

Our website: friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org Offers info on new natural history programs, recordings of past programs, info on animals and plants in SPVP, and more!

DEC. WEBINAR*THE RIBBIT of PACIFIC CHORUS FROGS:

THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EAR

Dr. Alejandro Velez Melendez, in a virtual presentation, will bring you a multi-faceted program on this small **amphibian**, formerly quite common in Pacifica, on **Tuesday, December 7th at 7pm**.

A common sound of California's spring nights is the iconic "ribbit, ribbit" of these **chorus frogs**, formerly named "tree frogs". In this talk, Alejandro will first introduce how frogs use sounds to communicate and the importance of communication in their social lives, delving into several research projects on communication of the Pacific chorus frog presently being conducted in his lab.

These projects include (i) how infection by a **fungal parasite** affects communication and mating behavior, (ii) how **human-generated noise** in the San Francisco Bay Area may be affecting frog calls and hearing, and (iii) how differences in the calls across California may be related to the formation of new species.

About the Speaker: Alejandro joined San Francisco State University as an Assistant Professor of Biology in 2017.



He holds a BS in Biology and a MS in Physiology and Behavior from Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota, Colombia. Alejandro obtained his PhD in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior from the University of Minnesota and conducted postdoctoral work on Sensory Ecology at Purdue University and on Evolutionary Neuroscience at Washington University in St. Louis.

In addition to his work on North American frogs, he has studied communication and sensory perception in **songbirds, electric fishes, and tropical poison dart frogs**. Alejandro is also a SCUBA dive instructor and enjoys exploring California's natural wonders.

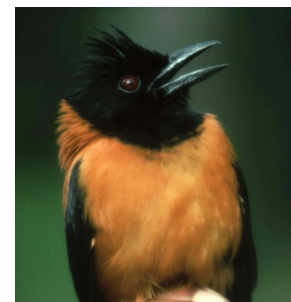
***Webinar instructions: bottom pg. 3 of this newsletter.**

JACK DUMBACHER PRESENTS OUR NOV. WEBINAR* POISONOUS BIRDS OF NEW GUINEA, AN ANOMALY

On **Tuesday, November 9, at 7pm**, in this virtual program, prepare to leave any preconceived notions about the survival strategies of birds behind as Dr. John Dumbacher, presenter of our provocative owl program last year, takes us across the globe into the exotic avian world of the Earth's second largest island.



New Guinea is a tropical island that hosts a variety of amazing **birds**, including some of the world's only poisonous birds, the **Hooded** (photo below, right) and **Variable Pitohuis**. About three decades ago, on an avian study expedition into a still surprisingly unknown world, **Jack Dumbacher** accidentally cut his hand upon releasing an endemic, oriole-like bird, the **Pitohuis**. It was a more than painful experience; the bird carried serious poisons, something the natives certainly knew, as he later confirmed. Jack's enlightenment has led to multiple scientific studies into the toxins, how they work, how the birds might use them, where they get them, and more recently, how the birds resist being poisoned by their own toxins.



Jack Dumbacher photo

Dr. Dumbacher is curator of Birds and Mammals at the California Academy of Sciences, where he has studied the genetics and relationships of birds and mammals in Africa, the Galapagos, China, California, and on one of the Earth's rainiest islands, home of the Pitohuis. He is also a professor in the Biology Department at SFSU.

ON THE TRAIL

Seen at about 3pm: **frightened female turkey** chased for 20 seconds by 4 school age **children** in the parking lot near the Trout Farm Picnic Area on a crowded Saturday, September 4. Suspected parents seemed clueless; turkey lost needed calories. (continued on page 4)



A Brief Autobiography of Carl Schwab

I grew up in Ohio. I think I had a fairly typical childhood, for the Midwest. I have 5 brothers and no sisters. It



goes without saying that life in our house was pretty hectic; but there was always someone to play with and talk to.

From an early age, I knew that I was better at math and science than I was at English and writing. I studied engineering at the University of Michigan. After graduation, I took a job in Oklahoma as an environmental engineer. It was a new field at the time; but it was the start of a 35 year career. It was rewarding to have a job that addressed environmental issues both past and present.

At the time, Oklahoma was the farthest away from home I had ever been. But while I was there, I took a vacation even further west, all the way to the West Coast. To say that trip was an eye opener is an understatement. Everything about the West was new and impressive. I saw mountains that are twice as high as any I had ever seen before. They were so high that they didn't have trees on



Getty Images

the top, just like I had seen in pictures. I saw trees that are 100 times bigger than any tree in Ohio. I saw the Pacific Ocean that stretches all the way to Asia. And I visited Yosemite National Park with its granite walls that soar 3 times higher than the Empire State Bldg. & some of the highest waterfalls in the continental U.S.

