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Habitat, Ecology, and Life Cycles of Fungi: "What is a Mushroom, Anyway?"

By Mila Stroganoff

J.R. Blair will present the amazing world of fungi: Ecology, Habitats, and Life Cycles of **Fungi** on Sat Dec. 12 at 4pm, as a Webinar pgm. (instructions on p.5) He will discuss the ways in which members of that ubiquitous and fundamental kingdom proliferate, thrive and participate in the workings of the planet and its denizens. J.R. will introduce you to the role, positive & negative, of fungi in the lives of plants, indeed of all life on Earth.

J.R. Blair received his B.A. degree at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington and obtained his Master's degree at SFSU in 1999, studying with the accomplished mycologist, Dr. Dennis Desjardin. His thesis was Fungi Associated with Arctostaphylos in No. Cal. Since that time he has been an active member of the Mycological Society of S.F. He served a two-year term as president & was their Fungus Fair chairperson for 5 years. He has taught mushroom I.D. workshops for mycological societies and outdoor education programs for many years. Currently he is a lecturer of Biol. at SFSU & is the director of its Sierra Nev. Field Campus. (boletus mushroom photo by Mila S)



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MEMORIES of CHRISTINE THATCHER

She kept our Visitor Center open on almost every holiday, in large part due to her strong commitment to San Pedro Park; I remember dropping by the Center desk on an all too quiet New Years day, I believe it was, and being greeted by a warm and lovely smile

and good will by an outgoing and friendly **Christine Thatcher.**



(at left-Christine chatting with Huldah Williams at Friends bbq.)

(continued, page 4)

NOV: DEEP FOREST OWLS of PACIFIC NORTHWEST: A CONSERVATION DILEMMA

By Mila Stroganoff

On Saturday, November 14, at 4pm, Dr. Jack Dumbacher will present a Zoom Webinar program to the "Friends of SPVP". (instructions on p. 5)



In the last 50 to 100 years, the **Eastern Barred Owl** has made its way to the western USA. Presumably helped by human landscape alteration, they now inhabit all of the range of the endangered **Northern Spotted Owl** & much of that of the **California Spotted Owl**. In recent years, evidence is mounting to suggest that Barred Owls have become a primary threat to Spotted Owls – they are fierce competitors, aggressive territory holders, faster reproducers, and have even been anecdotally reported to kill Spotted Owls. And they are spreading faster than ever. In this talk, **Dumbacher** will discuss the natural history and conservation concerns for both species, and discuss research & potential actions that are being considered by different management agencies.



Jack Dumbacher is curator of **Birds & Mammals** at the Cal Academy of Sciences and professor of Biology at San Francisco State University. He has been working on California Barred Owls since 2006. In addition, Dumbacher studies the genetics and relationships of birds from Asia, New Guinea, and Galapagos, and also studies some of the world's only poisonous birds, the **Pitohuis** and **Ifrita** of New Guinea.

ON THE TRAIL

Laurie Nikitas features a **gopher snake** showing off its beauty & stretching exercise expertise— just east of the bridge to Walnut Grove at 2pm, on the 1st day of fall. It was calm & slow, then slithered into the grass. (detail at right)



(continued on pg. 4)

HERE KITTY, KITTY!

By Judy Bacon

On August 15, the Friends presented “**Living With Mountain Lions**”. Bay Area Puma Project and Felidae Conservation Fund leader and Biologist **Zara McDonald**, led an extremely popular and timely webinar program for a concerned public on Bay Area **pumas**.

The mountain lion has many names: cougar, catamount and puma to name a few. They can be 6-9 feet long including a long tail. They have padded paws, sheathed and retractable claws, and fore-paws larger than hind paws. Pumas prey on anything from **mice** to **moose**. Their favorite prey in the Bay Area is **deer**. (photo-**Steven Gotz**)



They are extremely elusive creatures, who need a very large territory, which males defend from challengers. Male lion cubs need to find their own domain and therein lies the problem. In order for them to thrive they need connected habitat with adequate prey, cover, and water sources. Males need from 80 to 400 sq. miles of territory, depending on their habitat (desert or woodland, etc.) with females needing maybe half that area.

