

Please know that you are welcome to try our beautiful Website! You can “walk” our trails with Bevan Jones, Bing Huey, Jim Steele and Sharron Walker, & There is Much more! Try it today! It’s at: friendsosanpedrovalleypark.org

RYAN BERGER SEA MAMMALS OF THE FARALLONE



On August 26 at 6pm, **Ryan Berger** will be at our museum room at SPVP to talk to us about one of his most critical projects as Point Blue’s head biologist on the Farallone Islands: rescuing entangled whales, but also about his work on the response to environmental variation and climate change of the island’s marine pinnipeds: seals and seal lions.

Ryan had an unlikely pathway into the harshly competitive word of marine biology: as a youth “the only real wildlife that was abundant were the cattle that escaped from the pasture a few miles away from my house in Central Illinois”. But sea life became something he couldn’t resist.



Then after getting a B.S. from the U. of Illinois, he followed his passion, completing a thesis on seasonal **Manatee** behavior and distribution in Florida, garnering

an M.S. from Georgia Southern U. He then began working for the state of Florida as the lead marine mammal biologist for their Jacksonville field lab. There he polished his skills in understanding marine mammal behavior, field necropsy & the ins and outs of running an effective field lab, preparing him for the job offer on the Farallones Islands, a job demanding all his expertise, as you will see.



Marc Moritsch

WIDENING AND SCULPTING BROOKS CREEK TRAIL

We had a good crew, pleasant weather & good work for our June 10th 2017 Trail Day -- Ranger **Greg Escoto, Istvan Puski, Tommy Hart**, my brother **Erik** & I went up the Brooks Creek



Trail to do some bench-cutting of the inside slope to help widen the trail a bit. We tackled 3 spots -- a stretch where the **manzanita** starts & then 2 in the **eucalyptus** forest -- a section just above a sharp bend in the trail as you head uphill & another just above the bench/fork in the trail. Happy trails!

Joseph Piro (photo by J. Piro)

ELKHORN SLOUGH’S RON & ROB-- SEA OTTERS CLOSE UP

Ron Eby & Robert Scoles

are coming to our Visitor Center on July 15, 6pm, to share with you some of their 1000’s of hours ob-



servicing, documenting and photographing the **sea otter**. These two dedicated citizen scientists amazed researchers when they proved that the Slough otters often come on shore at night to sleep.



Ron, a retired naval commander, is a co-author of the study showing that the rebounding otter population resulted in the come-back of the **eelgrass** that offers a protected nursery for **herring, crabs**, etc. But it’s the

eating of tons of crabs by the otter that has brought back the eelgrass; Ron & Robert will tell you about this complex chain of feeding that defends the wildlife against the over-fertilization of the waters by agriculture.

This pair began their productive collaboration when at a meeting of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary volunteers, former law enforcement officer, Robert, asked if anyone would go kayaking with him at 2 am to check out some unusual sea otter behavior. Ron raised his hand; they read every research paper they could find on the furry fellas, & kayaked thru the cold with keen eyes for years!

ON THE TRAIL

Ray Trabucco found a “swarm” of reptiles scampering and slithering along the warmth of the upper Brook’s Creek Trail mid-afternoon on a beautiful May 3: many juvenile **fence lizards**, adults too. He also saw 2



young, sleek yellow-striped **garter snakes**. (San Jose Mercury News photo of fence lizards) (Gary Nafis photo of coastal garter snake)

Monarch Butterflies came in twos, also in the mid pm, but on May 1, flying at leisure between the North & South Walnut picnic areas. Observer: Ray Trabucco (geogiapeach photo)



On May 7, Bing Huey was on the Valley View Trail and photographed some lupines (pg. 7) that he believes are the varicolored lupines, **Lupinus variicolor**, family Fabaceae—peas. Some were somewhat white with light hints of blue or yellow, and others were a deep rich blue as in this internet photo. (On the Trail continued on page 4)



VALLEY VIEW SENIOR HIKE IN THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY

