

DESERT & COAST; KANGAROO RATS, MICE IN APRIL

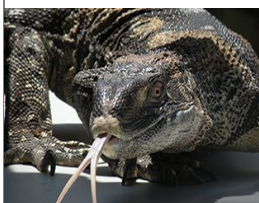


On Sat., Ap. 23, at 6pm, **Maureen Sullivan**, who has trapped & studied **kangaroo rats** in the desert & researched the **dusky-footed woodrat** & **deer mice** of our coastal mountains will show you how these little critters survive. She was a graduate student of **Dr. Jim Mackey**, who recommended her for this program on desert & coastal rodents, the critters at the bottom of the food chain.

Maureen is presently a science teacher at St. Ignatius College Prep School in S.F., teaching courses there in General Biology, Marine Biology, and Photography. Ms. Sullivan has a Master's degree in Biology from SFSU, with an emphasis on Ecology and Systematic Biology. After receiving her M.A. she taught some classes in Nature Study, Mammalogy, & Human Biology at SFSU before accepting her post at S.I. in 1995.

CREEPY CRITTERS for KIDS: REPTILES & TARANTULA 1pm on TUESDAY, APRIL 12

Be thrilled by jumbo-sized scaly crawlers, including an **American alligator**, & the monstrous **monitor lizard**, who will be "wrestled" by 2 handlers. But some of your more contemplative children may prefer the threatened **Mojave Desert tortoise** or the muscular,



sinuous **python**. Walk in & it's all free, thanks to the S. M. County Parks Foundation. Arrive early to be sure of getting a spot—this is a popular event. (left-monitor liz)

JIM STEELE'S APRIL BIRD SONG WALK—AP. 16

On Sat., April 16, at 8am, **Jim Steele**, the president of the Friends, will lead the first of his 2 spring walks in the lower reaches of the Park, helping participants to identify an array of territorial **song-birds**, especially by tricking males to respond to a recording of a rival. Jim



was the director of the SFSU Field Campus in the Sierras for many years, and teaches bird song recognition there each summer. (Andy Morrifew photo) Bring binoculars.

**THE FRIENDS OF SPVP HAS ITS OWN
NEW WEBSITE: SEE PAGE TWO!**

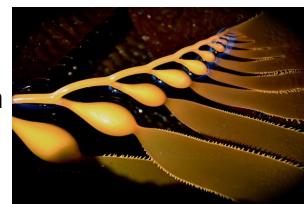
EDWIN HACKING'S COASTAL TREASURES: VALLEY TO SEA

Known for his expressive nature photography, follow **Edwin Hacking** as he presents a nature based photographic journey through the back trails of San Pedro Valley Park, the beaches of Pacifica and the coastside of our neighboring towns. Edwin finds beauty in the simple everyday images we all take for granted. This **March 19th program starts at 5pm.**



There will be time for Q&A as Edwin shares his photographic tips on using a point & shoot & DSLR camera. As a professional photographer, who has a B.A degree in Filmmaking and an M.A in Educ.Tech. from SFSU, you can be especially certain he will be worth learning from.

"My goal is to have my photographs evoke emotion through the strong images that I see. I look at a scene and make it my own, through my minds-eye. I hope this feeling of wonder & joyful challenge is in some way reflected in my photography, & that my attempt to fill the frame with light, balance, harmony & human interest is pleasing to the viewer's eye."



ON THE TRAIL

Bing Huey searches SPVP with an aesthetic and astute scientific eye; in doing so he found a prolific "swarm" of



fetid adder's tongue plants at the .25 mile mark on the west Hazelnut Trail on Feb. 6th But one in particular caught his attention, the one pictured above with a **Dipteran** (fly relative)



rolling in its pollen. To your left is his snapshot of another **slinkpod**, showing its green ovary, sagging styles and stigma and grey anthers, and behold: Another Dipteran! (Continued on p 4)

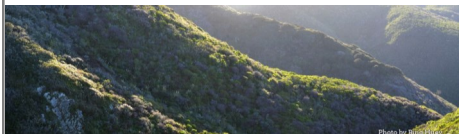
DRAIN DIPS DUG by OUR TRAIL CREW JUST IN TIME!



Drain dips on the lower portion of the Montara Mtn. Trail got some TLC during our February 13th Trail Day. **Lucia Riedemann, Vivianne Hiriart, Istvan Puski**, my brother **Erik** & I took a few shovels, rakes and McLeods and made our way up from the trailhead near the gate house to the canyon just past the eucalyptus forest cleaning out several drain dips and digging a few new ones along the way. While it was unusually sunny and warm that day & perhaps seemed a bit odd doing rainy season chores, later in the following week we got some good rain—perfect timing after all! [1.18 in rain one day] (Top: trail crew & freshly dug dip in front-J. Piro photo)

WEB SITE FOR FRIENDS OF SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK

The Friends of San Pedro Valley Park has launched its website: <http://friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org> thanks to the determination of **Bing Huey** in getting a grant from the S.M. Co. Parks Founda-



tion, not to mention the work & contribu-

tions of **Bing, Sharron Walker, & Jim Steele**. We have now expanded our capacity for communicating: Upcoming programs will be posted on our Events Page. There's a News section & an Our Species Page listing many Park animals & plants. Trails page leads you to your "perfect" hike. Habitat Pages interpret the SPVP natural features. (**B. Huey** photo above)

