



Hummin'

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Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

August/September 2008 Vol. XXX No. 4

Explore ... This Unknown Peninsula

By Jess Morton

El Segundo Blue

In Los Angeles the name El Segundo to non-residents conjures up images of refineries, ramshackle airport-edge factories and sewage treatment plants. The lost soul of the South Bay. Anywhere else in the world, though, El Segundo is a name of Spanish mystery, of sunny climes that spite winter months, and ... butterflies!

The El Segundo blue butterfly, one of the rarest animals in the world, is named for this coastal town. Once thought to be confined to two patches of sand dune habitat beneath the thunder of departing jumbo jets, this tiny flier is now known to exist in a few scattered populations along the coast to Long Point. Happily, it seems to be thriving at our southern end of its range.

But the butterfly was far from my mind the other day when I stopped by the Point Vicente Interpretive Center. It was a gloriously bright morning, and I was hoping to get photos of young California gnatcatchers that had been reported in the revegetated habitat preserve of the Ocean Front develop-

ment just north of PVIC. First, though, I thought I would take a look in the center's native garden, which had been planted by PVIC docents and volunteers from the California Native Plant Society. They had done a fine job, and I knew there would be some neat insects



El Segundo blue butterfly

Photo by Jess Morton

on a sunny day like this one. I didn't expect to find anything never seen there before, though.

Yet there it was, a small butterfly scudding over and around of the fresh

white flowerheads of dunes buckwheat, the host food plant for the caterpillars of El Segundo blue butterflies. Not that there aren't other butterflies whose caterpillars use this buckwheat — and some of them blue — but this I was certain was an ESB, a federally endangered species. I leaned in closer, getting a good angle to photograph the butterfly that had finally stopped its mad dash of a flight. There was no doubt as to its identity. The large squarish markings on the fore wings and characteristic pattern of orange and black spots on the hind wing left were unmistakable.

As I stepped back, I saw that there were several ESBs in the garden. Almost certainly, a gravid female had been there unseen a year ago and had left her calling cards in a number of flowerheads. The eggs had hatched — unnoticed. The caterpillars had eaten their fill of flower and foliage last summer — likewise unseen. For many months, perhaps since the previous August or September, the pupae had lain in the ground. Invisible until now.

The emergence of the adults must have started not more than a day or two before my arrival, for all the butterflies I saw were fresh. These are delicate

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President's Column

How Now Sans Cow?

By Martin Byhower



OK, here is another quiz question for you: What would be a bigger contributor to global warming, the emissions produced by your car on a 3-mile round trip to the market to shop for groceries, or by you, if you decided to walk

instead?

I have to admit that the answer to this one was a shocker for me, but in fact, if you are a typical American, the food you consumed in order to power your trip was responsible for *four times* the amount of global warming produced by burning the gas in your car's tank in order to travel the same distance! Only part of this relates to the fact that the abundant, "silent but deadly" methane secretion emitting by both ends of a cow contribute, by molecule, 21 more times the global warming wallop of carbon dioxide. The enormous energy it requires to grow the crops and provide the necessary support, packaging and transportation involved in the production of meat and dairy products are another big part.

This is one of the many reasons that I have chosen to try an experiment; going on two months now, I "don't do cow." No burgers, steaks, dairy milk, yogurt, butter or ice cream, not to mention cow-derived cheese (those last two have been the hardest to avoid, by the "whey"). I really hate it when individuals claiming to be "vegetarians" order a cheese pizza. It is even worse if I have to watch them enjoy it.

If you are experiencing a somewhat visceral reaction to the above, it is not unexpected. The acquisition of food is, arguably, pretty much the strongest driving force in all critters, which means that there is a selective advantage in pleasure becoming associated with consuming it. And we have evolved to seek out high-energy (fat) and high-protein sources of food, and meat and milk certainly can suit the bill. I sometimes posit

that it seems a little strange for the adults of one species (humans) to be consuming the lactated glandular secretions intended for the young of a different mammalian species (putting milk in our latte, for example). Consider the fact that something like half the human inhabitants of this planet are, in fact, lactose intolerant. That's why the Milk Advisory Council had to abandon their slogan "Every Body Needs Milk."

However, to be fair, many of us (particularly those of us with northern European ancestry) co-evolved with dairy and beef cows. Heck, our ancestors actually *created* cows, by selectively breeding their now-extinct ancestor, called the Aurochs, some time after that beast arrived in Europe (via Asia and India) about 250,000 years ago. Even before Carl's Junior, some guys couldn't live without their burgers and shakes (or their equivalent.) My forebears probably "did cow," but not to the extent that humans do today; Americans, with an average consumption of *100 pounds* of beef annually, are surpassed only by Argentina and Uruguay in our carnivorous gorging.

And this takes a toll. There is a correlation between our massive consumption of meat and the fact that we are also among the world leaders in heart disease, colorectal cancer and obesity. Of course, it is even more dangerous to advocate a reduction in meat consumption. As early as the late '70s, Sen. George McGovern was voted out of office in his own state, at least in part due to cattlemen's groups opposition, because he had the audacity to suggest that, for health reasons, Americans should cut down on their consumption of meat. On a personal note, as a teacher, I recall being asked to stop showing a video about the ethical, health and environmental impacts of animal agriculture because some parents believed that watching it might have caused their teenage daughters to become anorexic.

