



TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 484

December 2025

Whale Tales

by Dan Hammer

Whale season is upon us. Any day now, we'll have the chance to gaze offshore and see California gray whales as they make their way south from Alaska to Baja California.

At the November 8 meeting, **Jane and Ray Barger** told docents all about these magnificent marine mammals, also known as Eastern North Pacific gray whales. For the past seven years, Jane and Ray have been San Diego Natural History Museum (NAT) "Whaler Naturalists" working on whale-watching boats out of San Diego and Mission Bays. To expand their knowledge, they visited the lagoons of Baja California to see and touch the gray whales. In their two-part presentation, Jane profiled the species and described its amazing annual migration. Ray described how periodic die-offs strike the gray whale population.



California gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*) are of the order Cetaceans; the word comes from the Greek *ketos*, meaning "sea monster." The suborder *Mysticetes* are

Holiday Party Potluck!

Date: Saturday, December 13, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Location: St. James Community Hall, 625 S. Nardo Avenue, Solana Beach. Onsite parking available.

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/side dish, or dessert**. RSVP by email to tpdocents2025@gmail.com 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!

Barbara Gunning for the 2025 Holiday Party Planning Committee.

baleen whales; the Greek word means "moustached sea monster," referring to the plates of baleen filters that hang from a baleen whale's upper palate and resemble a moustache when its mouth is open.

Whales are mammals: they breathe atmospheric air, are warm blooded, and bear and nurse live young. Though they look like giant fish, they do have a single hair in each dimple on their rostrum (upper jaw).

There are two key populations of gray whales: the *Eastern North Pacific* along the west coasts of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, with a population ranging between 11,700 and 14,450; and the *Western North Pacific*, with about 300 whales off the coasts of Russia and Japan. In addition, the *Pacific Coast Feeding Group* consists of about 200 "resident" whales that hang out between Canada and Oregon and don't migrate back to the Arctic. (Cont. on pg. 3.)

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Editors@torreypine.org.

Please send postal/email address changes to:

Torrey Pines Docent Society
1155 Camino Del Mar #404
Del Mar, CA 92014

Attn: Membership or email to

Membership@torreypine.org

Web sites:

TP Docent Society: torreypine.org

TP Conservancy: torreypines.org

Visitor Center phone: **858.755.2063**

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FLASH - Don't forget to donate
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magazines to the Museum Shop.

President's Message: Progress!

Phase I of the Utilities Project is officially upon us. After years of waiting, it is finally happening! We can now imagine a future of the West parking lot without the porta-potties. Hallelujah! The construction fencing is up, but despite newspaper articles, TV news segments, and social media postings, some members of the public are still unaware of the closure. The upper mesa of Torrey Pines State Reserve is now closed until March 1, 2026 for improvements to utility lines, new comfort stations, and ADA upgrades. Phase II will begin in August or September 2026 and will end by March 1, 2027.



*On behalf of the board, we are proud that our community has risen to the occasion. Docents stepped up with great ideas as well as a positive attitude on how we would approach the closure. We have adapted our activities to include new volunteer opportunities. New beach walks will be held every weekend thanks to the leadership of **Bob Friedman**. Thanks to the **BLIK Team - Ed Saade, Malana Tabak, Gabriele Wienhausen, and Rosemary Wareham** - the **BLIK's** hours of operation have been expanded. There are also opportunities to volunteer near the construction gates at the north entrance. We are also working with State Parks to determine details of public walks in the Extension; stay tuned for more information on these walks.*

*I also want to thank the M&M crew, the dedicated docents who go to great lengths every month to bring hospitality to our general meetings: **Myrna Trust, Marian Edelbrock, Medi Denker, and Molly Allison**.*

*Please welcome the four new board members who were elected at our November general meeting: **Mukesh Mehta, Jamee Patterson, Mary Makowski, and Paul Howard**. With their wide range of skills and experiences, our board gets only better. Lastly, a big thank you to **Janet Ugalde**, who led a nominating committee composed of **Ann Herbert, Gary McCook, Lisa Kakone, and Roger Isaacson**.*

Onward!

Matt Xavier

President, TPDS

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(Cont from pg. 1.)

