TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 489 **May 2026**

Kumeyaay: The Past Is Present

by Dan Hammer

As we know, the Kumeyaay were the first people to live in the area we now call Torrey Pines. At the April TPDS meeting, archeologist Ariana Yanez and docent Mary Friestedt told how we can feel their presence through the study of artifacts and plants in the Reserve.

Ariana began with an overview of cultural resources found in TPSNR. As Associate State Parks Archeologist for the San Diego Coast District, she stewards the cultural resources (archaeological and tribal) in 13 state parks and protects them from adverse impacts. And as State Parks Coordinating Tribal Liaison, she maintains relationships with our local tribal communities and consults with them on cultural resource preservation.

Cultural resources found at TPSNR include pre-contact sites such as village sites, where people lived for generations; lithic (stone tool) production sites; shell middens, refuse sites containing a mix of artifacts; and burial sites, which are usually not shared with the public. Post-contact sites such as the park road, Lodge, and Fleming House also yield artifacts. (Ariana noted that anything more than 50 years old is considered an artifact, eliciting chuckles from many of us older docents.)

Ariana offered guidance to docents if we find a possible artifact or if a visitor brings one to us. In either case, the object should be returned to where it was found if possible. If a visitor doesn't know the location, or if the object was just left in the Lodge with no context, email sdcd.archaeology@parks.ca.gov. If you, yourself find an artifact, please email photos and GIS location. (If the object is on a trail, record the information and then move it off the trail.)

Finally, Ariana presented some "DOs and DON'Ts" of cultural resource language. Of all these tips, using the present tense is perhaps the most important. The point is that the Kumeyaay still live here, and their culture is alive and well.

Do's	Don'ts
Pre-Contact	Prehistory/Prehistoric
Present Tense	Past Tense
Time Immemorial	Thousands of Years
Native American	Indian
Horticulturalists / Environmental Managers	Hunter-gatherer
CA State Parks **Manages** this Reserve which is the ancestral land of the Kumeyaay	CA State Parks **owns** this Reserve
Talk about the roles Kumeyaay still play in the Reserve. For example: Kosay Market, events, project planning, monitoring of ground disturbance, etc.	Don't try to correct a member of the public as different groups refer to themselves in different ways. For example: San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, American Indians, clans vs. bands, etc

Docent General Meeting

Date: Saturday, May 9, 9:00 am

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

Speaker: Dr. Tammy Russell, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

Topic: ***The Good and the Bad: seabird science in San Diego and the current catastrophic event occurring across California***

Dr. Tammy Russell is a marine ornithologist and postdoctoral researcher at SIO. She will give us updates on the status of seabird research in San Diego, from student surveys of La Jolla Cove to the expansion of the banding program by Pelican Science. She will also present an overview of the current seabird mortality event taking place and will provide current statistics on what California seabird researchers are finding and what the potential causes are.

Refreshments: Docents with last names beginning with **R, S, T** will be responsible for providing snacks for this meeting.

The Torrey Pines Docent Society publishes the *Torreyana* monthly, edited by Joan Simon and Dan Hammer and 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 **Editors@torreypine.org**.

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Membership@torreypine.org

Web sites:
TP Docent Society: torreypine.org
TP Conservancy: torreypines.org

Visitor Center phone: **858.755.2063**

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

Contents

Mary Friestedt consistently used the present tense in her presentation on the flora of TPSNR and how the Kumeyaay traditionally use them. Since 2012, Mary has been active in the Youth Program, where she has shared her passion for *ethnobotany* (how a culture utilizes native plants) with hundreds of school children. As she discussed each plant, she asked "How can we use this?"

Mary shared photos of 23 plants found in the Reserve and told how the Kumeyaay have used them over the centuries. Here is a sampling:

Lemonadeberry *(Rhus integrifolia)* provides both food and medicine. You can soak its berries to make a drink or chew its leaves and berries to slake thirst. (Mary shows kids how to touch the berries and suck their fingers to get the citrusy taste.) Its bark is used to make a tea for childbirth, its seeds are ground into a tea for stomachache, and its berries are used to make cough syrup.

