolla.



Kelp forest in 2021

The acoustic survey done a few years after the 2015 El Niño (which happened to overlap with the 2018 marine heatwave that killed all surface canopy) revealed that there actually was a persistent canopy about 3 – 5 meters below the surface.



The bottom red line is the ocean floor; the top red line is the water surface.

“It looks like someone took a clean knife through the canopy just below the surface.” Unfortunately, acoustic recording is impossible to do on any kind of large scale because it is far too slow and painstaking. The question is: How did the kelp manage to survive? One reason is that, when the water column is highly stratified during a heatwave, there is often a slab of cooler, denser water sitting below the warm surface waters. This deeper region became a cold-water refuge where kelp was able to survive from the thermocline down to the sea floor.

Mr. Sedarat has six La Jolla kelp forest sites, strategically chosen, that his team permanently monitors seasonally for his PhD, with over three years of data collected thus far. Divers can see how the sea floor is changing, what is new in the reef structure, and whether other algae are competing with kelp. They are also looking for differences in the data that might explain why the northern area off the La Jolla coast hasn’t been recovering as well as its southern counterpart. One observed difference is in the temperature. In a distance of only 10 km along the coast, a variation of 1 to 2° C was observed, and this difference might be determinative.



Kelp monitoring locations off the La Jolla coast

In Tasmania, along a coastline of hundreds of kilometers, the same 1 to 2° C difference exists. Where kelp have been exposed to perpetually warmer water, it has already adapted. For many reasons we cannot simply import these more heat-tolerant kelp from a foreign country. They not only have a different genetic makeup from our local kelp, but there could be significant ecological consequences to introducing non-native strains into our waters. We need to find thermally tolerant kelp “in our own backyard.”

Finding these thermally tolerant kelp is the focus of Mr. Sedarat’s research, where he is doing “heat stress” experiments on the microscopic stages of giant kelp. The first step is to find reproductive material in the wild to bring back to the lab. Kelp alternates between two stages: a sexual stage and an asexual stage. The reproductive blades of *Macrocyctis*, called sporophyll, have darker patches called sori, which contain spores. The spores are released into the ocean and drop to the bottom of the sea, where they form gametophytes which eventually fertilize each other and develop into embryos. Those embryos mark the beginning of the asexual sporophyte stage; sporophytes develop microscopic blades and grow very quickly into giant kelp plants.

What are cues for the spores to release? While the timing varies by species, it’s happening almost year around for *Macrocyctis*, with peaks in the spring and summer, when there are strong upwellings in the water column that are typical of California waters.

The thicker section of the sori stores all the spores. In the lab, the giant kelp sporophyll collected from the ocean are cleaned, dried out overnight, and kept cool in incubators. By the next day they “should be pretty upset. They want to be in water with nutrients.” Then they are immersed in really cold, nutrient-rich water, which “makes them happy,” and they quickly release their spores, becoming male and female gametophytes over a period of two weeks. If you keep them in red light, they will stay in a non-fertilized gametophyte life stage indefinitely, which is helpful for storing them long term in the lab. (Red light is filtered out as it penetrates the ocean.) They can photosynthesize and will keep growing, but the red light does not provide a cue for them to start fertilizing.

When they are provided blue or white light, the colors they are accustomed to in the wild, they will immediately start to fertilize and begin the process of growing into giant kelp sporophytes. The embryonic stage is where Mr. Sedarat is doing most of his heat-tolerant experiments. In addition to this physiological comparison of heat tolerance, he is sequencing these kelp to further compare the extent of differences between the northern and southern plants in La Jolla. Mr. Sedarat is also sequencing upwards of 200 kelp individuals collected along the larger San Diego coast (from Point Loma up to San Clemente and the Channel Islands) to further compare the population structure of kelp forests in this region.

There are other kelp and brown seaweed (e.g. sargassum*) species which can often, and quickly, fill in patches of the reef where *Macrocyctis* has been lost. The shorter understory kelp that are replacing it in some places may be providing the same services – e.g., breeding and feeding grounds for fish, as well as protection – and they might naturally be more thermally tolerant. So, one question is whether we actually should replace them with giant kelp if these other species can better provide a more stable habitat in increasingly warmer conditions.