The California gray whale is well known for having one of the longest migrations of any mammal on earth. Each year they make a round trip (totaling 10,000-12,000 miles) between their summer feeding ground in Alaska and their winter mating and birthing areas in the warm lagoons of Baja California. Traveling at 3 to 5 mph, they cover 85-100 miles per day, and the trip takes 2-2.5 months each way. (With a lifespan of about 60 years, the average gray whale travels about 600,000 total miles!)



The southbound migration begins in late October and occurs in three waves: first the near-term pregnant females traveling alone or in small groups; then the breeding-age males and females, which usually breed along the way; and finally the non-breeding and immature whales (gray whales achieve maturity at 5-11 years). The whales mostly fast during migration – losing 16% to 30% of their body weight – but may do some opportunistic feeding along the way.

Calving occurs in January to February in the warm lagoons of Baja California, though some calves are born earlier during the southward migration. (The whale's gestation period is 12-13 months; females give birth once every two to three years.) A newborn calf is about 15 feet long and weighs 1,500 to 2,000 pounds. It nurses for seven to eight months, doubling in weight thanks to its mother's rich milk (which is about 50% fat, compared

with 4% for cow's milk). Mothers and calves stay in the lagoons for 80 to 90 days, allowing calves to gain weight and develop strength for the long, arduous journey back to Alaska.

The northbound migration occurs from March to May, ending in the nutrient-rich Bering and Chukchi Seas. The first wave north consists of newly pregnant females, adult males, and immature males and females. New mothers and their calves leave later and migrate closer to shore.

Gray whales are bottom feeders. Instead of searching for schools of fish, they dive to the bottom of the sea (to a depth of 165-200 feet), then roll to the side to suck up food, water, and mud. They use their baleen to filter out amphipods (shrimp-like crustaceans), isopods, bivalve mollusks and worms, then use their tongue to force out water and mud. The tongue then swipes the back of the baleen, and the whale swallows its food. The baleen is made of keratin (like our hair and fingernails) arranged in 150 to 180 plates, which hang from the upper palate on each side of their mouth to form the distinctive moustache. A gray whale eats 2,400 to 4,000 pounds of food a day – about 6% of its body weight!

A mature gray whale is around 45 feet long, weighs 20 to 40 tons, and is shaped like a torpedo. It is gray in color, covered in white spots and patches from the many whale barnacles and crustaceans that attach to it. Its blowhole consists of two nostrils located in a shallow dip on the top



of its head; it blows water 15 feet in the air, and the blow can be bushy or heart-shaped. The gray whale has no dorsal fin but a low dorsal hump followed by 10 to 12 "knuckles" before the tail fluke appears. On its pectoral side it has broad, pointed flippers used for steering and turning.

The California gray whale has had a stormy history. In 1855, Charles Scammon discovered the whales' breeding lagoon at Ojo de Liebre (formerly Scammon's Lagoon) and began the most destructive hunting of whales.

Mothers and calves were corralled and slaughtered in high numbers. By the early 1900s, the gray whale population had been reduced to 1,000-2,000 individuals.

Recovery began in 1946 with the creation of the International Whaling Commission. In the early 1970s, after passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act, the gray whale population increased dramatically to the point where it could be removed from the Endangered Species list in 1994.

In 1999-2000 and again in 2019-23, the number of gray whales declined because of what NOAA calls “Unusual Mortality Events” (UMEs) – that is, stranding events that are unexpected and involve a significant die-off of a marine mammal population. The causes of these UMEs are not known for sure, but they correlate with a lack of nutrition: in the year before each UME, an abundance of sea ice in the Alaska straits restricted the whales’ feeding range. The whales thus began their southward migration with a lower body weight. By the time they headed back north, they had less fat than usual to sustain them, and the normal weight loss during migration took a heavier toll, likely leading to more strandings.

If you want to spot a gray whale, go to a high cliff overlooking the ocean. (With the Reserve closed, you’ll need to head north to Del Mar or south to La Jolla.) Using binoculars, you can see whales come to the surface and take three to five shallow dives, surfacing and spouting after each dive. Sometimes you’ll see a whale *spyhopping*, raising its head and eye to assess its environment; or *breaching*, thrusting its body out of the water and crashing down on its side, which is thought to be used for communicating, for courting, or for shaking off parasites.

