

## **EDWIN HACKING—CALIF. VISUAL TRIP FROM SNOW TO SEA**

Known for his artistic approach to nature imagery, photographer Edwin Hacking, will take us on a memorable scenic tour of the Sierra Nevada watershed and beyond, during our program on **April 12 at 6pm.**

Starting in the deep snow of January, Edwin will present us with an image of the Sierra that few have had the opportunity to see. We'll explore Utica Lake, a typical alpine lake, & lower Consumnes and Mokelumne Rivers at the south end of Sacramento.



Moving from the Great Central Valley, Edwin will share his fascinating aerial photographs of the San Joaquin Delta, flying over lush farmland & finally to the Bay lands of San Francisco Bay. His photographer's eye captures converging lines, shapes, textures, and color only seen from the air.

We'll continue North with Edwin along the San Mateo coastline circling Pigeon Point Lighthouse, & then up to the spectacular Northern-most tip of the Point Reyes Peninsula and Tomales Bay. We'll get a chance to see some landscapes that will compel us to make our own photo trips to these locations.



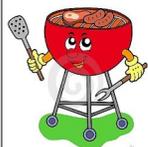
Edwin received a B.A in Film and an M.A in Education from SF State; his photo background began as a hobby that eventually turned into a paid job as a medical photographer, corporate photographer, and then took a visual twist to expand into video production where he worked for companies like Hewlett Packard, Apple, Google, etc.

## **MUSICAL MAGIC OF BIRDS WITH JIM STEELE**

Be an "early bird" and be in the Park by the Visitor Center at 8am on Sat, April 26, for a double deal—sight & sounds of birds. Jim will play recordings of challenging male fellows to draw territory-holders out with their triumphant songs. You're guaranteed to hear Chestnut-backed Chickadees and other residents, as well as regular migrants to SPVP. Afterwards be an early bird at the "Earth Day" barbeque.

## **EARTH DAY BARBEQUE on SATURDAY, APRIL 26**

Take a little break and then come back to the Park, OR hike a bit after the birding ends at about 10am, and then, at 11:30 come on in to the Center and nibble on some appetizers, while helping with the final setup for our Earth Day barbeque. Links and hamburgers and buns will be provided; you bring a favorite dish. (dreamstime royalty-free cartoon)



## **KATIE COLBERT ON SNAKES in MARCH**

Katie Colbert has been a naturalist at Sunol Regional Park since 1985, & one who has become increasingly interested in reptiles of the slithery persuasion. We are delighted that she will be giving us a talk on snakes on **Saturday, March 15th, at 5pm.**



Ms. Colbert has spent her pre-Wilderness years as a ranger for the East Bay Municipal Utility District, an interpretive student aide at the Tilden Nature Area, and as a naturalist & Environmental Education Specialist for several other Bay Area agencies. Katie has nearly completed a master's degree in Ecology based on field research with local rattlesnakes. She holds a degree in Eng./Art History, a certificate in Landscape Horticulture. She has written 3 science activity books for children and many articles for EBRPD; she obviously has a diverse background.

It's not surprising, then, that she has an expansive array of interests. "She has a soft spot for animals that creep people out: snakes, insects, and bats." . She also loves dancing, stream ecology, very long nature hikes, woodcarving, papermaking, stars, & gardening, through which she discovered she would rather eat her products than spray the insects with poisons.



## **WILDLIFE ASSOCIATES PRESENTS CALIFORNIA WILD**

This children's program with a live grey fox, opossum, porcupine, Great Horned Owl and Red-tailed Hawk, will appear at the Visitor Center on Tuesday, April 15, at 1:30pm. 4 of these animals are found in SPVP.



Did you know the opossum never stops growing & all of these animals can go up into trees? This is a great first "person" learning for youngsters.

## **ON THE TRAIL**

**Ray Trabucco** was the first to see & report a more eastern species in our park, a female **Red-naped Sapsucker**, which excited bird watchers from around the Bay Area as it gleaned food on the fallen **California live oak** on the W. Hazelnut. (Bob Steele photo)



**Laurie Nikitas:** "I have the final **woodrat [dusky-footed woodrat, Neotoma fuscipes]** count, after a really careful survey: 79 houses on the Hazelnut trail. Pretty amazing." [counted in mid-January] (Roger Hall ink drawings: inkart.net.)