We encouraged Mr. Sedarat to come back to a future docent meeting and tell us how his research plays out. To see the video of his presentation, click [here](#). For more background on kelp, see Endangered Kelp Forests (May 2021 [Torreyana](#)).

*See: What’s on the Beach: Sargassum (July 2025 [Torreyana](#))



General Meeting Minutes: October 11, 2025

Mohammad Sedarat from SIO gave a presentation on kelp in San Diego coastal waters (see pg. 1). Approximately 80 docents attended. Matt Xavier led the business meeting.

Docent of the Month: Khai Truong was named Docent of the Month. Khai volunteers at the TIK, Lodge, and beach cleaning, and he always has a smile ready for everyone he meets. (See pg. 6.)

Nominating Committee: Janet Ugalde, Roger Isaacson, Lisa Kakone, Gary McCook, and Anne Hebert make up the committee. Janet announced that the committee decided to fill the officer openings with available 2025 board members, so only at-large positions are available by application. Applications were due Oct. 13 to give the NomCom time to interview new candidates. You must be present at the November meeting to vote. The slate of nominees will be sent out by email to all docents (see pg. 10). Nominations may be made from the floor for all positions at the November General Meeting but must first notify the president of their intent at least 7 days before the election (by November 1)

Bob Friedman presented the latest information for the proposed bylaw changes to the nominating process. These are available at Docent Login under Docent Society Policies; there is also a link in the October *Torreyana*. An email will be sent with this information. Bob summarized the major changes: 1. Terms are for two years for first-time office holders. 2. Subsequent terms are for one year unless a person is filling an executive position, all of which have two-year terms. 3. Voting will be by electronic secret ballot starting with the 2027 election (in November 2026), so that all docents may participate. 4. Docents may self-nominate by filling out an application. The bylaws task force members are **Bob Friedman** (chair), **Matt Xavier, Janice Barnard, Linda Brown, Jeannie Smith, Myrna Trust, and Santosh Nichani.**

Mindful Walks: Beverly Toth announced that the Mindful Walks team will experiment with different mindfulness techniques, designed for new venues when parts of the Reserve are closed. Meet on Monday, November 3 at 4 pm at the South Beach stairs. All docents are welcome. Mindful Walks are offered on the Guy Fleming Trail every Sunday at 9 am. Bev extended a warm invitation for all docents to join a mindful walk and learn to experience our wonderful environment from a mindful perspective.

Budget: All program leaders should submit their budget request for 2026 to treasurer **Lynne Truong** as soon as possible. Questions regarding this and current budget status should be sent to Lynne.

Interpreter 1: Rowan Jackman, the new Interpreter 1 park aide, will start work in mid-October. A meet and greet has been scheduled for Oct. 22. She will also attend the November General Meeting. (See pg. 9)

New Docent Training: The training is scheduled to start on Wednesday, March 4 at the Pavilion.

Special Walks: Stu Rosenwasser is looking for someone to assist him with Special Walks and eventually succeed him. A person comfortable with regularly communicating with commercial event planners and corporate representatives, recruiting docent guides, and on-site coordinating on the day of the walks would be ideal. So far, 67 special walks involving approximately 2000 participants have been conducted or are scheduled in 2025 (an all-time TPDS record).

Old Town State Park: Alexandra Latona from State Parks is looking for docents to help with Dias de los Muertos at Old Town on November 1 and 2. Contact her at Latona.Alexandra@parks.ca.gov or contact park aide Hanna Nason at Nason.Hanna@parks.ca.gov to sign up or for more information. Volunteers who sign up for the 4-hour shifts can claim their time on Better Impact once complete.

Holiday Party: Barbara Gunning, co-chair of the holiday potluck committee with **Luz Chung**, announced that the party will be on Saturday, December 13 from 11 am to 2 pm in the Community Hall at St. James Church in Solana Beach where we celebrated last year. RSVP's will be through SignUpGenius or by emailing Barbara. A link for SignUpGenius will be sent to all docents.

Public Walks: Bob Friedman announced that a training for public walks on the beach will occur on Thursday, October 16.