Before 1900, mountain lions were found all over North and South America. With the immigration of Europeans, who feared & detested them, they were killed until their habitat was severely reduced. They were bounty hunted & a game mammal until 1990, when Prop 117 made them a Specially Protected Mammal in Calif.

Why are there so many being seen lately? Habitat encroachment. These beautiful animals cannot get from one area to another to stake out their own territories. We had one lion spotted in S.F. that was later killed on Highway One, probably looking for territory. We have more wildlife cameras & sensors that take pictures of animals who have always been here. Pacifica is on the edge of mountain lion habitat, so there will be lions coming through areas that are now homes to people.

The average puma litter is 1 to 4 cubs, who stay with the mother for 1 ½ to 2 yrs. 50% of young do not make it to



adulthood. Road kills, poisonings, depredation kills & poaching take a toll on the numbers. (credit for **cubs** photo: **nbclosangeles.com**)

Why bother?

They are a keystone species. They are integral to their ecosystem and habitat. If they are gone there are no species to replace them as predators of large herbivores. They keep these prey in check. They control **tick**-borne illnesses and are a marker for how healthy the ecosystem is.

There is so much more! The important things to note are pumas do not prefer to eat people. There are more than enough deer in Pacifica to keep them fed. But, they are opportunists and will take easier prey.

To be on the safe side:

- *Do not feed or attract deer.
- *Do bring pets and pet food inside at night.
- *Do trim vegetation surrounding your house.
- *Install motion lights. (debatable)

Pumas are very secretive animals, however on the off chance you come across one:

- *Maintain eye contact
- *Give it a wide berth so it does not feel defensive.
- ***NEVER** turn your back on a lion or run – you don’t want to look like prey. Most predators will think about chasing something that is running.
- *If they do run away, make yourself seem as big as possible.
- *Pick up children.
- *Throw rocks, sticks, anything to scare them away.
- *Do not walk alone at night where lions have been seen.
- *If, in the unlikely event you are attacked, fight back!

Video is on the Friends Website. (see top of page 1)

CLEARING PATHS, INTRUDERS

By Joseph Piro

Once again, donning masks and practicing social distancing, **Istvan Puski** and I did a little work for an unofficial October 10, 2020 Trail Day. Istvan tackled a large **cotoneaster** by the restroom building by the Trout Farm picnic area while I raked the paths through the sun garden and out to the bench by the back gate of the Visitor's Center.

Then we both walked up the Trout Farm Trail up to the old foundation where we cut back some overgrown vegetation along the way. (Joseph Piro photo)



THE SOCIAL NATURE OF QUAIL—IT'S SEASONAL

By Jim Mackey



I encountered this delightful family of 6 **California Quail** on July 10. I had been sitting on a bench by the turn-around at the east end of Weiler Rd. After

about 15 minutes, something moved behind the "Do not feed the wildlife" sign. It was a male Calif. quail. After a while, he moved out onto the road, with 5 smaller quail behind him. They paraded down the road, with me following—at a distance. They went into the first meadow on the right. Then the male ran ahead and back and forth along the far edge of the meadow. He then called: "Chi-ca-go!" (This is an all-clear, come-ahead call.) So they re-united.

Later, I examined my photo of the 6 birds, and I tentatively concluded that the 2 smallest ones (next to the male) were juveniles (but too large to be called chicks), while the 3 larger ones were adult females! Also on July 10: **Judy Bacon's** husband, **Dave**, saw 4 adults and 7 "chicks" at the west half of Weiler Road. On June 25, **Judy** said that she was driving out of the Park when she saw: "dad, mom and some baby quail." It was on June 19 when I saw a male on top of a shrub in an island on our lower parking lot while a female and 8 chicks were foraging on the ground below. And it was June 15, when **Ray Trabucco** saw "5 very tiny quail chicks crossing the eastern Weiler Rd. with their Mom."



Quail are very social - especially in winter. On March 20, I saw a covey of about 20 adults foraging in the newly-mowed grass of the South Walnut Grove picnic area. I also remember working part-time for the Ohio Div. of Wildlife censusing **Bobwhite Quail** (at left) I flushed a covey that had spent the

night under the snow. They exploded out of the snow, leaving a steaming pyramid of feces behind. (Their rear ends had been together in the center of a circle.)