The soft, green leaves of **California sagebrush** *(Artemesia californica)* are rubbed on the skin to repel insects and are used by hunters to mask their human smell. Kumeyaay women boil the leaves to make a tea for menstrual discomfort, postnatal recovery, and menopause. The leaves can also be ground to make a poultice to treat sores and ant bites.

Wild cucumber *(Marah macrocarpus)* is a most versatile plant. Its seeds are used to make necklaces and rattles, and they contain an oil used in rock art and face painting. Its leaves are used to treat hemorrhoids. And its large, tuberous root (called a manroot, another common name for the plant) can be crushed and thrown in a lake or pond to stun fish.

When teaching children about *Dichelostemma capitatum*, Mary calls them **blue hyacinths** rather than the more commonly used **blue dicks** to keep snickering to a minimum. By any name, this plant has long been an important food source formerly known as "Indian potatoes." Its starchy corm (underground stem) can be boiled, roasted, or eaten raw.

Jojoba *(Simmondsia chinensis)* is an evergreen shrub with light-green leaves. Its seeds are toasted or eaten raw and can be helpful during pregnancy and childbirth; they are also roasted for use as a dressing for wounds. Jojoba oil is good for hair and helps keep it black; it is now used in many beauty products.

Mary's favorite plant is **Shaw's agave** (*Agave shawii*). This rare succulent has long been an important food source for the Kumeyaay, who eat its stalk, root, and flowers. Its leaves are chewed to separate fibers used for cordage, nets, and sandals. Mary showed us a pair of agave flip-flops that she found in Borrego.

White sage *(Salvia apiana)* is a victim of its own success. Traditionally wrapped in bunches and burned (smudged) by the Kumeyaay to bless dwellings, it has become so widely popular that the species is threatened. If you see white sage, smell the leaves but please don't pick them, even outside the Reserve.

To watch Ariana's talk, click here.

To watch Mary's presentation, click here. For further reading, see *Kumeyaay Ethnobotany: Shared Heritage of the Californias* by Michael Wilken-Robertson, "Kumeyaay Ethnobotany" by Dan Hammer (based on a talk by Prof. Wilken-Robertson) in the December 2018 *Torreyana*, and *Native Plants: Torrey Pines and Nearby San Diego County Locations* by Margaret Fillius.

Volunteer Appreciation Event

Please join us on **Thursday, May 21 at 6 pm** in honor of Volunteer Appreciation Week, as we celebrate Torrey Pines docents for the thousands of hours you dedicate to the Reserve.

Pizza, snacks and beverages will be provided.

Please bring: beach chair, cup/utensils, a friend or partner if you wish.

RSVP HERE

Rowan Jackman and the Interpretation Team

General Meeting Minutes: April 11, 2026

Mary Friestedt and Ariana Yanez gave a presentation on Kumeyaay Botany and Archeology (see pg. 1). Approximately 55 docents attended.

Ed Saade led the business meeting.

Docent of the Month: **Gale Darling**, class of 2023, serves as a frequent TIK host, bird surveyor and Trail Interpreter.

Interpreter I Rowan Jackman reviewed the phone numbers for SURCOM.

SURCOM Emergencies: 951-443-2964

SURCOM non-emergencies: 951-443-2969

Rowan announced that a policy for dead and injured animals will be released soon. It will recommend contacting SeaWorld in most instances.

Rowan announced there will be a Docent Appreciation get-together at South Beach on May 21 (see pg. 3 for details).

Tracking Visitors: We are tracking the number of visitors at the Lodge, TIK, and BLIK. It is the only way we can show the state how busy the Reserve is and that we need more support. For other activities, such as guided walks, roving interpreter, wannabees, weeding, and ambassador stations, rather than using Better Impact to note visitor interactions, we will be using a QR code/Google Forms system available in the Lodge and on the website. There will also be an app you can download onto your phone. More information is being emailed to all docents.

Earth Day: Lynne Truong discussed plans for Earth Day on Saturday, April 25. More volunteers are needed. Docents may park in the "volunteer parking only" area along the park road that day. A recap of the event will appear in the June issue of the *Torreyana*.

Water Stations: The water station that was removed from the TIK (West) parking lot will be moved back or replaced, thanks to funds from TPC, and the water station at the BLIK will be repaired. There are also plans to install a water station at the Lodge. There is no timeline yet on these improvements.