Utility Project Phase 1 Update: The Reserve will be closed from Monday, November 3, 2025 until the end of February 2026. For more details, see the President's Message on pg. 2.

Extension: The TPC board has approved a funding request from Darren Smith, CA State Parks Senior Environmental Scientist, for a LIDAR survey of the Extension to help with trail mapping, among other things, as part of the post-2024 fire recovery effort.

Video and transcript of the meeting are available [here](#).



Docent of the Month: Khai Truong

Photo by Herb Knufken

First, thank you to the board members who gave me so much support and led to my receiving this award. I spent most of my career as an engineer in Sorrento Valley and knew nothing about Torrey Pines - the trees, birds, insects, or even the park itself. The word docent never came to my mind because I couldn't teach or spread any knowledge when I didn't know anything about Torrey Pines.



Now, I have time to look back. The seven and a half years have just flown by, from the first day in my training class to Docent of the Month. I would like to thank everyone who supported me along the way. Special thanks to **Don McGuire, Guy Lawrie, and Thomas Stehlik**, who make cleaning up graffiti and picking up trash enjoyable.

Using Scientific (Binomial) Plant Names on the Hiking Trail

by Cresencio Torres

When leading hikes at Torrey Pines Reserve, it's helpful to use binomial plant names – the two-part scientific names for each species. These names may seem difficult at first, but they provide a clear and consistent way to identify plants, no matter where they're found.

Using scientific names helps avoid confusion that can come from regional or common names, and it also encourages a deeper understanding of the unique plants that grow in the Reserve. When we lead a hike, we almost always share the common names of plants, and many visitors are familiar with common names, such as

“black sage” or “California buckwheat.” But every plant also has a binomial name, its official scientific name made up of two parts:

Genus: the first name shared by related plants – e.g., *Salvia*

Species: the last name unique to that specific plant – e.g., *mellifera*. Black sage is *Salvia mellifera*.

Why Are Binomial Names Useful?

- **Clarity:** Common names can be confusing, because many plants have multiple names, and some common names are used to identify more than one plant. Scientific names are exact.
- **Connection:** Explaining what the Latin or Greek words mean can help visitors remember the plant.
- **Curiosity:** Guests enjoy learning the plant's “real” name – it feels like an inside secret that is shared.
- **Respect:** Using the scientific name shows the plant's place in the wider natural world.

How to Introduce Scientific Names

- I give the common name first: “This is black sage.”
- Then I add the scientific name: “Its scientific name is *Salvia mellifera*.”
- I offer a quick meaning or connection: “*Mellifera* means ‘honey-bearing,’ because bees love it.”
- I encourage guests to engage their senses by inviting them to touch, smell, or look closely at the plant while repeating the name.

Examples from the Torrey Pines (*Pinus torreyana*) Reserve are:

- Lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*) – “leaves with smooth uncut edges”
- California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) – *erigonum* means “woolly knees”
- White sage (*Salvia apiana*) – *apiana* refers to “bees”
- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) – *arbutifolia* means “having leaves like the strawberry tree”

Tips for Success

- I use only one or two scientific names per walk.
- I share stories behind the name, not just the meaning of the Latin or Greek word.
- It's important to adjust to the group: kids may enjoy hearing the “funny foreign word.”
- I always strive to create a welcoming environment, not one that is intimidating.

Remember, scientific names are not about showing off knowledge. They help visitors see plants as unique and fascinating members of our Reserve's ecosystem.

The Legal Beginnings of the Torrey Pines Docent Society

by Judy Schulman, TPDS Historian

What came first, our bylaws or our Articles of Incorporation? How many of you even knew we had Articles of Incorporation? I had completely forgotten about them until I accidentally found the document while looking for something else in my files. (I guess that means I need to reorganize my file cabinets.)

In a nutshell (or in our case, a pinecone), bylaws are internal rules that govern an organization. Articles of Incorporation are a legal document filed with the state to legally create an organization. So, you must be an organization before you can create bylaws.

To answer my opening question, I have a copy of the Articles of Incorporation with a stamp on it that says it was endorsed by the State of California on September 28, 1977. The earliest copy of the bylaws I have was signed on December 17, 1977.