Destination: first east Valley View Trail bench, and always a pleasure to hike with an alert, observant, and knowledgeable, **Katie Antista**. First stop was for Kate to show me some hidden, peek-through-the-bushes, perfectly formed, enchanting **red columbines** (*Aquilegia Formosa*, family Ranunculaceae) by the Weiler Ranch Rd just past this east entrance.



www.nwplants.com photo

Then I, an out-of-shape Senior, stumbled slowly up the trail, following Katie, on the way seeing **Franciscan Indian paintbrush** —not too shabby even compared to the red ranunculus—displaying its beauty in healthy scarlet blooms. Bunches of royal blue **lupine** (*Lupinus varicolor*) were scattered here and there, but Katie



inaturalist.org

pointed out the largest bush of these radiant pea relatives I'd ever seen in the Park in the brush below the trail, which I believe I would have missed while struggling for air. A quick movement on the trail, and Katie alerted me to a "fat" fence lizard



Rictor Norton & David Allen

going into a large hole on the side rise of the trail—whoops, senior reaction time: I missed her. Then an unanticipated regular: a special view of a large **Ceanothus thrysiflorus** bush, or **Calif wild lilac**, in full bloom several yards down the hill.



baynatives.com



Watershed Nursery

Once at our destination, we both found some nascent **Dudleya farinosa** succulents growing in the rocky overhang; unlike the photo ours were not in bloom yet. We couldn't find the Valley View **coffee fern**, *Pellaea andromedifolia*, that I thought used to grow on that ledge/cliff, a little beauty and not all that common in the Park. Those of svelte body shape and younger years, like Katie, please report



Coffee fern



Sharron L. Walker

any sighting of this unusual fern farther up the trail. Stalwart **sticky monkeys** stood out here & there, amidst a thriving, well-watered "chaparral" all around us, almost like the **Sharron Walker** photo of Valley View Trail from our website.*

(see bottom of article—next column)

Finally, the return, all too soon, but waiting below at the side of the Weiler Ranch Road were 2 rather serene **wild turkeys**, who seemed unflustered even though they had a group of *Homo sapiens* on either side of them. The ladies walked non-chalantly into the **cy-**



Lillian Stokes

press tree copse, picking at the ground on the way, quietly unmolested. A black bug at my feet! but Katie seemed unimpressed by my mention of the half inch long black carabid or tenebrionid **beetle** on the road. Perhaps the gobblers felt differently, however, having already fed on some of those crunchy but juicy high-protein snacks.



* friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org. I refer you to **Jim Steele's** excellent trail description as well as a larger Sharron L. Walker photo. Click Trails & then Valley View.



Joseph Piro

WHACKIN' WEEDS TO SMITHERINES

By **Joseph Piro**

Unlike the surprise rain, hail and thunder on last month's Trail Day, we had nice sunny and slightly breezy conditions for our May 13th Trail Day. **Istvan Puski, Keith**, newcomer **Tommy**, my brother **Erik** & I worked with Ranger **Matthew Tolmasoff** around the 1 mile marker up on the Montara Mtn. Trail. Matthew and I worked on a several hundred-ft stretch along the canyon, just outside the eucalyptus forest -- he ran the weedwhacker (sending overgrown grass, dandelions and whatnot flying) while I kept an eye out for passing hikers and raked the trail clean again. The others worked a bit further up the trail, trimming brush, etc. It was certainly a good and productive morning! [A salute to Joseph & the other trail heroes; what a job! And don't we know it, what with the huge bumper crop of vigorous weeds we've been pruning & pulling from our yards lately!]

BIRD SONGS IN THE PARK and *ANGRY BIRDS!*

By Bevan Jones



Sharron Walker

Once again **Jim Steele** led a great 8AM bird song walk on Sat May 13—the first of two in the month of May. The outing was well attended and that morning we had the good fortune of both hearing and seeing 18 bird species. Our park has a great variety of feathered vocalists – some are year-round residents, while others simply pass through on their seasonal migrations.