The humane and health impacts of animal agriculture are separate issues; the environmental consequences of our cow habit are profound. The amount of

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Conservation Corner

Water: A 21st Century Crisis

By Lillian Light



A sweeping UN report warns of a global water crisis caused by population growth, pollution and climate change. It predicts that the average water supply per person will fall by a third in 15 years. As many as 7 billion people in 60

countries could face scarce supplies by 2050. Meanwhile, 1.4 billion people, more than 20 percent of those living on the planet, do not have access to an adequate supply of clean water. Although ocean levels are rising because of global warming, supplies of fresh water are declining. Compounding the problem, less than 1 percent of all water is accessible for consumption.

Water, long viewed as a common property resource available to all and a basic human right, is in danger of being turned into a commodity to be bought and sold. Fresh water is the elixir of life on which our survival depends. It is necessary for our food to grow, our rivers to flow, and it supports many diverse ecosystems and species on Earth.

Privatization experiments span all continents, and they work by removing publicly owned water supplies from the public and transferring them to private companies seeking to make a profit. When water is privatized, prices go up. The message is simple. If you want to live, pay up. Conversely, if you can't pay, you don't have a right to life.

This becomes particularly ominous when you read "Blue Covenant" by Maude Barlow, a "passionate call to arms" to tackle three water crises: dwindling freshwater supplies, inequitable water access and corporate control of water. A documentary "Flow, For Love of Water," based on her book, was screened at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival and was described as "the scariest film in the festival." Both film and book are critical of the corporate giants that are privatizing water in developing countries.

Below are some points from her book, compelling

evidence that the world is running out of clean water.

- Every eight seconds, a child dies from drinking dirty water.
- Every year, a new desert the size of Rhode Island is created in China because of drought.
- Half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by people with waterborne diseases.
- The World Health Organization says that contaminated water is implicated in 80 percent of all sicknesses and diseases worldwide.
- Newborns in the global north consume 40 to 70 times more water than in the global south.
- Women of South Africa collectively walk the equivalent distance to the moon and back 16 times a day for water.
- In China, 80 percent of its major rivers are so degraded that they do not support aquatic life.

Even here in our most prosperous nation, 40 percent of our rivers and streams are too polluted for swimming or fishing, let alone drinking. Multinational corporations squeeze beef and dairy cattle, poultry, hogs and sheep in unspeakably cruel conditions on feed lots that saturate our waters with drug-resistant bacteria from 500 million tons of untreated animal waste. Mercury from coal-burning power plants ends up poisoning our lakes, rivers and streams. Many of our communities have experienced a steady decline in groundwater levels, resulting in land subsidence and environmental degradation.

Another interesting book, "Bottlemania" by Elizabeth Royte, points out that bottled water is a waste of taxpayer money, an undeserved rejection of local tap water and a threat to the environment. She maintains that, "The privatization of pristine water is part of a larger story, a tragic failure to steward our shared destiny." In 1987, Americans drank 5.7 gallons of bottled water per person per year. In 2006 we drank 27.6 gallons each, at a rate of about a billion bottles a week. She points out that the bottles require 17 million barrels of oil to manufacture. One expert told her that "the total

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Birds of the Peninsula

May and June 2008

By Kevin Larson

This spring's first good waves of land bird migrants in the first week of May came later than usual. Normally the first major wave arrives in late April. The weather played a major role since there was a shift from high to low pressure in early May. Good migrant numbers continued through mid-May and a good late wave was noted near the end of the month. A Prothonotary Warbler and an American Golden-Plover were outstanding spring records. A Little Blue Heron and a White-winged Dove were good spring finds. Otherwise, there was a fairly small variety of vagrants. The number of nesting pairs of Western Bluebirds in our area increased to two during the period.

Due to variable weather during May and June, coastal cloudiness was not as unrelenting as it can be in some years. The most extensive period of marine layer came during the first half of May. A few high temperature records were broken during periods of strong high pressure 13-19 May and 18-23 June. An unusually late dip in the jet stream brought stormy weather to Southern California 22-24 May. Severe thunderstorms, flooding and even a few damaging tornados were experienced to the east of our area on 22 May. The effects of the storm were minor here, but the 0.11 inches of rain at LAX on 23 May set a record for the date.

The wintering "Aleutian" Cackling Goose found at Alondra Park on 23 Dec was last seen on 5 Jun

(David Moody). Two female Buffleheads at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh 6-14 May were late migrants (Kevin Larson-KL). A 1-year-old **Little Blue Heron** in Ballona area 17 May-21 Jun was first found at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh and later seen in tidal areas such as Del Rey Lagoon (KL). White-faced Ibis sightings at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh included up to two 28 Apr-13 May



Summer tanager

Photo by Tracy Drake

(Barbara Johnson) and a flyover flock of 30 on 17 May (John Ivanov). Two Virginia Rails in the Playa Vista Wildlife Corridor since 5 Apr were recorded through 25 May (KL). A Common Moorhen pair with young at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on 2 May confirmed the first breeding record for the location (Richard Barth).