The seven-page Articles of Incorporation starts by saying that the name of the corporation shall be the Torrey Pines Docent Society. It is organized pursuant to the General Nonprofit Corporation Law of the State of California. There are two pages listing what our purposes will be! This is followed by a list of the first board members and their notarized signatures. There is a section on our financial responsibility as a nonprofit during the life of the corporation and its dissolution.

The first *Torreyana* mention of Articles of Incorporation was in the November 1976 issue. It stated that “Your executive committee is seriously pursuing the possibilities of incorporating as a cooperating association. Interpretive rangers Irwin and Anderson are aiding with the paperwork. If the Docent Society membership decides in the affirmative to become a cooperating association, then the publication sales program [which has morphed into our Museum Shop today] would be entirely operated by the association. Some of the profit could be used in the operations of the association....”

The February 1977 issue mentions that both the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws were still in Sacramento being reviewed by the State Parks Department.

The December 1977 issue states that we are now incorporated as a nonprofit organization by the State of California and that one of the benefits to docents will be that their donations and expenses can be tax deductible.

Look how far we have come!



Lodge Restoration Continues

by Corbin Schuppert, CA State Parks Restoration Specialist

A group of ten State Park employees from San Diego Coast District came to Torrey Pines on October 8 to begin the "scratch coat" stage of our re-plastering effort at the Lodge.

Our work party – three maintenance workers from Old Town State Historic Park, two employees of the district's Natural Resource Department, a district archeologist, a media/outreach aide, my supervisor Jodi Whelchel, restorationist Foresta von Kurt, and I – began the scratch coat process at the front of the Lodge.

Some minimal lathe was applied to the base of the wall to act as a starting point for the plaster (plaster is applied from the base of the wall upwards). Extra care was taken to reinforce all exterior corners with appropriate fiberglass mesh. Though the goal of our re-plastering is to minimize modern additions to the historic process, compromises are made in areas that are more prone to damage or failure. Doorways and window openings experience frequent vibrations due to their openings and closings and are often reinforced to protect them from those concussive forces. Similarly, exterior corners in high-traffic thoroughways are prone to the undiscerning kicks from children and errant hand-trucks from preoccupied delivery people. In these areas, fiberglass mesh was pressed into a thin coat of plaster, and then covered again, embedding some needed strength in the areas of concern. All plaster was then "scratched" in a crosshatch pattern, leaving a "key" for the next layer to adhere to.

The extra help was much appreciated, and the art of adobe repair continues to be disseminated throughout the San Diego Coast District.



The Old Town maintenance team apply plaster and "scratch" it. Photo by John McCaull

Bee of the Month: Metallic Sweat Bee

by Jess Mullins; photo by Tina Tong

Some of the most common bees seen year-round in San Diego are the metallic sweat bees (*Lasioglossum* subgenus *Dialictus*). The WannaBees have recorded this group at the Reserve every single month of the year! These bees are tiny and fast, and their metallic sheen makes them tricky to focus on as they dart from flower to flower. Their small body size may help explain their persistence during times when most flowers have gone dormant. They need fewer resources than larger-bodied bees, and can make do with the few late-blooming species such as San Diego wreath-plant (*Stephanomeria diegensis*) and goldenbush (*Isocoma menziesii*).



Their year-round presence provides a clue to some of the life-history strategies that interest bee biologists: they are social and have a general diet. Many bees we have featured in previous months are solitary. In contrast, these small sweat bees live in colonies with a queen that remains underground laying eggs and workers

that collect pollen and nectar for the nest. Social species tend to have a longer flight season than solitary ones, spanning months and the bloom periods of many plants, so they can't afford to be picky! Colony size also shifts with the seasons, with more workers during times of plenty and fewer during the drier months.

There are about 20 species of metallic sweat bees known from San Diego County; a few of these species belong to the “*gemmatum* complex.” (A “complex” refers to a group of species that are very similar and difficult to separate.) A few of the *Dialictus* species in the county fall into the *gemmatum* complex. Distinguishing *Dialictus* often requires a microscope to see tiny surface pits on the thorax. Other distinguishing traits include the color of the abdomen, the shape of the face, and the orientation of hairs on the body. The *gemmatum* complex is united by an oval structure called the tegula, which appears to “hold” the wings in place and is easily identifiable in photographs. The orange oval in the photo highlights this characteristic.

