

Amigos de Bolsa Chica

THE

TERN TIDE



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In this issue:

1

Coyotes

2

Public Tours & Weather,
New Bolsa Chica Pin

3

Docent Class of 2010
Junior Naturalist
Program

4

Amigos at Community
Events, Earth Day,
Belding's Savannah
Sparrow

5

Footbridge Dedication

6

Savannah Sparrow
(continued)

7

President's Tern

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Our New Neighbors: Good or Bad, Coyotes Are Here To Stay

By Jamie Pavlat

Coyotes, *canis latrans*, weigh about 30 pounds. A narrow muzzle, pointed ears and bushy tail are good identification marks. Coyotes appear in all types of habitat. Farmland, woodland and wetlands are their preferred environment. They are classified in the Order: Carnivore. They are predators and hunters. But in everyday life, they are opportunists. They will eat practically anything and everything. In the winter, fruits and vegetables can be a big part of their diet.

More and more our home building and development have moved into wildlife habitat. The result is increasing human-wildlife contact. Southern California is home to a dense population of coyotes.

The first written description of the coyote is from Lewis and Clark's expedition in 1804. At this time, the range of the coyote was limited to the Great Plains. Over the last two hundred years, their range has expanded across the country.

There are three main reasons which enabled this expansion:

- 1) The grey wolf, which is a main predator of coyotes, has been wiped out from much of its former range. This is mostly due to habitat destruction and hunting.
- 2) Conversion of land through logging, agriculture or urban development have altered the land into a more favorable habitat for coyotes.
- 3) In the past, relocation was considered a solution to nuisance coyotes. Records show many west to east releases. From Maine down to the southeast, coyotes were introduced to a new, unnatural habitat. This accelerated their expansion.

Relocation has proved to have a strong affect on the ecosystem. In many areas coyotes are at the top of the food chain. An increase in their population can influence and limit the expansion of their prey species. Local wildlife now have to adjust and survive the new predator invasion. Expanded habitat and the ability to successfully adapt has insured the coyotes future presence.

Once a coyote loses its fear of humans and experiences a consistent supply of food, aggressive behavior is often seen. Eradication may be the only answer. This can be a challenging feat for fish and game officers. Often, by the time an officer can respond to a coyote problem, the coyote is long gone. Unfortunately traps have proved unsuccessful. The coyote population

"Coyotes" Continued on page 7



Photo by Arizona Dept. of Fish & Game

First Saturday of the Month Public Tours and the Weather

By Jennifer Robins

Jim and I have been the Group Leaders for the first Saturday of the Month Public Tours for a number of years. The Docents who come out each month to help with these tours are real troopers. And the March Public Tour proved how resilient they are in spite of bad weather.

February 5th there was rain predicted Friday and Saturday, so we cancelled the February Public Tour due to threat of rain. On March 5th we were faced with somewhat the same problem, but local weather reports predicted a dry Saturday morning on March 6th. So I sent an email to the docents signed up for duty that unless it was raining when we got up Saturday morning we would head out for the tour.

As we set up the canopy and tables at 8:30am the wind was blowing but no rain, just dark clouds surrounding us. We were doing okay until just before the first tour was to start when a minor squall hit us. We crowded under the canopy and looking at the sky Dean Elder declared it would pass shortly - which it did. A geography teacher from Fullerton City College had instructed her students to come out for our tour. Through the morning the students filtered in (some with light jackets and flip-flops on) but all interested in taking our tour. At 10:25 just before our last tour would go out a bigger squall than the first let loose on us. Again we crowded under the canopy and started covering our merchandise and literature - everyone grabbing and protecting what they could.

We looked out at the trail and saw that the last three stations - Ecology, History and Restoration were continuing. Both the students, visitors and the docents acted as if it was a blue sky overhead. Some students had even brought umbrellas in case of rain. They wanted to make sure they heard all the stations so they could get credit for the tour and the docents continued to do their job of teaching.


A huge thank you to all the docents that came out and

stayed to the bitter, wet end - Joyce Beardsley, David Casey, Jerry Donohue, Dean Elder, Helen Higgins, Bob Johnson, Sue Mickelson, Dave Myers, Al Vari and Ed Zschoche. Jim and I couldn't do the tours without all the wonderful docents who take part in the First Saturday of the Month Public Tours.