Female Calif. Quail nest on the ground in thick shrubs, where they lay and incubate about 12 eggs, which hatch into precocial chicks. In spite of protection by males, predation by **bobcats, foxes, coyotes, owls, hawks, gopher snakes**, et al, must be very intense. So female quail are apt to be quickly liberated from motherhood!

CORALS—A DEEPER LOOK

By Bing Huey



The Friends' webinar on September 12, 2020, presented the **deep coral reef** work of **fish** expert **Dr. Luiz Rocha**. The curator of ichthyology at the California Academy of Sciences spoke about his studies of these corals and their ecosystems in tropical locations around the world. Deep corals occur at depths ranging from 200 to 500 feet, where light is substantially reduced from shallower depths. They are referred to as meso-photoc coral ecosystems (MCEs), or the "twilight zone".

His work is important to understanding how large of a role deep coral reefs might have in mitigating the effects of the environmental pressures affecting shallow coral reefs, which have recently been severely affected by rising ocean temperatures, pollution, and overfishing. The base of their food chain is their symbiotic relationship with **algae**. Temperature stress causes the **coral** to expel the algae thereby depriving them of that photosynthetic nutrient source and manifesting as widespread bleaching.

Dr. Rocha's research addresses the question of whether the deep corals might somehow serve as refuge for species affected by damage to the shallow coral reefs. The supposition is that, in some places, there is substantial overlap in species composition of shallow coral and deep coral ecosystem. However, exploration of the deeper reefs by Dr. Rocha and his associates resulted in the discovery of a myriad of new species not found in shallow reefs. In eight locations over 28.5 hours of exploration time, this dictated by the limitations of rebreather technical diving, 153 new species of fish alone were discovered, thereby reducing the measured similarity in species composition between the shallow and deep reefs and the likelihood that the deep reef environment might be habitable for shallow reef species. In addition, species previously found in shallower reefs that were thought to be also deep reef species had really been described from higher latitudes where surface temps. more closely matched the cooler temperatures of deeper tropical waters. *(Cont'd page 4)*

DON'T MESS WITH MOTHER NATURE

Some **butterflies** need cool shady spots for survival on hot sunny days! Plant native trees & shrubs in your yard. (**Small Copper** is one having particularly special needs: photo; inaturalist; info; **U. of Cambridge**)



ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Seen at about 5pm, Sat., Sept 5, by editor—5 hungry



mule deer looking for fresh food under a **Coast live oak tree** (going for **acorns?**) & **conifers** between the church lot & the main entrance road to SPVP, a few feet from Oddstad. (Photo courtesy of **Addison Mohler**, USFS)

Ron Wilson spied this lovely old **Lorquin's Admiral** butterfly on September 19, darting about, mate-hunting at the back of the Weiler Ranch Rd.



Bing Huey went for a surprisingly photogenic **hoverfly** on July 2, on the Hazelnut Tr, scoring this photo. (cropped)

(Dr. Rocha, Coral Reefs & Climate Change, cont'd)

Are MCEs refuges for shallow reef ecosystems? It appears unlikely, since there is now believed to be 87.6 to 99.9% dissimilarity in species compositions between MCEs and shallow reefs. Environmental impacts to the shallow reefs, like rising temps, pollution, & overfishing, affect MCEs almost as much. Plastics, as from fishing equipment make their way to the deeper environments. Even surface weather events such as hurricanes are known to blanket the deep reefs with sand.

Dr. Rocha augmented his presentation with stunning photos of some of the coral reef fishes & diving locations. He also gave an informative discussion on the technicalities & challenges of deep diving. *The webinar has been recorded & is accessible through our website.* (MCE fish picture with permission from Luis Rocha.)

**(Christine Thatcher, continued)**

Many years ago, I enjoyed a hike across the Hazelnut Trail with **Shirley Drye** (her closest friend) and her, where I could see her enthusiasm for the trail and its **flowers** and other surprises on that April Day following a Friends barbeque. We nearly froze on that cold and windy afternoon, but she loved the adventure; Chris was largely a person of the outdoors and its wildness.