Taxidermy: If anyone knows where the deceased animals in the garage freezer came from, please let Rowan know. And please, do not collect any additional dead animals.

Junior Ranger Program: The number of finished booklets is now included on the data sheet at the Lodge desk. (Scroll down when filling out the digital menu at the end of your shift.)

Museum Shop. Sales have been strong in the five weeks the Reserve has been open; e.g., we have sold 388 shirts in this time period.

North Beach Shed: Rosemary Wareham updated everyone on the newly cleaned and organized North Beach shed and requested that any unclaimed materials be labeled or removed.

Docent of the Month: Gale Darling

Photo by Herb Knufken

As a garden designer, I get a lot of my creativity from nature, and Torrey Pines couldn't be a more inspirational place to draw from.

I have lived in Del Mar for close to 40 years and Torrey Pines was always my go-to place to get exercise, from boogie boarding to hiking. Back in the day I ran the trails. As time went by, I slowed down my pace and paid closer attention to my surroundings. Thanks to ***Jean Kelleher*** *and* ***Lisa Kakone*** *for working at the TIK on Wednesday mornings, when I would see them on a regular basis. They suggested I do the docent training. I had always thought I would consider becoming a docent, and that was the push I needed. Torrey Pines has given me so much, and I wanted to give back.*

Since training in 2023, I have continued to learn from knowledgeable docents. I have grown to appreciate native bees sleeping in flowers, the different habitats of plants, and thanks to ***Robert James****, the voices of birds. But mostly, I appreciate sharing with visitors all that Torrey Pines has to offer.*

June CEED:
Barona Cultural Center and Museum

Date: Thursday, June 18

Time: 10 – 11:30 am

Place: Barona Cultural Center, 1095 Barona Rd., Lakeside 92040

RSVP to Rachel Scherba. Limited to 25 docents.

Website: https://www.baronamuseum.com/

What's on the Beach?
Piddock Clams are BORING!

by Kathy Dickey

I often wondered what made those deep holes in the cobblestones on the beach. Long ago, docent **Jane Barger** told me those were made by piddock clams. I nevertheless wondered how something as frail as a clam shell could do that, and how long it took them. So here is some research on them that I dug up recently.

Piddock clams, also called boring clams or angelwings, are found all over San Diego beaches, but especially in rocky intertidal areas such as on Point Loma. There are at least five species that might be found here, but the most common are the flat-tip piddock (*Penitella penita*), up to 3.75 inches long with shells in three sections; and the wart-necked piddock (*Chaceia ovoidea*), up to 4.7 inches long with shells in two sections. They live in dense colonies of ten or more on soft rocks, clay, shale, or mudstone. They bore permanent one- to six-inch-deep holes into the rock using their serrated, ridge-edge shells, which they rotate and drill down into the stone.

The boring process starts with their powerful, suction-cup-like foot that grips the rock's surface. They use the foot as an anchor as they rotate back and forth in rhythmic contractions. Then the clam twists about 12 degrees at a time as its ridges and spines drill against the rock, scraping away material. It also sucks in water through its siphon to help create pressure and increase friction. The clam increases its holes by only about one to four millimeters per month, depending on the rock's hardness. The inner chamber of the hole eventually becomes wider than the entrance hole as the clam grows larger. This traps the clam inside its burrow for its entire life, which can be as long as 30 years.

The hole provides a safe home for the clam, protecting it from strong waves and predators. The piddock clam eats by extending its two siphons through a narrow opening to filter food and oxygen from the seawater. One siphon sucks in the seawater, and the other expels waste. Food includes phytoplankton, detritus, and microorganisms such as protozoa.

The piddock clam's major predators include sea snails, crabs, fish, sea stars, and shorebirds. Humans have historically eaten piddock clams for food, going back as far as ancient Rome. Once the clam dies, other animals – such as crabs, anemones, and small fish – may use the rock holes as shelter.

Once the piddock clam stops drilling, it becomes sexually mature and uses its energy for reproduction. Piddock clams have two sexes, and reproduce by releasing their sperm or eggs into the water during the warmer months. The fertilized eggs develop into swimming larvae and eventually settle on a suitable rock surface.

References available on request.