New Bolsa Chica Wetlands Lapel Pin

Soon to arrive is the new lapel pin for the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. The pin is one inch square and will be available near the end of March. The purchase of this memento of the Bolsa Chica is \$3.00. The pin will be available on the Join/Shop/Donate section of www.amigosdebolsachica.org, at the public tours and at all other Amigos events where merchandise is available.





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Congratulations Amigos Docents Class of 2010

By Patty Overley

Congratulations to our new docents. Ten students, David Casey, Alina Lee, Dave Myers, Susie Pendleton, Carol Rice, Sharon Simmons, Don Thomas, David Vize, Gail Vize and Nicholas Nguyen. successfully completed five weeks of training and were awarded their docent status on the last night of class, February 2.

Classes were held at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center. Course topics included History of the Bolsa Chica, Ecology and Natural Setting, Birds and Endangered Species, Restoration and Teaching Tips. This year, we had the pleasure of adding an additional presentation on Fish and Macro Invertebrates of the Bolsa Chica presented by Kelly O'Reilly from the Department of Fish and Game. Additionally, the students attended two field trips to the Bolsa Chica. One was to learn more about the Natural Setting of the wetlands and the second was a birding field trip.

A special thanks goes out to all of the presenters Helen Higgins, Vic Leipzig, Barbara Sentovich, Dave Carlberg, Kelly O'Reilly, Jim and Jennifer Robbins, Laura Holdenwhite and Barbara Stewart for their hard work and dedication that made the learning experience a



New docents, left to right, Susie Pendleton, Dave Vize, Gail Vize, Sharon Simmons, David Casey, Alina Lee, Dave Myers, Nick Nguyen. Not pictured: Carol Rice and Don Thomas.

great success. And a big thank you to the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center staff for providing the facility and support to conduct the training.

If you are interested in attending a future Docent Training program, please contact the Amigos office at 714-840-1575.

Junior Naturalist Program

By Lori Donohue

The Community Education Committee is developing a Junior Naturalist program. Participants who complete the program will be called "Wetlanders." The mission of Amigos de Bolsa Chica Wetlander program is to provide opportunities to enhance the connections between youth/family/community & nature.

We would like to invite eager members of Amigos to join us for a half-day workshop in late April or May to create this program. One of our first projects will be developing a Junior Naturalist newspaper with activities, games and articles all relating to the wetlands. The goal of the activities is for participants to have so much fun, they won't know they're learning!

Anyone with experience in teaching, art, working with youth or good ideas and lots of enthusiasm is invited to join us! Our target population for the Wetlander program will be geared for ages 5-15 years, keeping in mind there really is no age limit to learning! If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Lori Donohue at ldonohue@socal.rr.com.



40 Amigos Volunteers Will Be Busy At Community Events

Please Join Us! We take our literature, tri-fold display, restoration photos, and children's activities to share information with attendees, and encourage visitors to schedule tours and visit the wetlands. If you would like to volunteer, call the Amigos office or e-mail Margaret mcarlberg@ix.netcom.com.

April 10, 10:00-3:00, Earth Day, Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve North Lot (see separate article on this page).

April 11, 9:00-12:00, monthly weeding and planting of local native shrubs, Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center. Amigos and Bolsa Chica Stewards.

April 17, 10:00-3:00, Dedication of the Magnolia Marsh, Magnolia Marsh, Newland and PCH: Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy. Amigos Information Booth, plus government officials, and other exhibitors from local wetlands.

April 24, 9:00-5:00, Long Beach Earth Day, Long Beach Aquarium. Amigos Information Booth plus children activities, with many other exhibitors and an aquarium visit.

May 1, 9:00-2:00, Spring Festival, Shipley Nature Center. Amigos Information Booth plus childrens activities, many other exhibitors and tours.

Other local environmental events of interest...

April 10, 8:30-5:00, Orange County Book Fair, with Dave Carlberg on a 3:30 panel with 2 other history authors, and 15 other panels, with book signings all day. UC Irvine Student Center. See www.literaryorange.oorg/Events.php,

April 10-9:00-12, Composting and Vermicomposting Workshop, Shipley Nature Center. Registration \$10. The Shipley Nature Center will present three workshops on the art and science of composting and vermicomposting (composting with earthworms) 9:00 a.m. Saturday, April 10, 2010. Repeated on May 22 and June 12. 714-842-4772 \$10 per participant. Registration payable online at www.shipleynature.org. Each seminar is limited to the first 50 registered, so sign up now!! HB Residents will receive a \$50 voucher (one per household) toward the purchase of a composting bin.