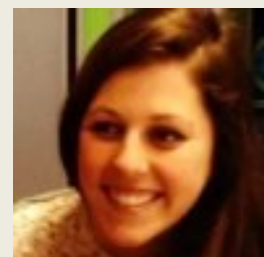
We also invite contributions of your park photos for our website & Visitor Center's bulletin boards. (credited to you) Electronic images can be sent via our contact email & printed photographs can be dropped off at the Visitor Center on weekends from 10am to 4pm. Email us at: contact-us@friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org

NEWS BRIEFS—THE RANGERS

On Feb. 23 the board of "the Friends" met with our personable and dynamic new coastal area supervisor, **Matt DelCarlo**, a ranger IV, of course, who is now the head ranger for our park, having his main office in our Visitor Center. He is also in charge of the Fitzgerald Marine Preserve, Devil's Slide, the Quarry, Pillar Pt., the Adobe, etc. Ranger Matt plans to expedite the redesign of our Visitor Center, so that the Measure A funds get spent on time. One other surprise to come!



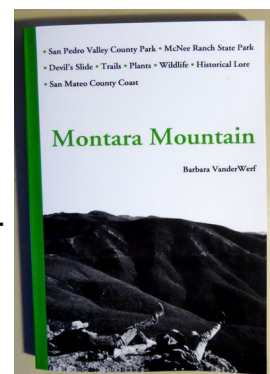
Darrick Emil, (photo above) who was at SPVP a few years ago, & **Mark Rogers** will be our two ranger III's. Rangers **Greg Escoto, Miranda Holeyton** (pictured at right), **Shane Rodgers, Steve Cross, & Matt Auda-Capel** will be returning, though some will, like Ranger **Rob Cala**, be spending more and other parks of our district.



Ranger DelCarlo also reminded us that **Ramona Archiga**, our new Resource Manager for the SM County Parks, will be monitoring the protection of endangered species, et al when trails are trimmed, and will work with him on the control of invasive plants in SPVP.

MONTARA MT BOOK BACK IN TRAILSIDE STORE!

Montara Mountain is back in print. **Barbara VanderWerf's** guidebook to the trails, plants and fascinating historical lore of the Montara Mountain area including San Pedro Valley Park, is available only at the SPVP Visitor Center Trailside Store. Originally published in 1995, *Montara Mountain* was reprinted in 2010 with a forward by **Mike Vasey**. As this is still a great reference for hikers, bicyclists & horse-back riders, **Sharron Walker**, store manager of the Friends of SPVP--working with Barbara--facilitated a 3rd printing. Trailside Store hours at the Visitor Center. are Sat & Sun 10am-4pm.- *Note: Book signing event in May!*



A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By **Jim Mackey**

What has been the most abundant bird on earth? According to **James Boyce**, in his article, "Rethinking Extinction" (Harpers Magazine, Nov.



2015), it was the Passenger Pigeon. (John J. Audubon photo) This species bred in the deciduous forest of the eastern United States and wintered in South America. In the early 19th century ornithologist **Alexander Wil-**

son described a migrating flock that passed over the Ohio River. It resembled a vast river in the sky, about 10 miles long and 1 mile wide. (photo from Louisiana Digital Library) He used its density and the time it took to pass over to estimate that the flock contained over 2 billion birds! The largest nesting and roosting colony on record occurred in Wisconsin in 1851; it extended for 850 square miles.



Passenger pigeons were destroyed by market hunters, some using captive "stool pigeons" to attract them. The huge mortality rate greatly exceeded the birth rate, which was only one egg per female per year (see Alcorn, G.D., 1991. "Birds and Their Young"—in our Volunteers' library in the Visitor Center). The last passenger pigeon, Martha, died in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo, but perhaps not in vain, because it may have spurred a budding conservation movement. The Audubon Society had been formed to save egrets, in Florida, from being exploited for plumes for ladies' hats, and in 1918 the Migratory Bird Treaty banned the hunting and sale of most birds.

This change in attitude favoring wildlife conservation came in time to protect a western relative of the passenger pigeon: the Band-tailed Pigeon (photo commons Wikimedia.org). Both species prefer similar ecological niches: woodlands and forests, often with oaks. Band-tails are fairly common, but erratic in our Park (Jim heard



"the persistent cooing" of one by the "Trout Farm" on Feb. 26th!] In 2012, **George Church**, a pioneer of genetic sequencing, hosted a meeting at Harvard Medical School that began planning the resurrection of passenger pigeons! Genetic material from museum specimens would be combined with that from band-tailed pigeons. Skeptics worry that there is no longer a suitable habitat for passenger pigeons.

If you are in or around our Park some day and you think that you hear the hoots of an owl, it probably won't be a passenger pigeon, but some other pigeon or dove, perhaps a mourning dove. This species is opportunistic: nesting in broadleaf trees or conifers or even on the ground—in all 48 contiguous States! So join me in advocating the replacement of the bald eagle with the mourning dove as our national bird. However watch the possible impact on mourning doves of a recent local arrival: the Eurasian-collared dove. (Carlos Escamilla photo of Eurasian Collared Dove).