Flat-tip piddock (*Penitella penita).*
Source: Theoutershores.com

Wart-necked Piddock (*Chaceia ovoidea*).
Source: iNaturalist

Rock with piddock clam holes.
Source: Reddit

Birds of the Month:
Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks

by Robert James; photos by Robert James and Tsaiwei Olee

With spring migration underway, it is a fantastic opportunity to feature two closely related species that occur at the Reserve and are well known for their aerial agility. These woodland hawks are slender with short, broad, rounded wings and long tails that help them maneuver in flight within vegetation. They have extended legs and long, sharp talons used to kill their prey (mainly small birds) along with a sharp, hooked bill used in feeding.

The Cooper's Hawk (*Astur cooperii*), the larger and more common of the two, occurs throughout our region and is chiefly a resident species. Its characteristic flight pattern is a repeated "flap-flap-glide," and the head extends beyond the wings. The tail, usually rounded and white tipped, can often be seen in perched birds. The Sharp-shinned Hawk (*A. striatus*) is the smaller and less-common species. It is the smallest hawk in North America! "Sharpies" winter in our area, and some migrate through in the spring and fall. As Tsaiwei's excellent photo of the flying hawk shows, the tail is squared off, and the head does not extend past the wings. I had a chance recently to visit Cape May, New Jersey, which is famous for large numbers of migrating hawks. We saw many Sharp-shinned Hawks soaring. Their small size and agility were often apparent when they were flying with other birds.

As organisms at a higher *trophic* (feeding) level, few of these hawks are supported in the ecosystem, so they are less common than seed- and insect-consuming birds. Our monthly bird counts will typically log one or two Cooper's Hawks. During winter and migration months, we may also see a Sharp-shinned Hawk. On our last Christmas count, we observed a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and in March I saw one at the Extension and posted a photo of it to iNaturalist.org.

As you might suspect, these species can be misidentified. In addition to their physical similarities, the sexes differ in size, with males smaller than females. This is known as Reverse Sexual Dimorphism (RSD), in contrast to the more common norm – e.g., in many mammals the males are larger than the females. RSD accounts for female Sharp-shinned Hawks that approach the size of male Cooper's Hawks.

I recommend that if you see one of these types of birds you tentatively assume that it is the more common Cooper's Hawk, especially in the summer when Sharp-shinned are unlikely to be around. The next step is to look for the above-mentioned field marks. If you can see more than one mark, that is the best indication of an identification. If you are not sure, it is okay to say it is a Cooper's/Sharp-shinned Hawk, as many folks properly report in eBird. In any event, enjoy seeing our successful hunters in the woods, and share your sightings with fellow docents and our visitors!

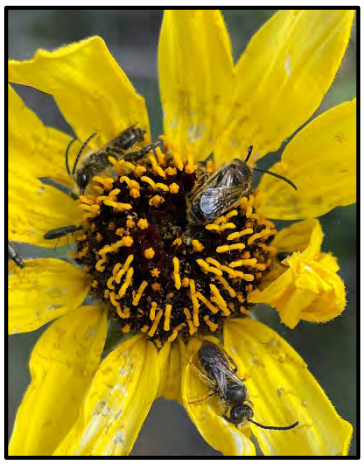
Bee of the Month:
The Southwestern Shortface

article and photo by Julia Showalter

The southwestern shortface (*Duforea australis*) belongs to the family *Halictidae*, known as sweat bees. It creates shallow nests in the ground and is solitary, meaning that each individual female creates and provisions her own nest. Species within the genus *Duforea* are known to specialize in certain plants. The southwestern shortface is a specialist pollinator of plants in the sunflower (*Asteraceae*) family. It is most commonly observed foraging on bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) and has also been observed foraging on San Diego sea dahlia (*Leptosyne maritima*) and San Diego sunflower (*Bahiopsis laciniata*).

Being a specialist means that its diet and survival are heavily reliant on a specific plant's nectar and pollen; and the time of year the species is active must be in sync with the blooming period of the plants in which it specializes. This species is most active between March and May and can be found along many parts of the Reserve, such as the Parry Grove and Guy Fleming trails.