Very rare as a spring migrant anywhere in California, an **American Golden-Plover** was photographed at Cabrillo Beach on 14 May (David Ellsworth). Our only other spring record was at the Los Angeles River near Willow Street on 12 Apr 1995 (KL). A Wilson's Snipe at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on 29 May replaces a 28 May 2005 occurrence at Harbor Park as our latest spring record (Dan Cooper). A late Pomarine Jaeger was seen from Point Vicente on 6 Jun (Mike San Miguel). An immature Mew Gull at Del Rey Lagoon on 26 Apr was also late (John Ivanov). Xantus's Murrelet sightings from Point Vicente included one on 11 May and two on 6 Jun (Mike San Miguel). A **White-winged Dove** in Playa del Rey on 9 May is one of few spring records for our area (KL). Intriguing and unusually early was a report of an apparent Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Polliwog Park in Manhattan Beach on 7 May; David Moody was cautious of the identification since the bird was seen briefly.

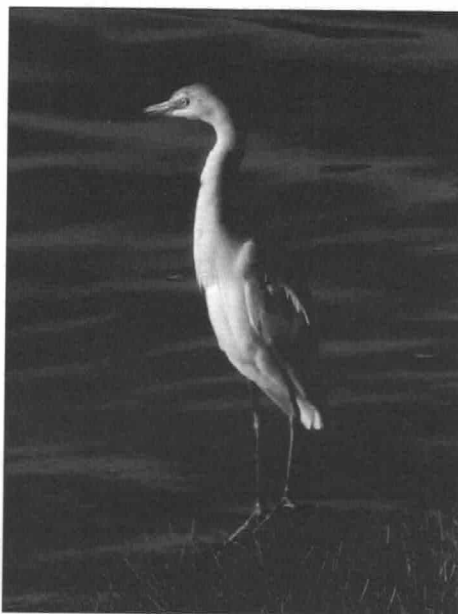
A presumed Lesser Nighthawk was at Angel's Gate Park in San Pedro on 9 May (David Ellsworth). The timing of a calling Chimney Swift over Madrona Marsh on 2 Jun fit perfectly with recent records of this rare visitor (David Moody). A Nuttall's Woodpecker was in Westchester near Loyola Marymount University on 25 May (Russell Stone). Single Willow Flycatchers at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh and at Polliwog Park

on 7 May were early and came during an impressive migrant wave (KL, David Moody). A Hammond's Flycatcher at Sand Dune Park on 22 May establishes our latest spring record (Richard Barth). Martin Byhower found a Gray Flycatcher at Banning Park on 3 May. Single Dusky Flycatchers were recorded at Polliwog Park on 7 May (David Moody), in Westchester on 17 May (KL) and at Sand Dune Park on 17 May (John Ivanov).

A singing Bell's Vireo at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on 6 May could not be found the following day (KL). A pair of Bell's Vireos was reported by a surveyor in the Wilmington Drain north of Lomita Boulevard at the end of May (fide Wendy Katagi). A singing male was there 13-15 Jun but I could not find evidence that it had a mate; a bachelor was present at this location 28 May-18 Jun 2007. A Plumbeous Vireo at Alondra Park on 6 May was a rare spring migrant (Ron Melin, David Moody). A pair of Hutton's Vireos feeding fledglings at DeForest Park in Long Beach on 18 May confirmed the first breeding record I know of from this location (KL); at least two individuals had been present since 17 Jul 2007. It is encouraging that this species can colonize an area disjunct from their usual nesting areas.

Bank Swallow reports included one at Harbor Park on 7 May (David Ellsworth) and an unusually late individual at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on 6 Jun (Don Sterba). The wintering Red-breasted Nuthatch at Wilderness Park was still present on 1 May (David Moody). Very rare away from known nesting sites, a wan-

dering California Gnatcatcher was at Harbor Park on 11 Jun (David Moody). This may have been a dispersing juvenile from the small isolated population at the nearby Navy Fuel Depot in San Pedro. The status of the Western Bluebird has changed dramatically in the Palos Verdes/South Bay area. Sightings have increased following our first area record in 1994, though this species is still unrecorded in the



Little blue heron

Photo by Jonathan Coffin

coastal Ballona area. Our first breeding pair found in 2003 continues to nest at Ridgecrest Intermediate School in Rancho Palos Verdes (Sam Bloom). The number of local breeding pairs increased to two this year. Thanks to an installed nest box, a pair fledged young at Harbor Park by 31 May (Martin Byhower). Another pair was seen near a nest box at Alondra Park in May and June but evidence of breeding was not obtained (David Moody).

Two Northern Parulas made a good spring total; one was at Ban-

ning Park on 11 May (Mike San Miguel) and another was at Madrona Marsh on 27 May (David Moody). The first for spring locally, a singing **Prothonotary Warbler** thrilled several observers at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on the morning of 6 Jun (Don Sterba). Martin Byhower treated his bird walk participants to a Northern Waterthrush at Harbor Park on 11 May. A singing Yellow-breasted Chat was in the Ballona area willows below the northern bluffs of Playa del Rey 3-30 May; another was singing south of the dam at Harbor Park on 15 Jun (KL). Tracy Drake produced a nice photo of an immature male Summer Tanager at Madrona Marsh on 22 May. A late or wandering Lark Sparrow was photographed at Madrona Marsh on 14 May (Laurie Szogas). Four White-crowned Sparrows at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh on 16 May were late migrants (John Ivanov). A Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco at Ridgecrest Intermediate School in Rancho Palos Verdes on 23 Jun was near where our first local breeding record was confirmed in 2006 (Sally Moite). Laurie Szogas photographed a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak in her Rancho Palos Verdes yard on 17 May. A singing Blue Grosbeak at Harbor Park on 15 Jun was where a pair bred in 2007 (KL). Ron Melin found a male Indigo Bunting at Madrona Marsh on 24 May.