You can learn more about gray whales at the BLIK, where you’ll find a sign board, gray whale models, a vertebra and rib, a baleen, and an [informative brochure](#). You can get up closer to whales by taking a cruise out of San Diego with the [NAT](#) or [Andiamo Travel](#) (look for GroupOn discounts). Plans are in the works for a CEED whale watching cruise in January; further information to come via GoogleGroups and in the January *Torreyana*. And you can visit new mothers and their babies in Baja California with [NRDC](#), [National Geographic](#), or [Kuyima](#), an excellent ecotourism company in San Ignacio, Baja California.

To watch Jane and Ray’s informative presentation, click [here](#).

General Meeting Minutes: November 8, 2025

Jane and Ray Barger presented a program on migrating gray whales (see pg. 1). Approximately 77 docents attended. President **Matt Xavier** led the business meeting.

Docent of the Month: Debi Buffington (class of 2015) was named Docent of the Month. She is well known for her geology expertise and led us in her “geology slide dance.” Debi also shares her vast knowledge of marine mammals. She volunteers as a naturalist at the NAT for their whale watching tours. She frequently participates in the Youth Program, Lodge hosting, and at the TIK. (See pg. 5.)

North Entry Gate: There will be two-hour shifts from 8 am to 4 pm at the South Beach parking lot entrance to notify visitors of the Reserve closure. Bring a chair.

Election of the 2026 Board: **Janet Ugalde** presented the slate of nominees, which was approved by voice vote. The following people will make up the 2026 board:

Matt Xavier, President

Harry Proctor, Vice President

Ed Saade, Secretary

Lynne Truong, Treasurer

At-Large Members: **Bob Friedman**, **Paul Howard**,
Mary Makowski, **Mukesh Mehta**, **Jamee Patterson**

Adoption of New Bylaws: The changes in bylaws were voted on by a show of hands. 61 docents voted for adoption. The new bylaws are available on the docent website and will take effect in 2026. (Go to Docent Document Repository, then Docent Society Policies.)

Holiday Party: **Barbara Gunning** announced an online procedure through Sign-Up Genius for RSVP-ing to the holiday party. Docents were also able to RSVP at the general meeting.

Lifetime Membership: **Lynne Truong** announced that docents who have served for ten years can apply for Lifetime Membership. Contact her for details. She also said docents who are short of their required hours can apply for Associate Membership. She reminded docents that the \$25 annual dues are due in December. Checks can be brought to the holiday party or mailed to the TPDS. (See pg. 5 for details.)

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee announced that they are working on funding priorities. Suggestions are welcome. Please send them to Matt Xavier.

Beach Walks: On November 7, **Mukesh Meta**, **Robert James** and **Bob Friedman** held a training session for leading walks on the South Beach. There are a bag of resources and whisper units in the South Beach shed available to use when leading walks. The walks are scheduled for Saturday at 10 am and Sunday at 2 pm, subject to beach conditions. There will be a sign just beyond the kiosk with information on the walks. Contact one of the committee members for further information.

Docent of the Month:

Debi Buffington

Photo by Herb Knufken

The summer after graduating from Texas Tech University, I got a job in Grand Teton National Park. It was there that I started hiking and learning about geology. After returning to Texas in October, I worked as a microbiology/entomology quality control lab tech for an international bread company in Dallas for a year before becoming a science teacher and getting a master's in geoscience.

When my husband and I decided to retire, a trip to La Jolla convinced us that we would enjoy Southern California because David enjoys the desert and I enjoy the ocean. After we moved here in 2014, we happened to visit the Living Coast Discovery Center in Chula Vista the day there was a group of docents from Torrey Pines. On the shuttle ride, they encouraged us to become docents.

In 2015 I became a docent at Torrey Pines and a whaling docent for the NAT. I really enjoy sharing my love of the natural world with both adults and children in such a beautiful place. I now teach geology, oceanography, and geography for National University and physics and environmental science for the University of Maryland Global Campus. In 2016 I rewrote the Torrey Pines geology brochure, adding new information and drawing all the sketches. Then **Ray Barger** and I constructed the geology exhibit on the back patio at the Lodge. I enjoy all the friends I have made here and the people I meet at the TIK, at the Lodge, and on children's school tours.

In my spare time, I am a professional artist specializing in landscapes. I also make copper bowls and copper jewelry with fired powdered glass enamel on them. I am in three North Coast galleries. David and I both sing in the Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian Church. My religious beliefs and love of nature are continual inspirations.