### JUDY SPITLER'S NATURE UNBOUND

I had dogs as a child but didn't really get into wildlife until I was about 30. I had moved to California from the Midwest and had bought a pair of binoculars to look for whales when something blue flew past my field of view. Of course, I then needed to purchase a field guide to identify my first **Western Scrub Jay** and it was downhill from then on. (Wikipedia photo of CA Scrub Jay)



Probably my biggest inspiration for birding and natural history was the late, great **Rich Stallcup**. I was in my late twenties, newly arrived in Calif and Rich was leading trips for Point Reyes Bird Observatory. He was personable, enthusiastic, and totally in love with every aspect of nature.. One memorable time with Rich was on a pelagic (open ocean) trip when he



glimpsed a distant bird and just "knew" it seemed different. He got the boat headed toward it and everyone focused on the bird which turned out to be a **Light- mantled Sooty Albatross** - I believe the first northern hemisphere record for this species.

Rich's death last year was a huge loss for many people. (Pablo Caceres photo of the **Light-mantled Sooty Albatross**)

By my mid 30's, I was attending many Audubon trips throughout California, taking classes, going on pelagic (open ocean) trips to the Farallon Islands and Monterey Bay, and birding when I returned to the Midwest to see family. Most birders are also into other forms of wildlife too, so I started being exposed to sea and land mammals, reptiles and amphibians - both in California & on trips to Arizona & Texas. I loved it all.



There were periods when life intruded and my birding slowed, but it was always there in some form. By my 40's I was doing international trips and totally fell in love with the new world tropics, doing trips to Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela & Trinidad.

I was looking for a new career when a volunteer position (baby bird feeder at the Wildlife department of Peninsula Humane Society) opened into a staff position in the Wildlife department. So for several years, I worked in wildlife rehabilitation caring for our mostly suburban orphaned or injured wildlife. One was a little **gray fox** from SPVCP that **Carolyn** and I released back here fully recovered. During that period I also released other common rehabilitated birds to the park: **robins, finches, hummingbirds** ( mostly babies that the Wildlife department raised to a survivable age.)

On the more exotic side, I did foster for 6 weeks a **baby tufted marmoset** we called Chicheca, that was found in poor condition abandoned in a shoe box on the side of the road. Luckily at that time PHS had a veterinarian with monkey experience. I became the baby's mom and she would ride in the hood of my sweatshirt and cry pitifully if I put her down. Once she got old enough, I flew with her to Texas where she was placed in a sanctuary with other marmosets. (internet photo of baby tufted marmoset)



I also became connected with International Bird Rescue in Cordelia and worked with them on both the SF - Cosco Busan oil spill and the gulf - Deep Water Horizon well blow out. I continue to work at Peninsula Humane Society/SPCA but on the cat and dog side of things. Birds and wildlife remain my deep love though.

Oh, yes, my little **Emma**. Everyone remembers Hurricane Katrina which hit New Orleans with such devastation in 2005. Many people left their animals at home, thinking they would return in one or two days; or they were not allowed to take them into shelters. Thus, once they started rescuing the animals, Louisiana animal services were quickly overwhelmed, and so other humane societies around the country began taking them. Peninsula Humane Society agreed to accept 60 animals, mostly dogs. They were flown in to SFO and set up in housing in our parking lot separate from the rest of the shelter population, until their health could be evaluated. About 50 % eventually were returned to their owners and most of the others were placed in foster care. The last remaining foster dog was a little 20 pound, tan, Chihuahua / beagle mix with horizontal ears. She was so timid and frightened that no foster wanted her. Paper work only said she was found tied to a tree and swimming in the 9th Ward and her owner was dead. But she and I had bonded in the PHS parking lot that first dark night she flew into SFO, so of course, she came home with me with the idea that I would socialize her a little more. Emma was a beloved member of our family for the next five years until heart disease finally claimed her.