Thanks to all who reported sightings during the period. Please send your sightings to me at cbirdr@ca.rr.com for the Palos Verdes/South Bay and vicinity, including areas east to the L.A. River, north to about the 105 freeway, and along the coast up to Marina del Rey.

Birding on a Restoration Project

By **Ann Dalkey**

Science Director, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon birders are a talented and energetic bunch. Knowing that, I recently approached the board of directors about collaborating with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy to monitor birds at a restoration site. The result was a very enthusiastic yes!

Starting this year, the conservancy will be restoring approximately 20 acres of native habitat on the 98-acre Three Sisters Reserve, a part of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. This is a five-year project, in which non-native plants will be eradicated and replaced with natives. Both coastal sage scrub and grassland plants will be installed to augment areas with existing good quality habitat.

When the conservancy installs new habitat, we are interested in learning about how well the habitat is accepted by the local fauna. With this large habitat restoration, it is a perfect time to conduct a comprehensive study of the results. Already we have plans for monitoring the plants and small mammals. Now, with the Audubon/Land Conservancy collaboration, we have added birds to this list. We plan to publicize results in scientific venues, such

as at conferences and in journals. We also will be able to use the results to inform people about the value of habitat restoration.

The plan is to conduct scientifically rigorous surveys of birds within the existing habitat, in the new habitat and in areas with non-native plants. The surveys will be conducted bimonthly



American kestrel

Photo by Jess Morton

using Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon birders and volunteers, including student volunteers. The surveys will be conducted for five years. At this time, the design of the surveys is not finalized, but we probably will be conducting hybrid of point sampling and transects. By using specific methodology, we will develop quantifiable data that will allow us to assess questions that we are

interested in, such as how quickly the birds move into the new habitat, how many use the new habitat and how diverse the bird population is.

I like the inclusion of students. It's a perfect fit between our two organizations. Both of our organizations place high priority on student involvement through the conservancy's RECIPE program and Audubon YES!

You may be wondering, "How will this project work?" Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon will have a core group of birders who have been trained in the survey methods. The core group will lead and train other volunteers and students. We are aiming to have two birders conducting the surveys twice a month. As this newsletter goes to press, the board of directors and I will be meeting to work out the details of the survey methods and scheduling.

With the bountiful knowledge that local members possess, this project is sure to be a success!

Volunteers are needed for this project. They will be trained in identification and the methods used in the survey. It will be a great opportunity to hone your birding skills. Please visit the conservancy's website to volunteer: www.pvplc.org, or contact the conservancy's Science Director Ann Dalkey at (310) 541-7613, ext. 208 or at adalkey@pvplc.org.

Butterflies, from Page 1

creatures, and the adults do not survive long. The wings tatter quickly, battered by foliage and the elements. Few will live more than just long enough to mate and produce the eggs that ensure continuity. There are predators everywhere. Spiders with and without webs. Phoebes and flycatchers. Lizards lying in wait that look like nothing more than oddly shaped vegetation.

Still, the butterflies are doing well, a tribute to the Endangered Species Act, for the special protection afforded by this law has played a key role in the survival of the El Segundo blue. Funding driven by ESA has engendered projects to aid the ESB. Lands were set aside at the Chevron refinery in El Segundo, mitigating for habitat loss. At LAX, mitigation funds helped its butterfly population grow by a factor of 10. Here, on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, the discovery of a small ESB population at Long Point has led to the creation of a bluff-top park and the adoption of the butterfly as a mascot for Terranea, the new resort. Almost certainly, this was the source of the butterflies I had found at Point Vicente.

In Redondo, the iceplant that claimed the slope between the beach bike path and the Esplanade is being replaced by native vegetation. And it is doing splendidly. During the past couple of years, the tiny remnant population of ESBs at Malaga and Bluff coves has expanded to claim all of the dunes buckwheat planted along the beach. In a few years, Redondo Beach could well become the principal home to the butterfly. An amazing comeback for a butterfly on the brink of extinction 30 years ago.

Happy Birthday to Our Chapter!

Can you believe that the PV/South Bay Audubon chapter is turning 30 this year? How many great opportunities for learning about wildlife and its preservation we have had over the years. How many exciting hours of bird walks we have logged in. Thank you to all the members of our chapter who have given tirelessly of their time and effort to make this all possible.

If you would like to show your appreciation for our chapter and celebrate its milestone birthday, how about considering a monetary donation to the chapter or a gift membership for a friend in honor of our 30-year anniversary? What better contribution to the environment could you make than to contribute to an organization that is dear to your heart anyway?

For gift memberships, please contact Vicki Peterson at (310) 375-3150. Monetary donations should be made payable to PV/South Bay Audubon and sent to P.O. Box 2582, Palos Verdes, CA 90274.

Happy 30th Birthday and many more to follow!