Like most bees, *Dialictus* nest in bare or lightly vegetated soil, each leading to a complex tunnel system below. This species is also commonly spotted in more developed areas, including in home gardens and urban city plantings. To provide habitat for them, make sure to leave patches of bare ground and provide plants that bloom throughout the year.

Bird of the Month: Western Gull

by Robert James; photo from National Park Service

The term *seagull* reminds me of a popular book from my childhood, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. But the term is a bit of a misnomer, as biologists refer to these birds as simply “gulls.” Some gull species range widely over the oceans; however, many go inland to nest and some, such as this month's bird, are restricted to the immediate Pacific coast. The **Western Gull** (*Larus occidentalis*) is a species that is common here and distinguished by its large size and bold behaviors. At the beach and lagoon, you can often see adults with full breeding plumage – achieved after three years – with their dark, slate-colored back (mantle) feathers. First-year birds are all brown, and second-year birds are intermediate.



Western gulls are widely reported in eBird in our area and can be seen all year at the Reserve in varying numbers. Numbers are augmented by late-summer dispersal from colonies on nearby offshore islands, such as the Coronados. Interestingly, they are the only gull that breeds in San Diego County, in places such as the La Jolla Cove. Performing wildlife surveys at Naval Air Station North Island, I remember small numbers nesting near the runways. While helping to monitor a California least tern colony, I vividly recall a colleague getting wacked in the head by a particularly aggressive Western Gull.

This gull species has a broad diet, helping to account for its success. Prey include birds, eggs, nestlings, fish, invertebrates, carrion, and trash. This versatile forager captures prey while swimming, in mid-flight, or while searching on foot on the beach. On a broader spatial scale, however, the Western Gull is among the species that has lost more than 50% of its population in the past 50 years and has shown accelerated declines within the past decade. Scientists hypothesize that this decrease may be due to prey reduction following El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) ocean temperature events.

Western Gulls can be confused with the American Herring Gull (*L. smithsonianus*), another large species that is much less common in our area. A field guide will point out the distinctions. Of course, gulls in general have different plumages as they mature, and in some cases, they can hybridize and backcross resulting in varied patterns. However, building on the Bird of the Month featured in the September *Torreyana*, the Heermann's Gull (*L. heermanni*), you can now identify a substantial number of gulls that you see at the Reserve. More to come!

Meet the Natural Resources Field Crew

by Alyssa Sandino

The Department's natural resources responsibility is to "acquire, protect, restore, maintain and sustain outstanding and representative examples of California's natural and scenic values for the benefit of present and future generations."

Have you met the San Diego Coast District Natural Resources Field Crew? This intrepid State Parks team of five Forestry Aides led by an Environmental Scientist work year-round on invasive species removal, habitat restoration, monitoring, and fuel reduction throughout the District, including at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve. You will often find the team off trail controlling weeds or collecting bark beetles. During fall and winter, when most birds are not breeding, the team works on fuel reduction in the wildland-urban interface and the removal of invasive trees.

During bird breeding season, the team focuses on projects away from high-activity areas. This includes conducting bird surveys and doing restoration work at the Flintkote Avenue coastal sage scrub habitat restoration site. Year-round the team can be found in the Extension and main Reserve collecting bark beetles (*Ips paraconfusus*), conducting plant surveys, and managing both rare and invasive plants.

You may see the team off trail, but do not worry as they are trained in best management practices to prevent the spread of invasive weeds! They tread carefully to minimize trampling of native vegetation and brush off their boots, uniform, and vehicle between parks to prevent the spread of seeds.



Top row, left to right: Edwin Nava (crew lead), Olivia Pederson, Reyna Partee, Trevor Tompkins. Bottom row, left to right: Alyssa Sandino, Laura Chaing

Interpreter 1: Rowan Jackman

by Alexandra Latona, Education & Interpretation Manager, CA State Parks

We are excited to welcome Rowan Jackman to the Interpreter 1 park aide position at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve. She is replacing Louis Sands, who retired last year. An Oregonian, Rowan earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon in Global Studies and Spanish. Since 2021, she has worked in the environmental education field in San Diego with I Love a Clean San Diego and as a recycling consultant.