Our walk began out along Trout Farm Trail and progressed back through the parking lots, continuing to the Walnut Groove Picnic Area and part way out Weiler Ranch Rd. Just



Sharron Walker

a few of our “hear and see” encounters included the **Downy Woodpecker, California Quail, Cedar Waxwing, Spotted Towhee, Wrentit, and Black-headed Grosbeak.** We were even visited by a mom & an immature **Dark-eyed Junco.** (below, right) (See large photos on p. 6)

As we walked along Trout Farm Trail, Jim suddenly said that he could hear “some **angry robins**” over in the **eucalyptus** grove... and two seconds later a **jay** came flying out with a **robin’s egg in its beak**—a distraught parent in hot pursuit. Recognizing the robin’s distress calls led to our witnessing an event which we otherwise might easily have missed.



Sharron Walker

Learning to listen for patterns of sounds is the technique that Jim explained as we walked. Jim’s years of experience in the field have helped him acquire a keen ability to hear and process the songs of a great variety of birds. Whereas some calls are quite simple in structure, others are amazingly complex. Jim’s instruction helps break the content into its component sound types and tonal elements. This in turn assists in the identification of just who the songster might be.

BACK IN TIME: SPVP IN 1990 WITH BESS NERICCHIO:

On my May Visitor Center work day, a small, pleasant-faced elderly woman with a cane came smiling up to the counter with her larger and younger friend. In the course of our conversation, I realized that she was the “famous” **Bess Nericchio**, a “trail regular” as **Jim Mackey** had described her, a lady **Katie Antistia** used to tell me would often be birding on the trail, and one who was eager to share her knowledge of these feathered songsters of our Park. Her birding friend, **Kari Olila**, who stayed a bit longer, promised me that she would see if Bess would share with us some of her extensive field notes on SPVP. The following is an excerpt from this notebook:

June 29, 1998 San Pedro Valley Park 11 am

I was walking toward the Ranch Trail and just passing the parking area when a pair of adult **California quail** started calling to their brood of tiny young to cross and follow them over the pavement and up over the curb (a height of perhaps 5 inches). The half dozen or so chicks hurried as fast as they could, one tumbling over on his back as he ran, but finding the curb daunting, they scurried instead parallel to the curb, until, at the urging of the adults they successfully jumped the curb one by one to land safely on the sidewalk joining the adults -- except for one little one, who failed several times to jump high enough to clear the height of the curb and kept running farther and farther away from the group. He had one chance to climb onto a trailing shrub branch that had grown down to the pavement but he didn't act quickly enough. A **Scrub Jay** swooped down so fast to pick him up with his beak and fly off that it stunned me.



Pinterest

(Samsara photo of Scrub Jay)

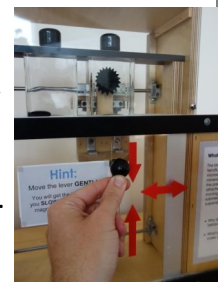


INTERACTIVE DISPLAY IN OUR V.C. MUSEUM

Have you seen those new interactive, educational “toys” in the Visitor's Center? They're so cool! In particular I liked the magnetic fluid ones -- that table that lets you make patterns and the other one with little bottles that make star patterns in them. And the one with the springs made some funky echo-y sounds. *Joseph Piro*



Joseph Piro



Joseph Piro

ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Bing also saw more of the white variant **blue dicks**, *Dichelostemma capitatum* in the family Liliaceae. (internet photo)

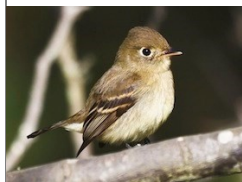


On May 19, **Ray Trabucco** tracked a **female turkey** walking in from the Weiler Handicapped Trail to the horse-shoe pits. She took dirt baths there and at the North Walnut Picnic Area. When he said that she was not afraid of him, I asked why. Ray made a huge claw with his hand, indicating that its claws are formidable weapons.

Aha! On May 30 at 2:20pm, **Laurie Nikitas** photographed this stylishly fashioned **female turkey**, decidedly limping on the left foot, going for a stroll by the horseshoe pits. Then Laurie saw her go into the woods by the creek.