Poor Jim's Almanac: Hooray for Cape oxalis! (alias sour grass or Bermuda buttercup) Its splashes of yellow on sunny days in February showed that Spring had arrived! (internet photo)

[I encourage Dr. Mackey to pick endless bouquets of oxalis from my front yard for his wife, Joyce.]

FACTOID

A lady bug's bright red and black coloring serves to warn predators of its poisonous blood, which it excretes through its joints when threatened in a process called "reflex bleeding"; redder ladybirds are more poisonous than their paler peers & this variation is directly linked to diet in early life, with better-fed ladybird beetles being more visible & more deadly. (Bay Nature, Jan, Mar.'16, article by **Nathaniel D. Thornton**)



CAN YOU HELP with a MAY 7 BBQ?

We need people like **Jennifer Alpaugh**, who decorated, led & also got **Rob Hughes'** fine flute music for the Hol. party. Leader **Carol Martinez & Skeeter** will return to help, & **Sharron Walker & your editor** will also. Call: 355-7466, **Carolyn Pankow**, to volunteer.

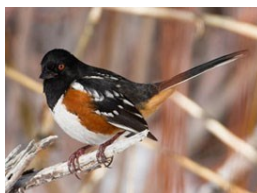
ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Can you see this dome of our **dusky-footed woodrat's** house? **Ron Wilson** captured one on "film", camouflaged by the sticks in front; hurry and find some before everything leafs out! Jan. 14th sighting.



Here is just one of the **mushrooms**, probably *Amanita pantherina*, that **Michael Kimbell** spotted in SPVP in early Feb. Speaking of spotted.....

Ray Trabucco spotted a **Spotted Towhee** in back of the South Walnut restroom on January 15th. (Photo is from the U. of Cornell website), whereas **Barbara Kempster** heard a short chirp first & then sighted the same species among the many branches of a small bush at the 2nd turn in the Hazelnut Trail.



Then **Barbara** went to her old haunt, the huge "oak tree that will not die", and saw a raptor who flew closely & quietly away. She ran home & "keyed it out" to a juvenile **Cooper's Hawk**. The time was 11:15 am on Jan. 20.



Jan. 24-: "I just saw **black funnel mushroom**" on the W. Hazelnut!"—there was excitement in **Ray Trabucco's**

voice as he reached us at the Trout Farm picnic table. (Online photo of this odd fungus)



Jim Mackey's Jan. 26 bonanza : "I saw several **Coast trilliums** on the Plaskon - they had all turned to red. And there were a few white **giant trilliums** and a few small **mission bell lilies** blooming at the edge of the Hazelnut below the iris meadow. I left the Park across the grass-land terrace and saw a few **star lilies** (Mike Vasey photo) in bloom."

**MARCH—APRIL 2016 CALENDAR****MARCH BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, March 9.....7pm

MARCH TRAIL DAY

Saturday, March 12.....9am

MARCH HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, March 19.....9am

EDWIN HACKING'S SCENES & WILDLIFE OF PACIFICA

Saturday, March 19.....5pm

APRIL TRAIL DAY

Saturday, April 9.....9am

WILDLIFE ASSOCIATES' CREEPY CRITTERS FOR KIDS

Tuesday, April 12.....1pm

APRIL BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, April 13.....7pm

JIM STEELE'S APRIL BIRD SONG WALK

Saturday, April 16.....8am

APRIL HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, April 16.....9am

MAUREEN SULLIVAN'S CALIFORNIA RODENTS

Saturday, April 23.....6pm

For all events, except the board mtg., meet at the V.C.

And back to Bing. On Jan. 24, **Bing** found his first slink pod of the year way up the Montara Mt. Trail, past its junction with the Brooks Creek Trail. Mr. Huey photographed this little beauty—at right. **Jim Mackey** saw 2 clumps of these bug attractors at the head of the Hazelnut trail on Feb. 26.

**HABITAT RESTORATION DAY NEEDS YOU!**

On the usual 3rd Sat. of Feb., **Istvan Puski** dug and pulled **many cotoneasters, eucs, etc.** from the hill above the entry road. Join him Mar. 19!



THANK YOU, SAN MATEO COUNTY PARKS FOUNDATION FOR: OUR WEB SITE, NEW COMPUTER & "CREEPY CRITTERS PROGRAM" AND THANK YOU TO JULIA BOTT FOR MANY YEARS OF LEADERSHIP.

The Leaders of "the Friends of SPVP": President: **Jim Steele**. Vice President & Editor of this newsletter: **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary: **Shirley Drye**; Interim Treasurer: **Bing Huey**; Visitor Center Desk and Staffing: **Mila Stroganoff**; Habitat Restoration leader: **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader: **Joseph Piro**; Membership: **Jim Steele**; Programs: **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store Manager: **Sharron Walker**; Mobile Display Board: **Katie Antista**. Member at large: **Jim Mackey**. *Letters to the editor at: carolynjunepankow@yahoo.com*