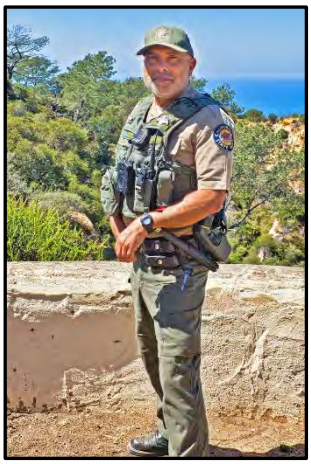
There are some key features to help identify the southwestern shortface on the trail. Keep an eye out for black, small-to-medium-sized narrow bodies ranging from 7 to 9 mm, about the size of a short grain of rice. The *labrum* (upper lip) is covered in grayish hairs, as are the legs and thorax, while the abdomen has grayish hair stripes. The most telling characteristics are their antennae positioned low – below their eyes – near the top of the *clypeus* (facial plate), and of course, their uniquely short faces. Males have slightly longer antennae than females. Another difference between males and females is that males do not have *scopa* (specialized hairs to collect pollen) on their hind legs. Only females have scopa to collect pollen to take back to their nests and feed their larvae.



Males do not sleep in nests with females. Instead, they find a safe place to sleep outside the nest, staying in close proximity to where they can find females the next day, as well as close to their food source. What better place than right on their favorite plant? I have observed three males sleeping on a single *Encilia californica* flower. It didn't matter that the flower was a bit old; they'll happily sleep under a curled-up, spent petal. Next time you're out on the trails in spring – morning or evening – look closely and you may find a *Duforea* slumber party!

Farewell from Ranger "Chuy" Salinas

photo by Herb Knufken



After 25 years working as a CA State Parks Ranger in four different districts and six parks (including the last 12 years at Torrey Pines), I'm finally retiring on May 1. I want to thank people who I've worked with over these 25 years. I learned a lot from everyone and I hope I contributed in return.

To my law enforcement brothers and sisters and SURCOM, stay safe and thank you for looking after me. To the interpreters/park aides who helped me put on campfire programs: thanks for teaching me new things and keeping the campers organized. Thank you to the volunteers who help out for the love of the parks and to the lifeguards who make us all look cool and the many rescues and help on those crazy medicals. Thanks to Maintenance for getting stuck patrol vehicles out of sand traps; to Admin for keeping my paperwork in check; and to Resources for teaching me the importance of why we protect the parks.

It's been my pleasure to be part of CA State Parks and I will take with me a lot of good memories. I'll continue to visit state parks to camp, hike and just enjoy what these parks continue to offer. Thank you!

Jesus "Chuy" Salinas Rodriguez
CA State Park Ranger

Eagle Scout Project Delivered to the BLIK

by Ray Barger

Two Eagle Scout Project A-frames were delivered to the docents at the BLIK on Sunday, April 12. The freestanding, rolling A-frames provide mounting and display options for existing and future BLIK signage and visitor information.

Eagle Scout candidate Connor Bohan designed the A-frames and during his spring break built them with the help of other scouts from Del Mar Troop 713. As a TP docent, I was the project's primary liaison and helped coordinate the design requirements and materials sourcing. Connor thanked our Docent Society for providing funding for the project.

Key design requirements for the A-frames included the ability to 1) display 2' x 4' metal signage like that at the Trail Interpretive Kiosk (TIK); 2) display tide charts and other useful information for beach visitors; 3) affix Velcro to secure BLIK posters, including trail maps and beach and lagoon content; and 4) be folded up, rolled, and stored. The final design is similar to the flower/plant board A-frame on the rear patio of the Lodge. Casters were added to the frames so the displays can be moved as needed. The A-frames will be stored in either the docent shed in the North Beach parking lot or under the BLIK pergola.

BLIK: Learn at Lunch

Date/Time: Thursday**,** May 7, 12 noon

Location: Docent Shed at the North Beach parking lot

Speaker: Docent Ed Saade

Topic: ***Environmental Monitoring at TPSNR: Beach Erosion, Cliff Collapses, Sand Transport, Seafloor Mapping – and how all of this is accomplished.***

Bring your lunch, a chair, your curiosity, and any questions you may have about how the environment at Torrey Pines is monitored. You may claim one hour on Better Impact under Training, Continuing Education (up to 12 hours per year).