Earth Day at Bolsa Chica

Saturday, April 10 from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. in the north parking lot (Warner near PCH) the Amigos joins the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, Bolsa Chica Land Trust and Department of Fish and Game presenting activities to celebrate Earth Day and educate families about Bolsa Chica. More than 18 Amigos docents are to be involved presenting information about the history and restoration of the area, bird eating habits, various art and nature puzzle activities and overseeing the Amigos information materials under our canopy. For the fifth year 3 docents will be gathering data with children and their families on bird activity at Fisherman's Point as tides change. About 15 other exhibitors will help educate families about the water, soil, marine organisms, plants, insects, reptiles, mammals and overall environment in the Bolsa Chica.

Donations or discounts for this event from the following are appreciated: Ingardia Brothers Fruit, Santa Ana; Pure Water Plus, Huntington Beach; Smart and Final, Huntington Beach; Ralphs Meadowlark, Huntington Beach; Starbuck's Coffee, Huntington Beach. The Amigos Community Education Committee appreciates all of the volunteer help from Amigos members and Boy and Girl Scouts who work with us.

So Who's Belding and Why Is the Savannah Sparrow Endangered?

By Ed Zschoche

The Bolsa Chica Wetland Salt Marsh is one of the homes for the Belding's Savannah Sparrow. This bird has quite a history. It is one subspecies of approximately seventeen known subspecies included in *Passerculus sandwichensis*, or Savannah Sparrow. The responsibility of identifying bird species in North America rests with the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). Presently, Belding's Savannah Sparrow is being considered for status as separate specie and not a subspecies.

Dr. James D. Rising is a retired and part time professor and researcher at the University of Toronto. He is considered one of North America's finest ornithologists. I had the pleasure of a telephone conversation with him to improve my knowledge of Belding's Savannah Sparrow. In his 2009 proposal to AOU, for separation of the Belding's from the other Savannah Sparrow subspecies, Dr. Rising reported some of the bird's history. "The Savannah Sparrow was first named by Gmelin in 1789, from the Sandwich

"Savannah Sparrow" Continued on page 6

New Footbridge Dedication

By Jennifer Robins

The Dedication of the new Footbridge located parallel to Warner Avenue from the north parking lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve across to the mesa occurred at 10:30 A.M. on Thursday, March 4, 2010. It was a joyous event with representatives from Amigos de Bolsa Chica, the Bolsa Chica Conservancy and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust celebrating an event long awaited. There were also representatives from Department of Fish and Game, OSPR, California State Lands Commission, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the California Wildlife Foundation, and URS and Reyes Construction. Also in attendance were County Supervisor John Moorlach, Kevin Gilhooley from Senator Harman's office, Joe Carchio representing the City and a representative from Assemblyman Jim Silva's office.

Karen Miner, Lands Supervisor of the South Coast Region of DFG, was the overall coordinator of the event. Representatives from all of the organizations were introduced and given a few minutes to make individual comments. Certificates from Senator Harman's and Assemblyman Silva's offices were presented to DFG followed by the ribbon cutting. The highlight of the event was having Madison Makoff, a young girl who asked for money for the bridge on her birthday instead of receiving gifts, performed the official ribbon cutting on the bridge. Participants took this opportunity to be among the first to "Walk to the Wild Side" and then return to the parking lot for refreshments.

It took several years to design and construct the footbridge and the funds for it were raised from a variety of sources that included citizens, grants, the County of Orange and the State of California. All present at the ceremony felt this was a time to celebrate the cooperation of the three Bolsa Chica Organizations along with State and County Agencies in fulfilling a dream of a footbridge that allows visitors to enjoy the trails of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in greater safety than ever before.



The new footbridge and signage near Warner Avenue.




Madison Makoff, a young girl who asked for money for the bridge on her birthday instead of receiving gifts, performed the official ribbon cutting. Photos by Ross Griswold.


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“Savannah Sparrow” Continued from page 4 Bunting of Latham, based on material from Sandwich Bay, Unalaska Is., Alaska. Wilson later described the Savannah Bunting (or sparrow?) from Savannah, Georgia.” Dr. Rising also said that it will take some time for agreement to be reached on the status of the Belding’s.