Rowan loves anything outdoors and spends time backpacking, gardening, surfing, hiking and traveling. She is learning to play the bass and loves crafty, hands-on activities. She brings high energy, a wealth of volunteer management experience, and a passion for education to the Interpreter 1 position.

Rowan's regular hours will be Tuesday – Saturday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.



CEED Event: November 2025

Date: Sunday, November 30

Time: 3pm – 4pm

Place: Living Coast Discovery Center
1000 Gunpowder Point Drive, Chula Vista

Meet: At the main parking lot; once parked, our group will be taken on a shuttle to reach the Center. Please arrive 20 minutes early (2:40pm) to gather and take the shuttle.

Duration: about one hour

RSVP: Rachel Scherba by email. The tour is limited to 20 docents. We will send out a list of attendees so that those who wish to can arrange carpools.

Website: thelivingcoast.org

TPDS Board Nominations for 2026

The TPDS Nominating Committee – consisting of **Ann Herbert, Roger Isaacson, Lisa Kakone, Gary McCook, and Janet Ugalde** – have nominated the following docents to serve as 2026 officers and board members:

President: Matt Xavier

Vice President: Harry Proctor

Treasurer: Lynne Truong

Secretary: Ed Saade

At-Large: Bob Friedman

At-Large: Paul Howard

At-Large: Mary Makowski

At-Large: Mukesh Mehta

At-Large: Jamee Patterson

This slate of directors will be voted on by the membership at the November 8 annual meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting (with seven days' prior notice). A candidate nominated must be a voting member in good standing and consent to the nomination.

BLIK: Learn at Lunch

Date/Time: Thursday, November 6, 12 noon

Location: North Beach parking lot, docent shed

Speaker: Bob Friedman, Torrey Pines Docent

Topic: *Waves, Sand, Cobbles, and Tides: How Can Docents Help Visitors Decide Whether to Walk the Beach?*

Bring your lunch, a chair, your curiosity, and any questions you may have about tides. No need to register. You may claim one hour on Better Impact under Training, Continuing Education (up to 12 hours per year).

BLIK Learn at Lunch is the first Thursday of every month at noon at the docent shed, North Beach parking lot. All docents, park employees, and visitors are welcome.

Save the Date

Docent Holiday Potluck

Date: Saturday, December 13

Time: 11am to 2pm

Location: St. James Church (same as last year)

Annual Docent Membership Renewal

This is a reminder to log your service hours in Better Impact. Because of an anticipated park closure, this year you will need to log a minimum of 60 hours to retain **Active** membership status in the Torrey Pines Docent Society (TPDS) for 2026, including 15 hours in Lodge Hosting or the Youth Program for the year to count toward Lifetime Status.

If your current status is Active and you cannot fulfill your 60 hours requirement by the end of the year but wish to remain in TPDS, you will need to fill out an Associate Application form to remain in the TPDS with Associate status for 2026. Application can be found [here](#).

If your current status is **Associate** and you will have completed 60 hours by the end of the year, your status will automatically be converted back to Active for 2026. If you will not have 60 service hours by the end of the year and wish to remain in the TPDS, please submit the Associate Application form to request an extension of your Associate membership for next year (see link above).

There is also a **Friends** status for docents who can no longer make the annual service hours requirement but still want to participate in other docent activities. Friends status does not come with a parking pass.

If you will be completing your 10th year as an Active docent by the end of this year, please send an email to membership@torreypine.org to request the Lifetime membership award. For each year starting in 2024, for your service year to count towards your **Lifetime** award, a minimum of 20 hours must be from the core interpretive areas of Lodge Hosting and/or Youth Program. (Because of anticipated Reserve closure this year, that requirement is 15 hours.)

Your TPDS volunteer hours may also qualify you for the CA State Parks Volunteers In Parks (VIP) parking pass. A minimum of 100 hours is required for the District Pass and 200 hours for the State Pass. State Parks will use the hours you logged into Better Impact to determine whether you qualify for a VIP pass and will mail the VIP pass to you.