That trip planted the seeds of a desire to live in The West, and I soon took a job in the Bay Area as an environmental engineer for the Navy Engineering Command.

Living in the Bay Area is completely different from anyplace I had lived before. There are world class sights, museums, and music. You routinely see people from all parts of the world. In addition, it was vastly easier to visit the ocean, the mountains, and National Parks. Every weekend was like a vacation.

It wasn't long before I tried backpacking. I loved it right out of the gate. There is nothing to compare with camping beside a clear mountain lake far away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. There's the adventure of finding out what's on the other side of a high mountain pass and seeing the panoramic view from a lofty peak. The challenge of carrying everything you need for a week in the wilderness is a satisfying accomplishment. Away from the city lights, the night sky is completely black. You can see so many stars that it's hard to pick out the constellations. Unlike in the city, the Milky Way is clearly visible in all its glory. This was beauty, tranquility, & adventure that I had not experienced in The Midwest.

Backpacking was just the start. Over the years, I have



Backpacking in New Zealand

done many other outdoor adventures like backcountry ski patrolling, snow-camping, rafting, & canoeing to name a few. It would have been much more difficult to participate in these activities living in the Midwest. I have still not tired of spending time in nature.

My interest in the outdoors has also dovetailed nicely with my interest in photography. I always carry some kind of camera on my adventures. It's just one way to capture the memories and create works of art. I have taken many photography classes and workshops to improve my knowledge and skill.

Now that I'm retired, I still get outdoors even though it's harder with all the wild fires and smoke. In addition to that, I've become involved in a number of volunteer organizations in Pacifica. Among these are the Pacifica Friends of the Library, the Rotary Club of Pacifica, the Friends of SPVP, and the Pacifica Spindrift Players. I have found that helping the community is a satisfying occupation and you meet so many good, interesting, and like-minded people.

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!

by Judy Bacon

Off with their pompous heads! was the hue and cry by County Volunteer Coordinator **Stu Smith** and his **Pampas Grass Gang**. For three consecutive Tuesdays, Pampas Grass People: **Bing, Mar-yann, Carl, Mark & Istvan** marched up the Valley View Trail & mercilessly cut off the seed heads of



Judy Bacon

over 500 pampas grass plants!

We have two types of pampas grass in the park. **Purple pampas grass, *Cortaderia jubata***, which has a distinctive purple hue and is shorter than **Uruguayan pampas *Cortaderia selloana*** which has the huge, tall, creamy white fronds.

These are very invasive plants that need to be kept in check before they take over the park!

(Now, how do we make them unpopular in Pacifica gardens? Especially when we see ads that say,

"a popular ornamental plant that will add a new dynamic to your garden" "technically invasive", "beautiful" "With a muted palette of silvery white, cream and milky coffee tones, and feather duster shaped flowers on long arching stems")

Our many thanks to these volunteers who work their heads off taking the heads off pampas grass!



GREAT PARK T-SHIRT FOR EVERYONE

Wear our **bobcat** on a **green** or **blue** T-shirt in men's and women's med or lg; kids' in small & med. **blue only**. Email **Judy Bacon**: baconegg@earthlink.net. Indicate whether children's or adult's; size, color. Likely ready in 1 wk.

ZOOM WEBINAR INSTRUCTIONS

by Adrian Stroganoff

Online registration for Webinars is now available. **Go to our website**, <http://friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org>. In the Events section you will find a link to the registration page for each webinar. There you need to **put in your name and email address to register**. You will then get a confirmation email with further instructions, and reminder emails closer to the event.

EASY DAY, HELPING WAYS

by Joseph Piro

It was once again your friendly regular crew of **Stan Jensen, Istvan Puski**, my brother **Erik** and **I** for our September 11, 2021 Trail Day. Under a nice, Fall-feeling sunny blue sky, we headed up the west end of the Hazelnut Trail and made it up to the bench. The trail was in very good shape, so aside from raking out some drain dips and trimming a few stray branches, we didn't find too much to do. We headed back down and then followed the Plaskon Nature Trail, where we found several low-hanging branches to trim over the bridge and sidewalk leading to the Walnut Grove picnic areas. And once there, it was perfect timing to help a woman setting up for a big picnic party -- Istvan got one of the wooden carts and we all helped her load her supplies & roll it down the path. A successful morning! (Joseph Piro photo)



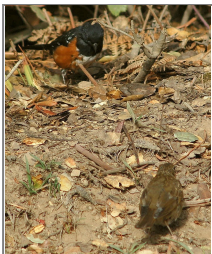
DITCH "DREDGING"

by Joseph Piro

We had 2 new-comers for our October 9, 2021 Trail Day -- **Karl** and **Eliane**! They joined **Istvan Puski**, my brother **Erik** and **I**, to help finish a project Istvan had recently started on his own -- clearing out a concrete



drainage ditch that runs midway along the hillside from just about opposite the gate house all the way down to the driveway gate at the main entrance. Armed with MacLeods, rakes, hoes and loppers, we made good progress under the warm, fall-feeling sunshine. Now that all the leaves, grasses & dirt are gone, we just need some rain. Happy trails (and ditches)!