Gift and New Member Application

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP (*chapter only or national—circle one*) \$25
(your contribution supports local programs and/or
GIFT ... \$20___ \$50___ \$100___ Other___
TOTAL ENCLOSED

Please send me information now how to make a bequest to PV/SB Audubon

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: AUDUBON SOCIETY
MAIL TO: P.O. BOX 2582, PALOS VERDES, CA 90274**

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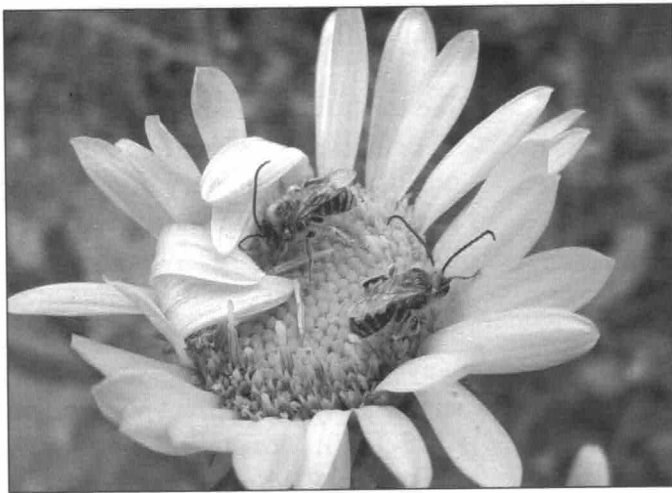
Your Backyard Habitat



By Dr. Connie Vadheim,
CSUDH

Gumplants

Grindelia species



Summer and fall are important times for native insects, including butterflies and bees. Evergreen foliage feeds our plant-eating insects, while summer-flowering species provide essential nectar and pollen. Among plant families, the sunflowers (family Asteraceae) stand out as all-purpose summer/fall habitat plants. Native species of *Grindelia* (Gumplant) are easy to grow and pleasing to the eye — as well as great summer/fall habitat plants.

Two Gumplants — *Grindelia camporum* (Bracted Gumplant) and *Grindelia hirsutula* (Coastal Gumplant) — are native to the South Bay. A third species (*Grindelia stricta*; Marsh Gumplant) hails from just up the California coast. All three thrive in local gardens and are available from Southern California native plant nurseries.

Native Gumplants are erect to sprawling perennials that die back to woody roots in fall/winter. Plants spread via underground stems (rhizomes) to form irregular clumps. Most foliage is concentrated near the base (often less than 1 foot high), so *Grindelias* make good groundcover plants. The leaves are medium-sized, medium green and succulent. The appearance of

the plant will vary somewhat depending on the growing conditions. Plants in sandier soils tend to be more sprawling, while those grown in clay soils are more upright. The foliage has a unique balsamic scent.

Grindelia produce an abundance of small (less than 1 inch across), bright yellow sunflower heads. With a little water, the plants bloom through the summer and into early fall (June to October). Before the flowers open, they produce a sticky white “gum” — hence the name “gumplant.” The flowers attract a host of interesting insects. You may want to get a good insect guide so the whole family can enjoy insect watching! Like other sunflowers, the seeds are a fall treat for seed-eating birds and other creatures.

In nature, Gumplants usually grow in full sun on sandy soils. In the garden they succeed in most local soils, even salty, alkali soils near the beach. They are quite drought tolerant once established, but remain green longer with occasional summer water (let soil dry out between waterings). They need no fertilizer and are quite disease resistant. Just let the plants dry out (go dormant) in mid-fall, then cut off dead stems. Remove unwanted stems as needed to control. Plants will reseed if happy.



Use Gumplants as a water-wise groundcover, on slopes, in pots and planters, or in natural plantings with other native grasses, shrubs and perennials. The plants are fire resistant.

For more information on growing and purchasing this plant, visit the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. You can also learn about local native plants at the “Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden” series on the first Saturday of each month at the center.

Calendar

Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Events

(See Calendar locations and information box for directions)

Saturday, Aug. 9 from 9 to 11 a.m.: Second Saturday Habitat Restoration Project at Ken Malloy-Harbor Regional Park. Led by Geffen Oren, Martin Byhower and others. Cleanup and restoration of this important wildlife area offers a hands-on opportunity to learn about invasive species removal, native planting, effective debris removal and much more while earning community service credit. All ages, but folks under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. Bring water, snack, sun/bug repellent and, if possible, work gloves. Questions? Contact Martin Byhower at (310) 541-6763, ext. 4143.

Saturday, Aug. 16 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Annual Strategic Planning Meeting at Madrona Marsh. Schedule: 8 to 9:30 a.m.: birdwalk; 9:30 to 10 a.m.: bagels and coffee; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.: planning meeting with lunch break. Agenda highlights are Together Green Grants (Toyota) and nomination committee.

Saturday, Sept. 13 from 9 to 11 a.m.: Second Saturday Habitat Restoration Project at Ken Malloy-

Harbor Regional Park. Led by Geffen Oren, Martin Byhower and others. Cleanup and restoration of this important wildlife area offers a hands-on opportunity to learn about invasive species removal, native planting, effective debris removal and much more while earning community service credit. All ages, but folks under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. Bring water, snack, sun/bug repellent and, if possible, work gloves. Questions? Contact Martin Byhower at (310) 541-6763, ext. 4143.

Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 7 p.m.: Audubon Third Tuesday Get-togethers. Our speaker will be Justin Shew. He will be talking about the Audubon California Starr Ranch Sanctuary, Orange County. Come to Madrona Marsh and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Saturday, Sept. 20 from 9 to 11:30 a.m.: Annual Coastal Cleanup Day at KMHRP. Please come help out at the annual trash cleanup at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park from 9 to 11:30 a.m., then stick around for a celebration at the park that includes walks, disaster-preparedness presentations, music, food and more! Check Martin Byhower's calendar on his website at www.birdingsocal.com

or call him at (310) 541-6763, ext. 4143 for more info.

Wednesday, Oct. 1 at 7 p.m.: PV/South Bay Audubon board meeting at Madrona Marsh. All Audubon members and friends are welcome to attend.

For a complete list of events at Madrona Marsh, go to www.southbaycalendar.org and click on Friends of Madrona Marsh.

For a complete list of Audubon YES (Youth Environmental Service) program activities, go to www.AudubonYES.org.

Fieldtrips

(See Calendar locations and information box for directions)

Sunday, Aug. 3 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden with Audubon leader Stephanie Bryan; 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation. You can join at the entrance.

Tuesday, Aug. 5 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around the South Bay's best birding

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areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

Saturday, Aug. 9 at 9 a.m.: Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy Natural History Walk at Malaga Cove bluff-top, Palos Verdes Estates. See Web site for details at www.pvplc.org.

Sunday, Aug. 10 at 8 a.m.: Second Sunday Walk at Ken Malloy-Harbor Regional Park. Join Audubon leaders and explore this important natural area of the South Bay. See meeting locations for directions.

Wednesday, Aug. 13 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leader Bob Shanman.

Tuesday, Aug. 19 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around the South Bay's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

Wednesday, Aug. 20 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

Saturday, Aug. 23 at 10 a.m.: Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Tour, Forrestal Reserve, Rancho Palos Verdes. See Web site for details at www.losserenos.com.

Tuesday, Sept. 2 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around the South Bay's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

Sunday, Sept. 7 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden

with Audubon leader Stephanie Bryan. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation. You can join at the entrance.

Wednesday, Sept. 10 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Audubon leader Bob Shanman.

Saturday, Sept. 13 at 2 p.m.: Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy Natural History Walk at Royal Palms Beach, San Pedro. See Web site for details at www.pvplc.org.

Sunday, Sept. 14 at 8 a.m.: Second Sunday Walk at Ken Malloy-Harbor Regional Park. Join Audubon leaders and explore this important natural area of the South Bay. See meeting locations for directions.

Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around the South Bay's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

Saturday, Sept. 20 at 9 a.m.: Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Tour, Abalone Cove Shoreline Park, Rancho Palos Verdes. See Web site for details at www.losserenos.com

Tuesday, Sept. 30 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Audubon leader Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around the South Bay's best birding areas. Meet at Madrona Marsh.

Meeting Locations and Information Sources

KMHRP: Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, Harbor City; parking lot near the intersection of Anaheim Street and Vermont, west of the 110 Freeway. Park opposite of old boat house.

Madrona Marsh Preserve: 3201 Plaza Del Amo, Torrance. Between Maple and Madrona Avenues. Park at Nature Center.

South Coast Botanic Garden: 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes.

Eric and Ann Brooks organize birding fieldtrips that are co-sponsored by PV/South Bay Audubon. Suggested donations: \$5 for day trips (\$4 if carpooling). Weekend trips Saturday are \$10 (\$8); Sunday \$5 (\$4). Contact them directly for details at motmots@aol.com or at (323) 295-6688.

Martin Byhower provides field guided trips. For updates and details on all trips, go to www.birdingsocal.com and click on "Updated calendar of events."

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy sponsors walks and other activities on the Peninsula. For more information, consult the website at <http://www.pvplc.org>, contact the conservancy by e-mail at info@pvplc.org or call (310) 541-7613.

How Now, from Page 2

global greenhouse gas emissions produced by livestock, including the energy that it requires to produce and sustain the animals, are — get this — greater than those produced by all the world's cars, buses, trains and planes *combined!* And in case you were wondering, organic dairy cows are worse than feedlot cattle in this regard, since raising the former causes even more methane to be released.

The sheer biomass, and even populations, of cattle in many countries exceeds that of humans. Mammalian ruminants such as cows are extremely inefficient, converting roughly 5 to 7 percent of their food into edible substances (poultry and fish are much better in this regard, converting up to a third of their feed into edible product). It is estimated that the feedstock we raise and provide for cattle in the United States alone could end world hunger, were it consumed by humans (and if pollution-free distribution were possible). Instead, Amazonian rainforests are being cleared at a horrendous rate, mainly to provide pasture for cattle grazing. Much of the world's water goes to raise crops that are used to feed cows rather than to feed hungry (and thirsty) humans. Nitrates and other compounds from animal waste pollute air and groundwater. I suspect that most of the cases of "deadly tomatoes" and such will be traced to the intermingling of animal and nearby plant agriculture. Desertification, erosion, habitat loss, water shortages on a global scale ... cows are by far the

worst thing to hit the planet, yet this fact is an exceptionally inconvenient truth.