Back in about 2005, Christine and Shirley took a trip close to both of their hearts, to the Carrizo Plains, an area of Indian pictographs (bottom), and a spring bloom of **wild-flowers**, (right) but it was the Indian drawings that were dearest to her heart; she was immersed in the culture of American natives.



On at least one of the Sanchez Adobe's Rancho Days, she dressed in an authentic Indian woman's garment. She was a steady volunteer worker at the Adobe for many years, dividing her time between that Indian and historical site and SPVP. The latter benefitted from her management of the Trailside store for many years, and she organized our small group of volunteers for our walk in the Fog Fest Parade for 3 years.

Christine had other interests: women's rights for one, and according to Shirley, she had an amazing collection of paper dolls. She also loved animals and put in many hours of pet-sitting dogs and cats for others.

Her life was not always easy; after the onset of breast cancer, years ago, she had to leave her clerical job at UCSF, & her home in Vallemar. She ended her days in So. California with the support of a dear niece. I imagine that she relied on her faith in certain Indian religious beliefs to weather the storm of dying or of passage. (psychedelic vision pictograph by **Carrizo natives** at rt.)



The Leaders of "the Friends of SPVP": President: **Judy Bacon**; Vice President: **Mark Golembiewski**; Secretary: **Enid Ansgarius**; Treasurer: **Susan Kern**; Visitor Center Shift Coordinator: **Carl Schwab**; Habitat Restoration Leader: **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader: **Joseph Piro**; Membership Director: **Adrian Stroganoff**; Director of Programs: **Mila Stroganoff**; Zoom Webinar Program Coordinators: **Mila & Adrian Stroganoff**; Director of Hospitality: **Judy Bacon**; Directors of Website Management: **Lakshmi Javadekar and Jayesh Kapoor**; Trailside Store Manager: **Melinda Moses**; Newsletter editor: **Carolyn Pankow** (pankowinca@gmail.com); Members-at-large: **Bing Huey, Sharron Walker**. **Volunteer Contributor: Katie Antista** on membership misc.; Program consultant: **Carolyn Pankow**.

Zoom Webinar Instructions

by Adrian Stroganoff

The Friends of SPVP have a limit to how many people can participate in the Webinar, so please send an email to friendsofsanpedrovalley@gmail.com in order to be placed on the list of attendees. **If for any reason you find that you cannot participate, send an email as soon as possible to free up the spot for someone else.** Do not email to join any webinar the day of its taking place. Deadline for signing up is noon on the day before the lecture.

On the day of the lecture, an invitation to join the webinar will be sent approximately 30 minutes prior to the talk in order for everyone to be ready by 4 pm.