2026 Dues Are Due!

by Lynne Truong, TPDS Treasurer

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

You can bring your check to the holiday party on December 13 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 2025 service hours determine your 2026 membership status within TPDS.

Active: 60 hours

Associate: less than 60 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 60 hours by the end of this year, you must fill out an Associate [Application](#) for 2026 and pay your dues to get your parking sticker for 2026.

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

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 California State Park.

Del Mar Sand Asters

by Rhea Bridy

Turn Nonchalance to Joy.

*Take note of small Sand Aster playing along
the path,*

Keeping your spirits high.



Lodge Renovation Update

by Corbin Schuppert, CA State Parks Restoration Specialist

During the Reserve closure for Phase 1 of the Utility Project, restoration work on the Lodge will be ongoing. In the past weeks, scratch-coat plastering has continued over all exposed adobe. The current focus has been detail work around window openings in the Media Room and Interpreter's Office.



The process of reapplying plaster continues to uncover more areas of the structure that demand care and attention. Specifically, repair of deteriorated wood in the window units must be dealt with before plastering can be completed. The nature of construction has many components, and there always seem to be areas in need of extra care which we did not originally plan for. With window jambs and sills exposed, we can remove or repair failed paint and rotted wood, and new paint can be applied prior to plastering around the jamb. (To view a brief time-lapse video of this process, click [here](#).)

Recent rainfall has posed a threat to active and open jobsites; several days prior to the first big storm on November 15 were spent masking off unfinished walls with a system of plastic "curtains," which kept heavy

rainfall off the sensitive adobe and directed water several feet off the face of the building like an eave on a traditional roof. Careful preparation paid off, and the jobsite suffered no damage during the storm. However, previously cracked and failed sections of plaster that exist on all sides of the building continue to be degraded by time and weather; a buttress in the front courtyard of the Lodge shows what happens when problems go untreated and serve as a reminder of why the current work is so vital to our "living" historic structures (see photo below).



After the window repairs and scratch coat have been completed, the second (or "brown") coat will begin. An additional phase of unplanned work will be added as new conduit lines are set into the walls underneath the Lodge porch in order to facilitate a relighting of the original, long-buried light fixtures, which illuminated the porch and entryway and were a handsome detail of original ironwork that complements the Pueblo Revival architecture.

Lastly, it should be noted that new restoration projects underway at Old Town State Historic Park are directly linked to the success of the current Lodge restoration. Techniques and strategies we continue to learn at Torrey Pines are being applied to several structures in Old Town, notably the Casa de Machado y Stewart. Restoration is a slow process, but with new momentum behind us and cooperation between myriad parties, we can move towards a more robust era of understanding and care for our fragile, historic structures.

Become a Torrey Pines “Roads Scholar”

by Judy Schulman, TPDS Historian

Given the changes that will be happening in the park, I want to share some facts about our road, an important landmark that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*

Its official name is Torrey Pines Park Road. But I have a 1922 map drawn by landscape architects Ralph Cornell and Theodore Payne referring to it as San Diego Boulevard, and in the following decade it was commonly known as Roosevelt Memorial Drive.

In 1901-02, old wagon roads were extended into the park. One source says that the road was initially scraped and graded in 1908-09. In 1915, the road was paved – just in time for the Panama-California Exposition in Balboa Park. Some newspaper articles of the time called our road “the Gateway to San Diego.”

Between 1928 and 1930, the League to Save Torrey Pines successfully fought against a proposed cliff road above the beach. The purpose of this proposal was to eliminate curves and grades in the old road. The opponents felt that the new road would not only destroy a section of the park but would also be costly to build. One of the reasons the League was so against this road was that it called for using landfill in the canyons so that the road could go across them.

The current road is about 2 miles long and varies from 18 to 25 feet wide. It has a 6% to 7% grade, most of which occurs from the park entrance to the Lodge, where it is about 320 feet above sea level. It is made from Portland cement, between 4 and 7 inches thick. Because of the seashells found in the road, it is thought that the cement was mixed with sand from a quarry located where the Fleming residence would later be built.

Here are two interesting features about the road. First, it doesn’t have any shoulders. Also, there was a section that once had a white picket fence from Guy Fleming Trail to the Lodge. Sometimes it was on the ocean side of the road, sometimes it was on the landward side.