Ray Trabucco photographed a **Pacific Slope Flycatcher's** nest containing 2 juveniles during a very quiet time in the Park—near the Trout Farm Trail. (to the left is a male in this **Bob Gunderson** photo.)



On June 13, **Laurie Nikitas** said: "Came upon Walnut Grove picnic area around 11:00 am, to see a **grey fox** trotting around the place. A woman at one of the tables said it had been there for a while. It was quite at ease. Climbed a tree near the creek, then came down to trot around some more; very calm, despite the humans watching." (Pinterest photo)



Ladybug "nest" eruption by Trout Farm and up Brooks Creek Trail on June 23. Thousands were flying all over, including all the way to the bathrooms! Reported by **Ray Trabucco**. (See ladybug Factoid.) In a chance meeting at the post office, Ray had just told me that things had "calmed down" in the Park, and in prophetic words, I'd said: "Well we still have the insects", having just seen a fancy-flying **pale swallowtail** by the VC. Ray had then said, "also **anglewings & mourning cloaks**".



naturelinemapping

JULY/AUGUST 2017 CALENDAR

JULY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, July 8.....9am

JULY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, July 15.....9am

RON EBY'S SEA OTTERS OF ELKHORN SLOUGH

Saturday, July 15.....6pm

FRIENDS OF SPVP JULY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, July 18.....7pm

AUGUST TRAIL DAY

Saturday, August 12.....9am

FRIENDS OF SPVP AUGUST BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, August 15.....7pm

AUGUST HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, August 19.....9am

RYAN BERGER: MARINE MAMMALS OF THE FARALLONES

Saturday, August 26.....6pm

For all events except board mtgs, meet at Visitor Center

FACTOID

Who more appropriate than Japanese scientists to find that the **ladybird beetle** folds its clear wings under the hard red elytra with 5 steps, in an origami-like process when landing. The stiff veins form template lines for the folding, which only takes about 2 seconds in all. To decipher this ingenious method the scientists constructed a hard, clear outer wing on one side of the beetles.



ScienceNews: June 13, 2017

PRICKLY PULLING ON HILL

On May 20th habitat restoration day, **Istvan Puski** led a group wearing, I would suppose, very thick gloves: Ranger **Matthew Tolmasoff**, **Jacob Straub**, and **Tommy Hart**. All 4 men worked on the hill above and just past the Park entry of Weiler Ranch Rd. Istvan said that they pulled "tons" of alien thistles. Later on, Istvan recuperated enough to work on pulling the masses of grasses invading our native sun garden. He couldn't miss **Jim Steele's** program on the birds of SPVP at 6pm that eve, so in he came, even helping with our setup. (photo of Istvan by Joseph Piro)



The Leaders of "the Friends of SPVP": President: **Jim Steele**; Vice President & Editor of this newsletter: **Carolyn Pankow**; Interim Secretary: **Judy Bacon**; 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**; Membership miscellany, mobile display board: **Katie Antista**. *Letters to the editor: pankownca@gmail.com All uncredited articles are from your editor.*

Featuring late spring insects of SPVP in 2017

Photos by Bing Huey



Genus *Diacchus*—**Bronze beetle** feeding on a **cobweb thistle** on Montara Mt. Family Chrysomelidae, leaf beetles—shot in very late May by **Bing Huey**.



unidentified **beetle larva** on what remains of a willow leaf after feeding (Plaskon). Shot in early June by **Bing Huey**.



Green lacewing (family Neuroptera or “nerve wind” feeding on pollen of cow parsnip on Montara Mt. very late May—shot by **Bing Huey**.

Bing Huey Spring Flower Photos



#1



#2



#3

Mid Spring Flowers of SPVP

#1: Fat false Solomon's seal—*Maiathemum racemosum*

#2: Lupine—*Lupinus varicolor*

#3: Slim false Solomon's seal—*Maianthemum stellatum*.

#4: Fringe cups—*Tellima grandiflora*



#4

Sharron Walker's Birds of SPVP in May



Sharron L. Walker

Downy Woodpecker



Sharron L. Walker

Female Dark-eyed Junco with youngster