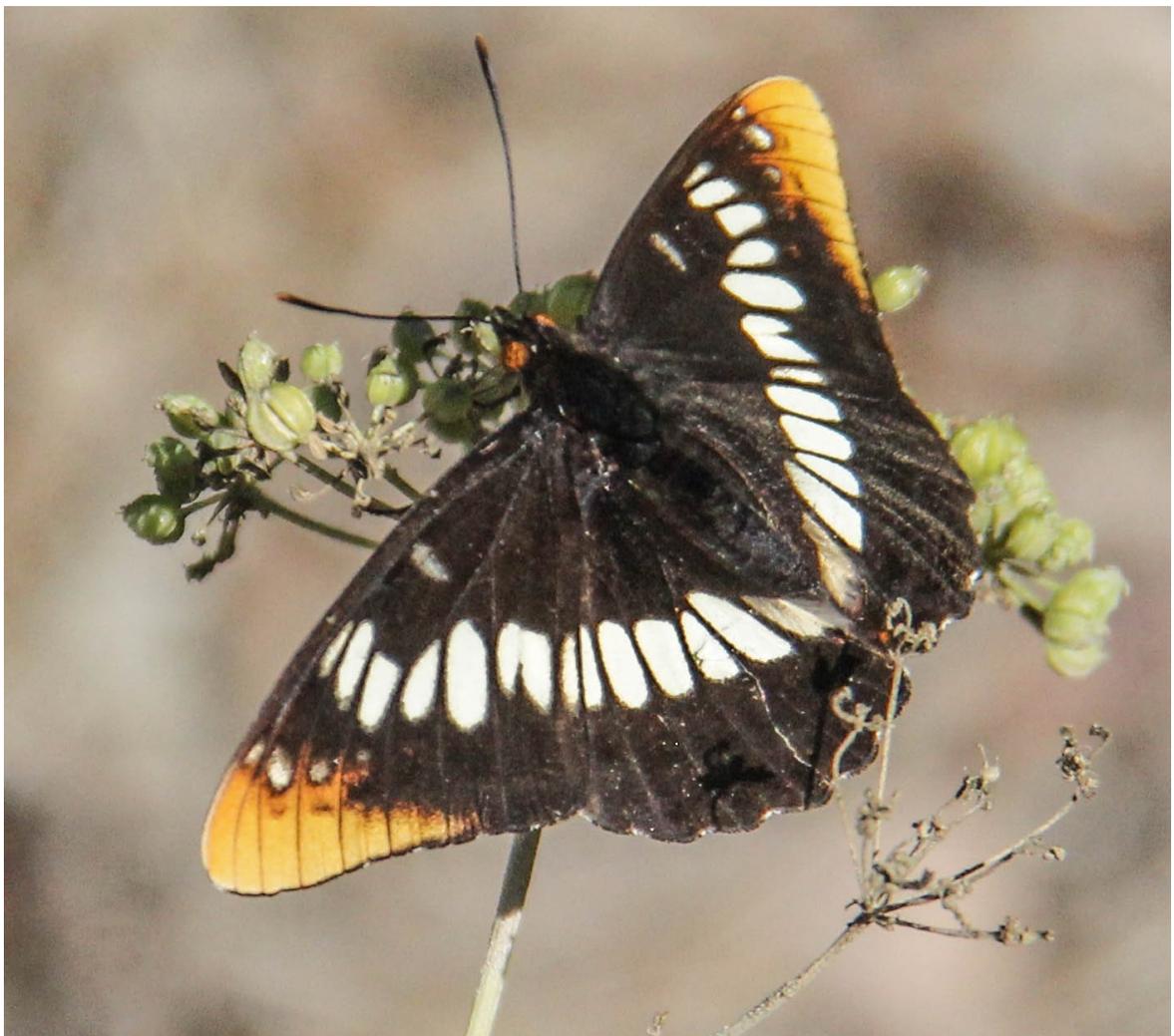
In the email will be a big blue Zoom box. You need to click on it, which takes you to a screen for the Webinar registration. You need to put in the required information, which will get you to the Webinar.

If you wish to just hear the Webinar on a phone call, then open the second email that will be sent to you after you register, using the link from the first email. The email will have the phone number to call. When you call, follow the instructions and put in the Webinar ID and Passcode which are included in the email.

***Also Note*:**

Living with Mountain Lions webinar was attended by 68 people with many who had RSVP'd not showing up. People interested had to be turned away due to the fact that we had reached the maximum capacity and we were holding their places. We DO have a maximum capacity, and the RSVP to the webinars should be done after carefully checking your calendar.

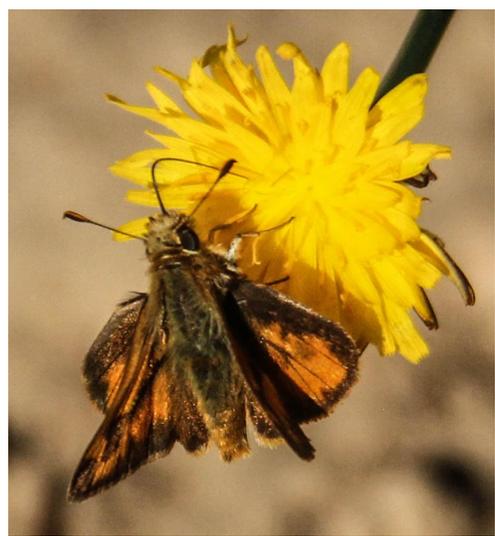
Ron Wilson Loves Lepidopterans



Lorquin's Admiral; September 19, 2020
Darting along the back of the Weiler Trail looking for a mate



A day moth, *Pyrausta orphisalis*;
9/19/20; Valley View Trail;
Dozens higher up



Woodland Skipper, *Ochloides sylvanoides*, on dandelion-like flower;
August 29; Weiler Ranch Rd.