In addition to carrying tourists, locals, and commercial goods, the road has served various unusual purposes. During both World Wars, it was used by the military for transportation and for marching exercises. Car and tire manufacturers used it for test drives to determine their products’ ability to negotiate the steep hill.



The road was mentioned in poems and books about Torrey Pines, such as William Maurice Culp’s 1931 novel *Tumba of Torrey Pines*, which includes a section where an old tree is telling a young tree how the road will affect them (spoiler alert: Kleenex needed).

Despite the road being paved, there were accidents, usually caused by heavy fog, drunk drivers, or speeding drivers who weren’t able to negotiate the hairpin turns. Margaret Fleming Allen (Guy Fleming’s daughter) told me that one year a truck carrying canned tuna rolled over. Her family gathered the cans and ate tuna for weeks! In the 1920s, some cars had to drive up the hill in reverse because they had gravity-fed fuel systems. And for Model Ts and some others, driving in reverse gave the car more torque than first gear.

As you may recall from my previous columns, I love mysteries. I’ll conclude with a mystery about Torrey Pines Park Road. On the back of a pre-1915 picture postcard of the road, I found this message: “*Do you remember this fatal spot? The puncture and the awful grade and the darkness and the mad drive to San Diego? It will be long remembered I know.*” What could have been going on?

*This article was based on research done in 1998 by Alex Bevil, Historical Consultant for State Parks San Diego Coast District. For the complete document, click [here](#). For an abbreviated version, see Marty Bressler’s article “Our Road – A Brief History” in the September 1999 [Torreyana](#).

Bird of the Month: Willet

by Robert James; photo by Craig Emery

Winter is an exciting time to see many shorebirds (waders) at the Reserve that migrate from the north to partake in our mild San Diego winters. The Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) may seem unremarkable at best. One of my reference books with drawings and descriptions of shorebirds from around our world, a classic titled *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide*, describes the Willet as “a rather heavy and inelegant wader on the ground” with legs that are an “undistinguished dull grey.” Other authors simply call them “noisy.” Not a stirring endorsement of interest! However, when they fly or display, you can see a brilliant white wingbar and surrounding dark feathers that no other shorebirds in our area possess.



The Willet is a large shorebird common on beaches, saltmarshes, and tidal mudflats in our area. Some nonbreeding birds remain during the summer. Our monthly bird counts have ranged from 0-15 individuals, typically with high counts in the winter and lows in the summer. As you would expect, there are many eBird records for our area, centered around the lagoon and beaches.

The Willet gets its name from its familiar call “pill-will-willet.” Some authors refer to ours by the common name “Western Willet,” which refers to the *ornatus* race that breeds in the prairies of southwestern Canada and northcentral U.S. and winters in our area. At Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, where I did fieldwork, Willets commonly foraged and roosted with other shorebird species, usually flocking and displaying with their brethren, but with grey plumage nicely blending into the vegetation to help them avoid predators.

In winter, Willets eat small crabs, worms, clams, and other invertebrates from saltwater marshes and along beaches. Because they find prey using the sensitive tips of their bills and not just eyesight, Willets can feed both day and night, which is an advantage for a migrating bird with high caloric needs. Speaking of food, shorebirds and their eggs (including Willets) were popular for some people in the 19th century; however, they were overharvested, reducing Willet numbers. This helped lead to laws that still protect birds such as the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and associated state laws such as our California Fish and Game Code.

To learn more about our other large shorebirds and see how they differ from the Willet, please see the excellent articles by **Jack Friery** with photos by **Herb Knüfken** in the

September 2016 [Torreyana](#) and the July 2019 [Torreyana](#). By comparing the photos, and learning about their ecology, you will confidently know your large shorebirds.

Bee of the Month: Black-tailed Bumble Bee

by Jess Mullins; photo by Cindy Pencek

One of the first bumble bees you may encounter at Torrey Pines in the winter is the black-tailed bumble bee (*Bombus melanopygus*). This species is the first bumble bee to emerge after winter rains, often appearing while many plants are just beginning to flower in the late winter. As winter blooms such as mission manzanita (*Xylococcus bicolor*) and coastal deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*) open, keep an eye out for these foragers zigzagging from flower to flower.