OK, for the record, I am *not* a vegetarian. But when, for breakfast, I have my Trader Joe's soymilk on my Cheerios, then my walking trip to the market, despite any huffing and puffing, creates less carbon dioxide than even my low-emission car. By the way, the refrigerated stuff in the "milk carton" is *much* better than the nuked soymilk in the un-recyclable boxes. They even have soy coffee creamer that is quite passable. One by one, I have been discovering replacements for the meat and dairy products that, like a reformed alcoholic, I might still crave on occasion. I eat goat cheese or sheep feta on my pizza or salad (OK, I know sheep are really bad, but I have to start somewhere). There are now some great butter substitutes, and they lack those ghastly hydrogenated trans-fats. Chicken sausage, turkey bacon, turkey burgers, turkey bacon on turkey burgers ... nearly everything bovine has a decent replacement these days. But the point of my experiment is in largest part to test the waters, so I can walk my own talk. A very good sign is that my better half is on board with this and has stopped bringing home anything that once was, or came from, anything that "moo'd." I probably couldn't do this without her as my "sponsor" in this 12-step (or maybe 12-hoof?) program to wean myself to a planet-healthy lifestyle. Now, if I could just find a good vanilla ice cream replacement ...

Water, from Page 3

energy required for every bottle's production, transport and disposal is equivalent, on average, to filling that bottle a quarter of the way with oil."

The residents of Fryeburg, Maine, a town of 3,000, are fighting hard to stop Nestle's Poland Spring from sucking 168 million gallons of water per year from the pristine aquifer buried under its nearby forest. Ms. Royte observes that Fryeburg is a "perfect example of water's shift from a public good to an economic force." Even though the residents have taken the issue to Maine's Supreme Judicial Court, they have not yet won this "water war."

Because of these many serious issues, our Environmental Priorities Network is making plans to have our next public forum on water. We hope to have one speaker on the international ramifications, and one who will deal with the record dry conditions and the shrinking water sources facing Southern California residents. Will we all be encouraged to buy water- and energy-saving clothes washers, weather-sensitive sprinkler systems or drought-resistant plantings? We all need to be aware of the need to save water.

If you would like to join us in organizing this event or finding out more about it, please contact Lillian Light at llight@verizon.net or (310) 545 1384.

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For back issues and chapter info, go to www.LMconsult.com/pvaudubon

Help Needed!

Audubon YES!: Contacts with South Bay schools and teen youth groups are wanted. If you are a teacher looking for extra-credit opportunities for your students, or if you are an adult advisor to a teen group looking for volunteer activities, become an active part of Audubon YES!, our Youth Environmental Service program. Audubon wants to work with you and your kids! For more information, call Jess Morton at (310) 832-5601 or visit us online at www.audubonYES.org. Pick up postage-paid envelopes at Wild Birds Unlimited at Pacific Coast Highway and Crenshaw to recycle your **HP or Lexmark Inkjet cartridges**. For each cartridge sent in these envelopes, \$2.50 is donated to our chapter or to South Bay Wildlife Rehab. This is a great way to reduce waste and to support your favorite organizations.



Hummin'

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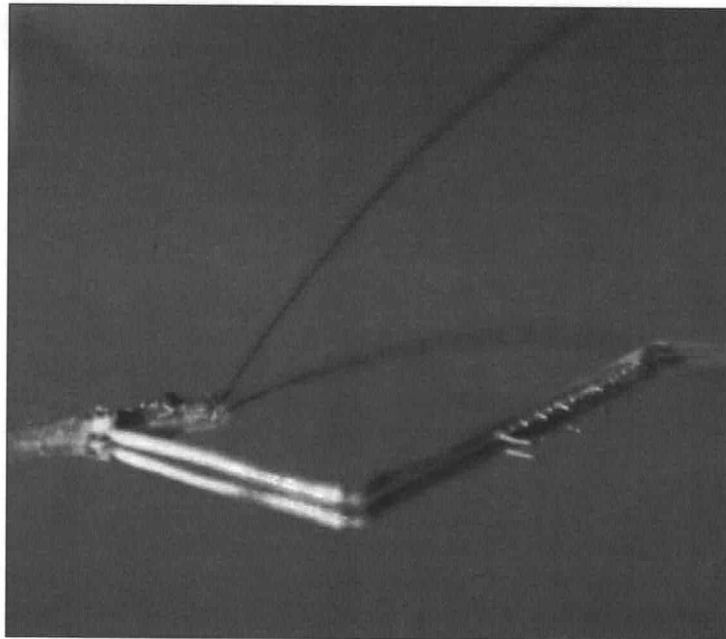
This Unknown Peninsula

Gravity and convergence

Things are supposed to fall down, not up. Apples — gravity — all that, you know. So when a bit of grass seed detached itself from a patch of wild oats on a dry Palos Verdes hillside the other day and fell upward, I thought it ought to be investigated. Not that I have much interest in wild oats, per se, but the notion that one of Sir Isaac's dicta was being defied seemed doubtful. Far more likely was that my senses had just been deceived! As was the case. And on two levels, as it turned out.

Even after locating the deceiver, it took careful observation to actually decipher all of what I was looking at. Clearly an insect, the very long, thin body was sharply defined, but legs and antennae were much harder to place. This brown creature was all length — and it extended in all directions. This just had to be a phasmid, the order to which walking sticks belong, and virtually unknown locally. The body was close to 2 inches long and the katydid-like

antennae nearly as long. The four rear legs seemed so ethereal that they might have been parts of the plant as much as of the insect perching on it. The front legs were even more bizarre, appearing long and



Assassin bug

Photo by Jess Morton

raptorial at times, and like a blunt snout extending from the head at others. I've seen some pretty improbable critters here on the Hill over the years, but this walking stick zipped right to the top of the list.