Please email membership@torreypine.org if you need further clarification on membership requirements.

What's on the Beach? Marine Worms

article and photo by Kathy Dickey

This article has been a tough one for me. Can anyone recognize and identify the photo? At first, I thought it was an old piece of coral. Then I thought it was a broken piece of a beehive-like colony of sand castle worms, like the kind we sometimes see at the ocean end of Flat Rock or in tidepool areas. But the shiny, pearl-like nature of the inside of the worm casing helped me to identify it as a scaly wormsnailed (*Thylacodes squamigerus*), also called the scaled wormsnailed or the worm shell.

This scaly wormsnailed lives in huge colonies as big as 9,000 worms per square foot, from the intertidal zone to 65 feet deep. They prefer large rocks in areas of gentle waves but also live on pilings and in bays and estuaries. They are found from Monterey to Baja California. Once they attach, the wormsnaileds do not move for the rest of their lives.

So why is it called a snail? It has a mollusk-like body, with a stomach and foot characteristic of gastropods (snails). A young wormsnailed begins as a coiled shell before elongating into its irregular, worm-like shape. If straightened out, wormsnaileds can be as long as six inches, with a width to about ¼ to ½ of an inch. If threatened, the worms sink down into their shells since they have no operculum (trap door). They are genetically in the class *Gastropoda*, which includes all snails and slugs.



Front, about 3 inches long

To eat, the wormsnailed releases strands (nets) of sticky mucus into the water to catch plankton and detritus. Next, the wormsnailed uses its radula (an internal structure of tiny teeth) to reel in and eat the food in the net. The wormsnailed's poop goes through an anus that opens near the head at the breathing hole.

The wormsnaileds have separate sexes. The males release sperm packets into the water, and the females use their mucus nets to collect the sperm packets for fertilization. The females keep the eggs until they hatch into tiny snails that are released.

Predators include starfish, large crabs, whelks, moon snails,

stingrays, and some pufferfish. The empty shells are sometimes used to shelter small crabs, amphipods (small shrimp-like creatures) and brittle stars.

References available upon request.

Torrey Pines "Branches" Out (to libraries, that is)

by Judy Schulman

On a recent trip to my local branch of the San Diego Public Library (SDPL) system, I noticed a flyer on the checkout counter showing eight new library cards that they were promoting. One of them was a view of Torrey Pines State Beach!

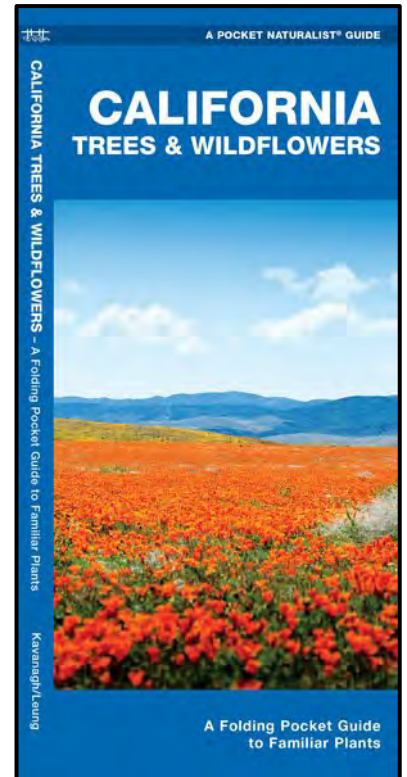
Another flyer promoted a free vehicle day-use pass that library patrons could check out. This would enable them to visit any California state park. The flyer at my branch mentions that Torrey Pines State Reserve is the local California state park.

In conjunction with this, the SDPL system also offers a hiking backpack that patrons can check out. It contains one park pass, a California Trees and Wildflowers Folding Pocket Guide, a California Wildlife Folding Pocket Guide, a set of binoculars, a luggage tag, a compass, a clear pouch with parks information, and a hand lens.