The black-tailed bumble bee is especially fascinating because it occurs in two different color morphs. Here in San Diego County, individuals show the



familiar black-and-yellow pattern shared by most of our local bumble bees (e.g., yellow-faced and California bumble bees). As you move north toward Oregon, this species sports a bright orange midsection on the abdomen. Despite this dramatic shift, both morphs share one telltale trait: the last abdominal segment is always black-haired.

Müllerian mimicry is when two or more unpalatable species evolve to resemble each other, creating a shared warning signal that is more effective than a species could achieve alone. Like other stinging insects, bumble bees use bright colors to warn predators such as birds that they are unpalatable, and they pack a punch with their sting. When multiple species in the same region share a similar warning pattern, they reinforce that message, reducing the cost for each species of educating predators. Because of this, bumble bees tend to converge on the coloration of the most abundant local species.

In San Diego, three of our five bumble bee species share a black-and-yellow pattern. In contrast, farther north, orange-banded species are more abundant (e.g., Hunt’s, yellow-fronted, and Great Basin bumble bees). Where the black-tailed bumble bee overlaps with those orange bees, natural selection favors individuals that match that pattern. Remarkably, the shift from black-and-yellow to orange is controlled by a single gene.

What's on the Beach? Acorn Barnacles

article and photo by Kathy Dickey

It would be very unusual to find a barnacle alone on a sandy beach; most often they will be attached to a sand dollar, a shell, or a rock. They are abundant on pilings and in tidepools. There are at least 1,400 species of barnacles found around the world. The oldest fossil barnacle is 320 to 330 million years old. You may be surprised to learn that barnacles are not mollusks. They are crustaceans, related to shrimp, crab and lobsters. Barnacles can make clicking or rustling noises as their internal bodies twist and contract inside their shells. Some species, such as acorn or volcano barnacles, are more likely to make these sounds.

Most barnacles are sessile, meaning once they attach they do not move again; however, barnacles can spread via their larvae and by other means. Some attach to



floating objects such as boat bottoms, buoys, driftwood, or whales, and some are parasitic. There is even a species of barnacle that attaches only to another barnacle species that grows on a whale!

Locally, we have two distinct groups of barnacles: the common acorn barnacles (named for their

conical shape) and the gooseneck barnacles (so-called because of their long, fleshy stalks). This article will focus on the most common acorn barnacles in San Diego.

Acorn barnacles can sometimes look like small volcanoes. The smallest ones (*Chthamalus dalli* and *Chthamalus fissus*) are brown and only about a quarter of an inch in diameter, but they can number up to 7,500 per square foot in rocky tidepool areas. *Balanus glandula* are white and larger, about ½ to 1 inch in diameter. They may live up to 10 years.

Another type of acorn barnacle is the thatched barnacle (*Tetraclita cubescens*). These start out white and develop deep pink or reddish grooves as adults. They grow to 1 to 1 ½ inches and can release up to 150,000 larvae in one year. They can live up to 15 years. A

similar species is *Megabalanus californicus*, the pink barnacle. They attach themselves to hard-shelled animals such as mussels, crabs, and sand dollars. These, like all the barnacles, live an upside-down existence. They shoot out their so-called feet to gather the plankton into their mouths.

Here are some other surprising facts about these organisms:

- Most barnacles are hermaphroditic, producing both eggs and sperm.
- If you were to look inside the shell, the barnacle has a body that looks a bit like an upside-down shrimp that has glued its head to a rock.
- Once a barnacle larva finds a suitable place to settle, it uses specialized cement glands in its antennae to secrete an incredibly strong, permanent bioadhesive. This natural glue is so powerful it can withstand a pulling force of thousands of pounds per square inch; scientists are even trying to re-create it for use in dentistry and medical implants.
- Because adult barnacles are sessile (immobile), they can't go looking for a mate. To solve this problem, they evolved an incredibly long, flexible, and extendable penis that can reach out to fertilize neighbors' eggs. In some species, this organ can be up to eight times the barnacle's body length! Barnacles grow a new one each summer.

References available upon request.