Lyman Belding was one of the original members of the AOU when it was formed in 1883. Considered a highly respected ornithologist, he often collected samples of animal and plant life, with a focus on birds, for the Smithsonian. Robert Ridgway was the first Curator of the Division of Birds for the Smithsonian. Ridgway analyzed samples and defined the differences between specimens. He named the samples of bird life significantly different from other known species. In 1881 Belding sent from California a bird sample to the Smithsonian for analysis. In 1885 Ridgway named that bird *Passerculus beldingi*, Belding’s Sparrow. As time passed Belding’s Sparrow became a subspecies of the Savannah Sparrow named *Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi*, Belding’s Savannah Sparrow.

The late Loren Hays in a 2004 article about Belding’s Savannah Sparrow reports; “The Belding’s savannah sparrow is unique in that it represents one of only two wetland-dependant avian species endemic to coastal salt marshes in southern California. This species is a year-round resident of these salt marshes and is therefore reliant upon these habitats to meet all of its life history requirements. This race ranges along the southern California coast from Santa Barbara County (Goleta Slough) in the north into Baja California, Mexico (near El Rosario) in the south. As with most ground dwelling species, this bird is inconspicuous and blends well with its environment.” In the Bolsa Chica we may see it in the pickle weed.

Hays considered Bolsa Chica census regular and dependable for accuracy. He wrote that the population fluctuates between 100 and 250 pairs. The California Department of Fish and Game in a document called “A Survey of the Belding’s Savannah Sparrow in California 2006” reported 201 pairs in Bolsa Chica. This was up from 175 pairs in 2004. The Christmas Bird Count is a report of individual birds of a species. The data for the Bolsa Chica is given to Sea & Sage Audubon and then to the national Audubon. The count in the Bolsa Chica was 15 birds in 2007, 24 in 2008 and 125 in 2009. The implication here is that the Bolsa Chica numbers are down.

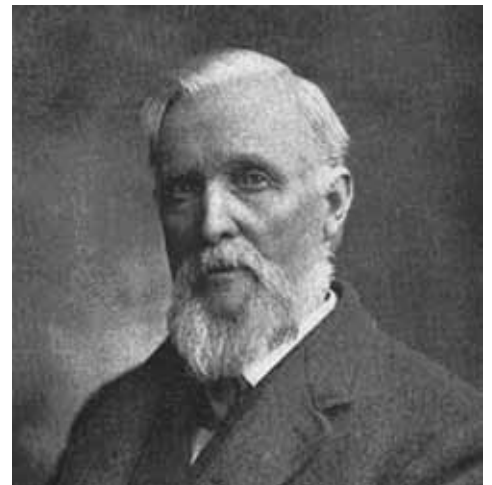
The fluctuation in the Bolsa Chica is due, in part, to the restoration process which destroyed part of the pickleweed nesting area of the Belding’s. However the improved flushing process has increased the growth of pickleweed. Unfortunately, the oil operators have limited the access of the available sea water to pickleweed nesting areas under their control. The operators have various excuses for their denial of increased sea water flow into ponds near their work sites. Fresh water is accumulating in those ponds just as it did 100 years ago for the Gun Club. There is minor sea water flow through culverts which limita pickleweed growth and in turn nesting sites are limited.

In a 2009 paper by Esteban Fernández-Juricic, et al., sponsored by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada, the Belding’s in the Bolsa Chica were studied. In the paper the size of Bolsa Chica was noted as an advantage to the preservation of the Belding’s. More space means a large area to roam, forage, nest and survive. Loss of habitat is the greatest threat to this bird. Dr. Rising congratulates Amigos for its efforts to retain salt marsh habitat, “Increasing and preserving habitat is the best way to help the Belding’s Savannah Sparrow to survive.” California identifies the Belding’s Savannah Sparrow as an “Endangered” species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2010 listing shows the Belding’s as “Specie of Concern”.



Left: A Belding’s Savannah Sparrow photographed at Bolsa Chica by Ross Griswold.

Right: Lyman Belding, 1829-1917, authority on the avifauna of California and Baja California.



President's Tern

I am Jennifer Robins, the new President of Amigos de Bolsa Chica. As the year begins on my term of office I reflect on the years and the Presidents that have preceded me. I take very seriously this position which has seen some competent individuals who fulfilled tasks and goals in order for Amigos to remain a living organization of dedicated people.