(internet photo of a chihuahua beagle mix)

[Finally, lucky **Wink**, a one-eyed Terrier, who came in to the SPCA injured and terrified, loves the game of ball, & became the new adopted member of the family—seen here with Judy]

## A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

March/April 2014

The daily and seasonal changes in weather are endlessly fascinating. And how much more do we appreciate the sun after the fog is burned back! People are especially im-



pressed by an apparently lifeless season being abruptly succeeded by a vibrant, lively one. In the foothills of California the brown grasslands of summer are suddenly greened by November rains (normally), whereas in the deciduous forest of the eastern U.S., the black skeletal trees of winter abruptly turn green as they leaf-out

in spring. Dormant animals, including groundhogs, morning cloak butterflies and spring peepers, revive. **Joseph Wood Krutch** wrote an essay titled "Resurrection of the Peepers." These tiny **treefrogs** hibernate in the mud at the bottoms of frozen ponds, but one night in spring we hear a chorus of their first peeps of the year, as they announce that they are still alive. Our delight in their victory over the freezing cold may be partly fueled by our subconscious realization that living beings, including us, can survive challenges of the non-living environment.

Every January, in San Pedro Park, I look for the resurrection of living beings - **trilliums**. This Jan.

16 I checked trillium sites on the Plaskon Trail, but found no plants. I continued a short way up the Hazelnut Trail, without finding trilliums, but the first **Montara manzanita** (manzanita photo by J.V. Littell) was in full bloom! My hike continued over to the west end of the Valley View Trail.



I was disappointed to not see **fence lizards** nor **buckeye butterflies** in the usual places although it was suitably warm and sunny. By the end of the day it was remarkable that I had not seen any **mushrooms** on this mid-winter date; I attributed their absence to our continuing **drought**. On Jan. 22 I hiked the same route - also with negative results, except that I saw a **Red-naped Sapsucker**

(photo of female by **Jim Burns**) - a new species for me! (**Ray Trabucco** pointed out the bird for me on the Hazelnut Trail.) But, Eureka, on Feb. 13 there were 2 **coast** and 3 **giant trilliums** up (but not blooming) on the Plaskon Trail! What happened? Three days of rain over Groundhogs' Day. (On Feb. 19 there were more trilliums & 4 were in bloom - but the plants were much smaller than normal.)



Waves of warblers. **Warblers** are small, active, colorful birds. (**Yellow Rumped Warbler** from allaboutbirds.com) Indeed they have been called "bird-butterflies." In the deciduous forest of the eastern U.S., the northerly spring migration of warblers is a major event. One can lie on her back on a carpet of wildflowers and train her binoculars up into trees that have not completely leafed out, revealing waves of warblers that are busy gleaning insects from the trees. The bright splashes of color (especially yellow) on these birds contrasts with the blacks and grays of winter residents, such as chickadees and titmice. We may sense that the warblers are bringing energy, warmth and life from some exotic, warmer land. (**Townsend's Warbler** from Audubon website)



Warblers in Pedro Park. Some intrepid bird-watchers showed up on the showery morning of May 2, 2003 for a hike led by **Judy Spitler**. She raised our spirits by reporting



that she had been bird-watching in the Park the last couple of days (both showery) and had seen a phenomenal 8 species of warblers! We started up the Trout Farm Trail and spotted our first colorful migrants: a female and male **Western Tanager** (from birdsamore.com)

high in a eucalyptus. Next Judy spotted a flock of birds foraging high in some **Monterey pines**, and one of them darted out into a rare stream of sunlight which illuminated his startlingly yellow face - a **hermit warbler**! (In addition to migrant species of warblers, our Park has 2 species of winter residents: **Yellow-rumped** and **Townsend's**, and 2 summer residents: **Wilson's** and [the bird that has orange on head when mating] **Orange-crowned** (from birds-friends.com). So we have "bird-butterflies" to enjoy throughout the entire year!



Poor Jim's Almanac. Try to spot some migrating birds - especially along the Trout Farm Trail in April. And watch for emerging wildflowers, including trilliums, especially along the Hazelnut Trail in March. (giant trillium —Bill Noble's blog)



## VISITOR CENTER HEROES NEED HELP!

**Lois Joseph** took 4 shifts this month, **Jim Mackey & Shirley Drye** took 3 a piece, as did Jack. Others took 2. Thank you, regulars. We need help says **Jack Dodson**! Please volunteer! Pledge one day a month and even choose your day!