It was several days before I found I had been deceived yet again! At home, after my discovery, I immediately looked through my library and through BugGuide on the Internet for species identification.

There are several California walking sticks, but the one most likely here is the "short-horned stick insect," which this clearly was not. The "horns" are the antennae, and there was nothing short about these. Shorter than a 747, maybe, but not by much! The more walking sticks I looked into, the more confusing the picture became. Finally, I gave up, figuring I'd leave it to the experts, sending photos to BugGuide and entomologist friends for identification.

Assassin bug, they said! Not a phasmid at all. Not even close. Walking sticks are herbivores. Assassin bugs (order hemiptera) are not. There are many species of these bed bug cousins, and the group to which my insect belongs is called, appropriately enough, thread-legged bugs.

See Assassins, Page 7

President's Column

Pre-postscript from fiery presentation

By Martin Byhower



Ivan Snyder, who wrote an article for this newsletter (see Page 11), is an interpretive naturalist in the purist tradition. I hope that others might characterize my life similarly. True naturalists come in many forms. The first ones to whom I was exposed were probably my

grandfather and grandmother, who took me to tidepools, Marineland and on walks through their seemingly endless farm (in East Los Angeles, no less!) when I was a child. Others who have inspired me have been various teachers and professors, individuals like Jess Morton, our September general meeting speaker, tracker Jim Lowery, and guys like Ivan. I think I am most thrilled when someone shows me something that was right under my nose, but which I had missed for years, or who can answer my sometimes arcane questions about why a plant looks the way it does or how an animal's behavior might serve it from an adaptive perspective.

I wonder whether, as the environmental crisis precipitates a renewed interest in the living world around us, a new breed of naturalists will be born. Right now, Nature Deficit Disorder is rampant. Kids are bombarded with video games, TV, indoor activity centers, every conceivable obesity-inducing couch and mouse potato inducement. Having biophobic parents who would never think of taking their kids on a walk in the woods or a nature park (if they could even find one) doesn't help. As a kid, I remember my neighbor's dad killing a king snake that wandered into his yard with a garden hoe in order to "protect" his family. More recently, I saw an athletic coach where I teach do something similar in front of a bunch of kindergartners. What chance do we have for

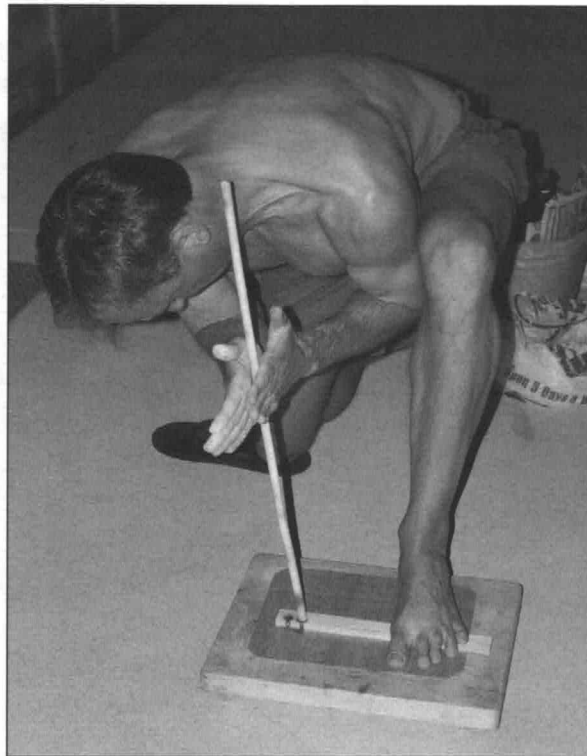
producing a kid who loves nature if spiders are what you kill in bathtubs and birds are what carry West Nile?

If you are, or know, a parent, *please* get them to take their kids on any one of myriad nature opportunities. This *Hummin'* newsletter, or the calendars of activities in the *Peninsula News* and *Daily Breeze*, are loaded with them. We need a No Child Left Inside policy if we want to induce the type of Biophilia that will re-connect our kids with their natural propensity for living things, before they lose the window of opportunity to connect with nature by about age 11 or 12, according to E.O. Wilson's widely espoused theory.

In closing, I wish all of you could have been there as Ivan, shirtless and shoeless in the waxing moonlight, primally coaxed flame out of sticks, stones, flint, you name it! Those attending were enthralled and transfixed, and there was a distinct sense of "group connection" in the air. I can not overemphasize that doing this, from scratch, is an *enormously* sophisticated task. Ivan and I believe that, in fact, the development of fire was pivotal in the evolution of the characteristics we consider distinctively human today.

Some day I plan to go out in the morning (most likely with Ivan's expert company), somewhere in the hills of Palos Verdes, with the goal of creating (controlled, of course) fire, before sundown. This will involve collecting the correct materials, including both the flammable materials and the materials needed to use as the tools to collect and fashion the needed materials,

and the time it will take to fashion those tools, *lacking* tool-fashioning materials (Got that? It is almost, but not quite, a catch 22 situation!) If and when I generate a glowing ember on that day, I am certain that a joyously primal scream will disturb the tree crickets and great horned owls, at least momentarily.



Ivan Snyder drills fire using a hand drill.

See related article on Page 11