Honeysuckle berries; 10/5; Valleyview

Walking stick, *Carausius morosus*; Hermosa Ave; Find one in SPVP!



Columbian Black-tailed deer buck in SPVP; photographer?



Buck feeding on poison oak, A favorite browsing plant; 10/13; 5:30pm; Weiler Ranch Rd



California aster; September 25;
Montara Mountain Trail



Chinquapin fruit detail; Sept. 25
Montara Mt.
Big challenge for a chipmunk!



Rein orchid; September 2
Valley View Trail



Manzanita apples; Sept. 25;
Montara Mt. Trail



Hoverfly on woolly sunflower;
July 2; Hazelnut Trail



Tarantula wasp on coyote brush;
July 18; Valley View Trail



Chrysomelid beetle on stinging nettle;
August 13; Weiler Ranch Rd.



Yellow jackets on mammal carcass;
September 2; Valley View Trail



Clostercoris, a true bug, order
Hemiptera, in monkey flower;
July 2; Hazelnut Trail



Prince Mushroom?; Aug. 13;
Behind VC

From Nature to Necessity



Sharron Walker's Early Autumn on Weiler Ranch Rd.



Sharron Walker: Columbian Black- Tailed
Deer; Sept 27
Walnut Grove—Bridge near horseshoe



Ron Wilson Voted Early!

Ron Wilson's California Quail family gleaning for seeds by willows on the morning of October 10; Weiler Ranch Rd.



Trip With Sharron Walker (photographer) & Bevan Jones



Towering trees of Humboldt Redwoods State Park; October 5



"Westy" the Camper Van At Van Damme State Park with its favorite passengers; Sept. 30

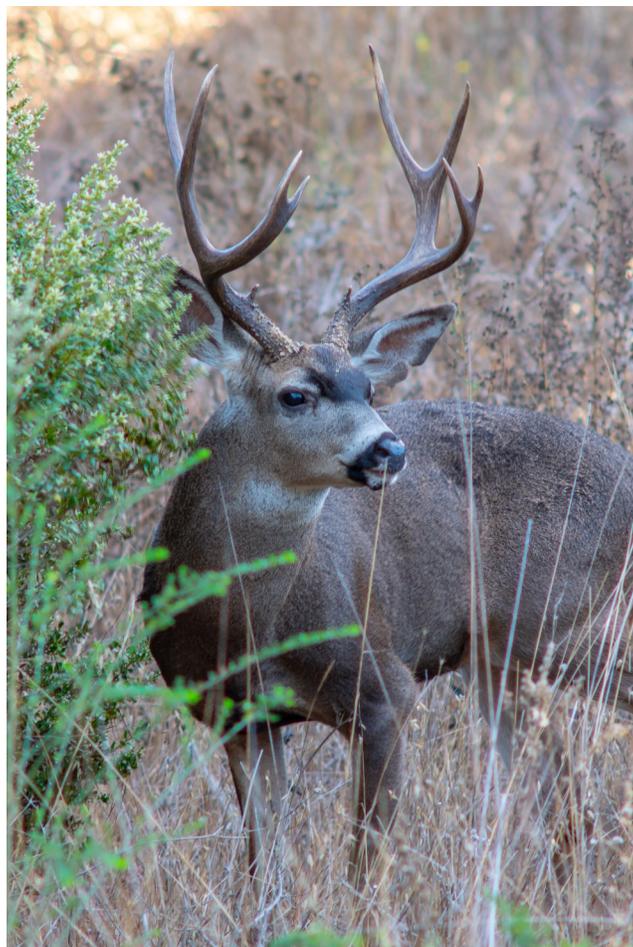


Elk at Stone Lagoon

Just Over Our Hill—San Andreas Trail & The Bay



Female Coyote Brush
Issuing forth fluffy white seeds
Charles Pankow; October 9



Columbian Black-Tailed Deer Buck
Our Subspecies of Mule Deer
Charles Pankow; October 9;
This buck was guarding a doe.



Great White Egret; Charles Pankow: October 16; SF Bay