## ON THE TRAIL (continued)

On Feb. 5th, **Laurie Nikitas** saw the **western trillium** budding at the top of the Hazelnut, and **hound's tongue** in bloom up & down the trail on the 11th. Ed. Note—The **bar-berry** with its sharp leaves, had some beautiful little yellow flower clusters—easy to find. Look in our native sun garden!



This lovely 2-foot long **rubber boa** was a trophy find for **Laurie Nikitas** on the Hazelnut on Feb. 11. She noticed “a large cyst-like bulge on one side, which was very mobile under the skin.” These are Laurie’s on-the-spot shots.



On Feb. 11. She noticed “a large cyst-like bulge on one side, which was very mobile under the skin.” These are Laurie’s on-the-spot shots.



**Istvan Puski** reported what he believes was a **Peregrine Falcon** on the no. end of the Plaskon Nature Trail. She flew towards the creek. It was at the beginning of Jan.

**Barbara Kempster** saw a **Black-headed Grosbeak** on the Hazelnut between the W. end & the large fallen oak. This is a nice, early sighting for this fella. (allaboutbirds.com)



On Jan. 7 at 9:30am, while walking on the East Weiler Trail, I [**Ray Trabucco**] saw a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** flying above and behind me, only 10 feet away. She was doing loops and then flew into the trees on the East Valley View Trail. This is

## ISTVAN AND THE PLANT RESTORATION GROUP

Last month we heard that a team of the native plant restoration group pulled **Cape ivy** from the No Walnut, well this week we can report that **Istvan Puski** has planted some beautiful little natives in this area: **coffee berry, ceanothus, gooseberry**, etc. Prior to that **Rangers Escoto & Cervantes, Eugene and Vlad Kardash** joined Istvan in once again pulling out Cape Ivy. (**Jack Dodson** photo of leader posed by a **flowering currant**)



## MARCH-APRIL 2014 CALENDAR

### MARCH TRAIL DAY

Saturday, March 8.....9am

### MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, March 12 .....call Carolyn at 355-7466

### MARCH HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, March 15.....9am

### KATIE COLBERT SNAKES PROGRAM

Saturday, March 15.....5pm

### APRIL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 9.....call Carolyn at 355-7466

### APRIL TRAIL DAY

Saturday, April 12.....9am

### EDWIN HACKING'S SOURCE OF WATER FOR BAY AREA

Saturday, April 12.....6pm

### CALIFORNIA WILD-LIVE ANIMALS FOR CHILDREN

Tuesday, April 15.....1:30pm

### APRIL HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, April 19.....9am

### APRIL BIRD SONG HIKE AND EARTH DAY BARBEQUE

Saturday, Ap. 26.....8am, 12 noon

## SMOOTH TRAIL, 4x4 DELIVERY

By Joseph Piro

Happy New Year! **Istvan Puski** and I joined Rangers **Greg Escoto** and **Joel Cervantes** and **Angie** and **Eddie** for the January 11th Trail Day -- we resurfaced parts of the ADA trail that runs diagonal from the horseshoe pits to the Weiler Ranch Road trail. Greg and I made several runs in the Kubota 4x4, loading it with baserock and DG, while the others prepped the surface and raked and tamped it down.



## FAÇIÖID

A tiny hawk that appears in a blur of motion—and often disappears in a flurry of feathers. That's the **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, the smallest hawk in North America and a daring, acrobatic flier. (photo courtesy of © [Lloyd Spitalnick/Restricted](http://LloydSpitalnick.com) from [lloydspitalnickphotos.com](http://lloydspitalnickphotos.com))



**Questions or letters to the editor?** —email **Carolyn Pankow** at [carolynjunepankow@yahoo.com](mailto:carolynjunepankow@yahoo.com) or write **Carolyn Pankow**, Editor of, “**Friends of San Pedro Valley Park**”, 600 Oddstad, Pacifica, CA 94044. She is the writer of all uncredited features.

The Leaders of “the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park”: President, **Jim Mackey**; Vice President, **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary, **Shirley Drye**; Interim Treasurer, **Bing Huey**; member at large, **Istvan Puski**; Visitor Center staffing—NEW! **Jack Dodson**; Habitat Restoration Leader, **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader, **Joseph Piro**; Membership, **Catherine Antista**; Programs, **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store: **Denise Marcucci** . . .