Amigos de Bolsa Chica has published two books, the most recent one is David M. Carlberg's *Bolsa Chica Its History from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, published in 2009. The second book is an oral history titled, *Saving the Bolsa Chica Wetlands*, by James A. Aldridge, published in 1998. The Carlberg book is the history of the property called Bolsa Chica and the people involved with the property. The Aldridge book is the history of the process to save the Bolsa Chica from development and restore the land to wetlands. Both books are important to anyone interested in the Bolsa Chica.

I've completed the Carlberg book and I'm currently reading the Aldridge book. Recounted in the Aldridge book are hours of recorded discussions with every Past President of Amigos through the Presidency of Chuck Nelson, 1984-1987. It seemed a fitting time, as I start my first year as President of Amigos, to pull down the large Oral History book from my shelf and read about the reflections of Amigos' past Presidents and other individuals surrounding the struggles that got us from there to here. The ordeals and difficulties faced by these determined people are vividly brought to life as they talk about the lawsuit with Shell; the Coalition Plan; the formations of Amigos de Bolsa Chica, the Bolsa Chica Foundation and the Bolsa Chica Conservancy; meetings with legislators in Sacramento and Washington D.C.; meetings with their attorneys; talks with city council and county legislators. Mixed in their words are pride, perseverance, and patience. Pride in an organization founded by a group of citizens who felt the mission to restore the wetlands was worthy of their time and money. Perseverance while meeting each obstacle and seeing it through to a satisfactory conclusion. Patience as they realized their goal would only be reached through a lengthy process. Their fortitude to meet their goals and fulfill their mission is something of awe to me. I wish to thank each of these Presidents for providing strong shoulders to stand on and look forward to maintaining our mission with a great deal of pride.

Those Past Presidents are Herb Chatterton, Ken and Rhoda Martyn (serving concurrently), David Carlberg, Peter Green, Lorraine Faber, Mary Ellen Houseal, Vic Leipzig, Shirley Dettloff, Tom Livengood, Terry Dolton, and Chuck Nelson. They were followed by Linda Moon, Jim Robins, Tom Anderson and David Carlberg.

"Coyotes" Continued from page 1

learn quickly when witnessing a trapped coyote.

Even if eradication could control the problem, it is only a matter of time until the next pack of coyotes move in. When faced with that reality, changing our human habits may be our only long term answer. The pursuit of food and breeding are the motivation for most wildlife behavior. If a predator can't fill its need for food in one area, it will move on.

Outdoor cats are extremely vulnerable to local coyotes. I have had cats at every point in my life. I was brought up to believe that keeping a cat indoors was cruel. After dealing with cat fights, abscesses, car accidents, I am now the proud owner of indoor cats. All my cats have lived to be at least 19 years old. These are happy, loving animals. They can enjoy a life of protection. The bonding between a cat and its owner is stronger with indoor cats. The increasing amount of cars, contagious cat viruses, and hungry wildlife are very real hazards for outdoor cats. Unfortunately, it appears many more cats will experience the harsh reality of their neighborhood before cats are commonly valued as great indoor companions. Feeding wildlife is asking them to enjoy their stay. Leaving a cat outdoors is essentially, "feeding wildlife."

Often after encountering wildlife there is a "shouldn't something be done" attitude. Those days are gone. Encountering wildlife is no longer a rare experience. A wildlife attack on humans is rare but these rare encounters usually end up on the news due to public interest. But wild animal attacks do occur and we should never let our guard down. There is only one recorded coyote attack in the United States. Whatever the number, coyote attacks on humans is unacceptable. Every caution should be taken when one is near a possible coyote territory.

Compared to the one fatal coyote attack ever recorded, the U.S. averages over 20 fatal dog attacks each year. A clear perspective is needed to effectively address the problem. Eradication is not an effective solution and it is near impossible to enforce. Co-existing is no longer a choice, but a reality.

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Inside this Issue:

Coyotes

Public Tours and the Weather

New Bolsa Chica Pin

Docent Class of 2010

Junior Naturalist Program

Amigos at Community Events

Earth Day Celebration

Belding's Savannah Sparrow

Footbridge Dedication

AMIGOS DE BOLSA CHICA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I support the specific and primary purpose of Amigos de Bolsa Chica, which is to advocate the preservation, restoration and maintenance of the Bolsa Chica, to encourage the public acquisition of all the wetlands and sufficient surrounding open space to create a viable ecosystem, and to provide education about the importance of wetlands.

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