Both park passes and backpacks are available at the Circulation Desk of San Diego City Library branches and are good for two

weeks. They cannot be reserved in advance. The San Diego County Library has a similar program for the park passes. They can be reserved in advance (like a book) and are good for 10 days. Both programs have been operating for several years.

sandiego.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S161C1805116



Torrey Pines Book Club

We will meet via Zoom at our regularly scheduled time. Please notify **Annette Ring** if you plan to participate or if you need any extra help getting connected.

When: Tuesday, November 11, 1:00 pm

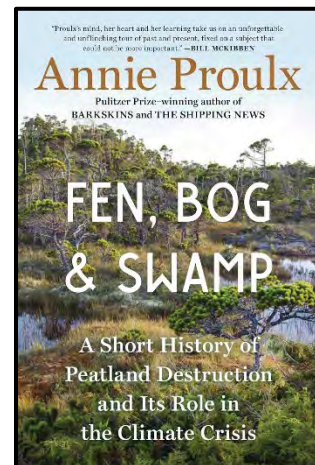
What: *Fen, Bog and Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis* by Annie Proulx

Amazon says:

A lifelong acolyte of the natural world, Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Proulx offers a riveting dive into the history of our wetlands and the vitally important role they play in preserving the environment – by storing the carbon emissions that accelerate climate change. Fens, bogs, swamps, and marine estuaries are crucial to the earth's survival, and in four illuminating parts, Proulx documents their systemic destruction in pursuit of profit.

Proulx describes the fens of 16th-century England, Canada's Hudson Bay lowlands, Russia's Great Vasyugan Mire, and America's Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia. She introduces the early explorers who launched the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, and writes of the diseases spawned in the wetlands, such as malaria.

Fen, Bog and Swamp is a sobering look at the degradation of wetlands over centuries and what their systematic destruction means for the planet.



All TPDS docents are welcome. Meetings usually last a couple of hours.

December 9: *The Language of Butterflies: How Thieves, Hoarders, Scientists, and Other Obsessives Unlocked the Secrets of the World's Favorite Insect* by Wendy Williams

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: October 2025

Number of species: 66
(+2 other taxa)

duck sp. 9
California Quail 1
Mourning Dove 22
Vaux's Swift 14
White-throated Swift 6
swift sp. 2
Anna's Hummingbird 16
Allen's Hummingbird 4
Killdeer 1
Whimbrel 3
Long-billed Curlew 8
Willet 6
Heermann's Gull 2
Western Gull 20
California Gull 1
Elegant Tern 3
Royal Tern 9
Eared Grebe 2

Black-vented Shearwater 200
Brandt's Cormorant 9
Double-crested Cormorant 2
Snowy Egret 3
Great Egret 1
Great Blue Heron 2
Brown Pelican 14
Osprey 1
White-tailed Kite 2
Cooper's Hawk 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 2
Red-tailed Hawk 3
Belted Kingfisher 1
Downy Woodpecker 1
Nuttall's Woodpecker 11
Northern Flicker 1
American Kestrel 5
Peregrine Falcon 3
Black Phoebe 12
Say's Phoebe 1

Cassin's Kingbird 1
Hutton's Vireo 2
California Scrub-Jay 27
American Crow 15
Common Raven 58
Bushtit 63
Wrentit 90
Swinhoe's White-eye 1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 2
California Gnatcatcher 1
Northern House Wren 15
Bewick's Wren 8
California Thrasher 18
Northern Mockingbird 3
Hermit Thrush 1
Phainopepla 1
Scaly-breasted Munia 51
House Finch 144
Lesser Goldfinch 57
Chipping Sparrow 1
White-crowned Sparrow 18

Savannah Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 17
California Towhee 87
Spotted Towhee 19
Orange-crowned Warbler 7
Common Yellowthroat 7
Yellow-rumped Warbler 62
Townsend's Warbler 1
Western Tanager 3
Common Yellowthroat 6

Observers: Nancy Richardson, Nancy Stalnaker, Paul Mullholland, Robert James, Kathy Estey, Robert Turner, Karen Turner, Pam Burdt, Luz Chung, Gale Darling, Steve Neal, Donna Mancuso, Marci Rimlinger, Dave Rimlinger, Marty Hales

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



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