December CEED:

Barona Cultural Center

Date: Wednesday, December 10

Time: 12:30 pm

Place: Barona Cultural Center and Museum
1095 Barona Road, Lakeside

Meet at: Parking lot directly in front of the museum

Duration: Approximately 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Easy walking, wear sturdy walking shoes

RSVP: Rachel Scherba

Limited to: first 25 docents to respond

We will send out a list of attendees so that those who wish to can arrange carpools.

More Information: baronamuseum.com/

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.

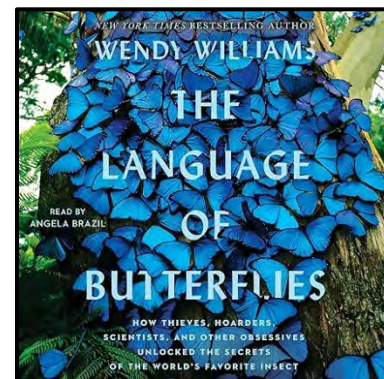
When: Tuesday, December 9, 1:00 pm

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

Amazon says:

A glorious and exuberant celebration of these biological flying machines. From butterfly gardens to zoo exhibits, these “flying flowers” are one of the few insects we’ve encouraged to infiltrate our lives. Yet, what has drawn us to these creatures in the first place? And what are their lives really like? In this entertaining look at “the world’s favorite insect,” Williams reveals the inner lives of these delicate creatures, who are far more intelligent and tougher than we give them credit for.

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



January 13: *A Wilder Shore: The Romantic Odyssey of Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson* by Camille Peri

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: November 2025

Number of species: 78
(+2 other taxa)

Blue-winged Teal 2	Royal Tern 12	Northern Flicker 2	Western Bluebird 10
Gadwall 12	Pied-billed Grebe 2	American Kestrel 3	Hermit Thrush 3
American Wigeon 5	Western Grebe 90	Merlin 1	Scaly-breasted Munia 6
Mallard 11	Common Loon 1	Peregrine Falcon 1	House Finch 100
Northern Pintail 18	Black-vented	Black Phoebe 9	Lesser Goldfinch 20
Lesser Scaup 5	Shearwater 400	Say's Phoebe 3	White-crowned Sparrow 40
Surf Scoter 30	Brandt's Cormorant 12	Cassin's Kingbird 10	Golden-crowned Sparrow 5
Bufflehead 15	Double-crested	California Scrub-Jay 19	Savannah Sparrow 3
Mourning Dove 31	Cormorant 14	American Crow 9	Song Sparrow 33
Anna's Hummingbird 9	Black-crowned Night	Common Raven 25	California Towhee 37
Allen's Hummingbird 4	Heron 2	Tree Swallow 5	Spotted Towhee 9
American Coot 11	Snowy Egret 4	Northern Rough-winged	Western Meadowlark 1
Long-billed Curlew 1	Great Egret 7	Swallow 8	Orange-crowned Warbler 4
Least Sandpiper 9	Great Blue Heron 5	Barn Swallow 2	Common Yellowthroat 5
Parasitic/Pomarine Jaeger 1	Brown Pelican 85	swallow sp. 5	Yellow-rumped Warbler 158
Bonaparte's Gull 4	Osprey 2	Bushtit 31	9
Heermann's Gull 100	Cooper's Hawk 1	Wrentit 40	Observers: Nancy
Ring-billed Gull 5	Northern Harrier 3	Swinhoe's White-eye 1	Richardson, Donna
Western Gull 151	Red-shouldered Hawk 3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1	Mancuso, Nancy Stalnaker,
California Gull 5	Red-tailed Hawk 6	California Gnatcatcher 3	Paul Mullholland, Robert
Elegant Tern 2	Great Horned Owl 1	Northern House Wren 5	James, Nancy Novak, Kathy
	Belted Kingfisher 1	Bewick's Wren 2	Estey, Robert Turner, Brian
	Downy Woodpecker 1	California Thrasher 11	Griffith, Karen Turner, Pam
	Nuttall's Woodpecker 8	Northern Mockingbird 2	Burd, Andy Rathbone,
			Debbie Regottaz

For all birders, the Christmas Bird Count (we participate in the Rancho Santa Fe count) will be January 3, 2026.

This will substitute for our January counts. More to follow from group leaders as we get closer to the date.

The December count will stay as usual.

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



Torrey Pines Docent Society
1155 Camino Del Mar #404
Del Mar, CA 92014
(858) 755-2063
torreypine.org