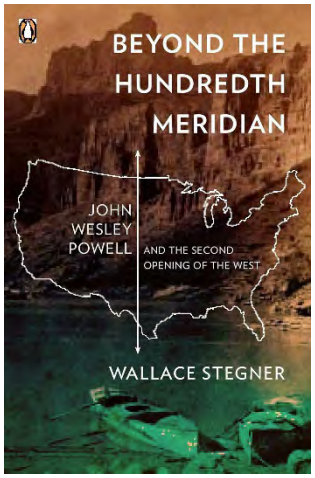
BLIK Learn at Lunch is at noon on the first Thursday of every month at the North Beach parking lot shed. All docents, park employees, and visitors are welcome.

Torrey Pines Book Club

We will meet via Zoom on **May 19**, a week later than our usual date. Please notify **Annette Ring** if you plan to participate or if you need any extra help getting connected.

When: Tuesday, May 19, 1:00 pm

What: *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West* by Wallace Stegner



Amazon says:

John Wesley Powell fought in the Civil War, and it cost him an arm. But it didn't stop him from exploring the American West. Pulitzer-Prize winning author Wallace Stegner gives a thrilling account of Powell's struggle against western geography and Washington politics. We witness the successes and frustrations of Powell's distinguished career and appreciate his unparalleled understanding of the West. Originally published in 1954, the work is considered a masterpiece of Western American literature, combining historical detail with a cautionary tale about environmental exploitation and the consequences of ignoring expert advice on managing natural resources.

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

June 9: *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard* by Douglas W. Tallamy

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: April 2026

Number of species: *86 (+4 other taxa)*

Canada Goose 2
Blue-winged Teal 3
Cinnamon Teal 4
Gadwall 3
American Wigeon 5
Mallard 5
Surf Scoter 1
Red-breasted Merganser 9
California Quail 2
Eurasian Collared-Dove 1
Mourning Dove 48
White-throated Swift 9
Anna's Hummingbird 22
Allen's Hummingbird 30
hummingbird sp. 7
Virginia Rail 2
American Coot 1
Hudsonian Whimbrel 4
Long-billed Curlew 5
Willet 4
jaeger sp. 1
Heermann's Gull 9
Western Gull 50
California Gull 2
Caspian Tern 3
Forster's Tern 1
Elegant Tern 8
Royal Tern 6
Elegant/Royal Tern 100
Pied-billed Grebe 2
Western Grebe 89
Clark's Grebe 1
Western/Clark's Grebe 5
Red-throated Loon 4
Common Loon 2
Brandt's Cormorant 20
Double-crested Cormorant 1
Black-crowned Night Heron 2
Snowy Egret 11
Great Egret 7
Great Blue Heron 3
Brown Pelican 15
Osprey 2
Cooper's Hawk 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 2
Red-tailed Hawk 5
Nuttall's Woodpecker 11
Northern Flicker 1
Peregrine Falcon 1
Black Phoebe 6
Ash-throated Flycatcher 3
Cassin's Kingbird 6
Western Kingbird 1
Hutton's Vireo 1
California Scrub-Jay 15
American Crow 14
Common Raven 16
Tree Swallow 2
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 2
Bushtit 25
Wrentit 57
California Gnatcatcher 2
Northern House Wren 16
Bewick's Wren 12
California Thrasher 15
Northern Mockingbird 1
Western Bluebird 2
Scaly-breasted Munia 2
House Finch 74
Lesser Goldfinch 45
Dark-eyed Junco 1
White-crowned Sparrow 5
Golden-crowned Sparrow 1
Savannah Sparrow 2
Belding's Song Sparrow 31
California Towhee 69
Rufous-crowned Sparrow 1
Spotted Towhee 23
Yellow-breasted Chat 12
Western Meadowlark 6
Hooded Oriole 1
Red-winged Blackbird 3
Brown-headed Cowbird 1
Brewer's Blackbird 1
Orange-crowned Warbler 16
Common Yellowthroat 11
Northern Yellow Warbler 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler 1
Townsend's Warbler 2
Black-headed Grosbeak 4

Participants: *Donna Mancuso, Nancy Richardson, Nancy Stalnaker, Kathy Estey, Robert Turner, Chris Roberts, Robert James, David Walker*

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

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