ON THE TRAIL (cont. from p 1)

Bing Huey gave us a real treat when he photographed an adult **Spotted Towhee** with **young** on the Hazelnut Trail on Sept. 26. They feed their offspring for 30 days after they leave the nest.

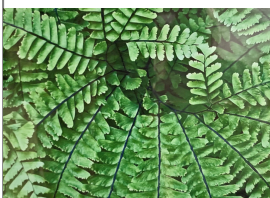
Katie Antista found the **hairy honeysuckle** by the far Plaskon Bridge was laden with bright red berries.



Oct. 23: 2 separate hikers were a bit unnerved by massive outbreak of winged **termites** on the Hazelnut!

ON A NATURE JOURNALING TRAIL: *Spirals in Nature* by **Sharron Walker**

Since July, the San Pedro Valley Nature Journalers have met monthly at our park. Each meeting has a journaling prompt that stimulates our curiosity about nature. Spirals was our most recent topic.



Of all the natural shapes, why are spirals perhaps the most common? They are all around us, from galaxies & weather patterns, to tree rings, to conifer cones.

A spiral shape causes plants to condense themselves and not take up as much space, causing them to be stronger and more durable against the elements. Spirals in nature follow a mathematical pattern, which in some is the Fibonacci number series.

In SPVP we found spirals in cones: **Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens* & *gigantea*)**, & **Douglas Fir**, **snail shells** (Yes, there are snails in the park), in **tree rings**, in some **flowers**, and in the **5-finger fern** shown above, which was photographed by **Bevan Jones**.

Journaling is an interest in nature, curiosity, a journal and a few tools. It is not about fine art. Watch for our group's next discoveries in SPVP. In the meantime, here is a challenge for you: can you locate other spirals in nature in the park? If so, take a photo and send it to me!! sharronlee@aol.com.

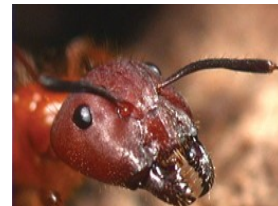
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021 CALENDAR

- JACK DUMBACHER'S POISONOUS BIRDS WEBINAR***
Tuesday, November 9.....7pm
- NOVEMBER TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, November 13.....9am
- NOVEMBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**
Saturday, November 20.....10am
- ALEJANDRO MELENDEZ'S CHORUS FROGS WEBINAR***
Tuesday, December 7.....7pm
- DECEMBER TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, December 11.....9am
- DECEMBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**
Saturday, December 18.....10am
- SUNDAY "WELCOME TABLES"**often from 10am-4pm. *Outdoor volunteers meet at Vis. Cntr. Webinars do not.* *Webinar info at bottom of page 3.

FACTOID

There's zinc in the recipe!

The enamel on the surface on our teeth is not razor sharp like those of the ant, whose mandibles have a smooth blend of proteins criss-crossed with zinc, their counterpart to human tooth enamel. And the zinc does not form blocky rod-like crystals like ours; instead it stays evenly distributed throughout the protein mixture, allowing teeth to have sharp edges. (Study was by **R.M.S. Schofield** & colleagues & concentrated on the mandibles of the **leaf-cutter ant**, & other arthropods.) (Orkin photo shows effective jagged-edged mandibles of the **carpenter ant**)



IF YOU LOVE BOBCATS—TAKE YOUR PICK OF BOOKS:

1. For the very scientifically minded: *Bobcat, master of Survival* by Kevin Hansen, published in 2007. You'll have new respect for them and concerns.
2. For those who would like to know a bobcat personally: *Trooper, "The heart-warming story of the Bobcat who became part of my family"* by Forrest B. Johnson, 2018.



The Leaders of "the Friends of SPVP": President: **Judy Bacon**; Vice President: **Mark Golembiewski**; Secretary: **Enid Ansgarius**; Treasurer: **Susan Kern**; Vis. Cntr. 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 & Jayesh Kapoor**; Trailside Store Manager: **Melinda Moses**; Newsletter Editor: **Carolyn Pankow** (pankowinca@gmail.com); -members-at-large: **Bing Huey, Sharron Walker**; Vol. Contributor: **Katie Antista**, member misc. Our organization's website is : **friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org**

We Need Folks to Honor our Speakers!

Mila has booked some renowned speakers and yet many of these experts are being ignored; so please honor them by being online when they speak to us. Who will perform if they hear few will be present?

LIZARD ENDS; LIZARD BEGINNINGS

Any day with lizards is a good day for **Jim Mackey**; each one tells its own tale: in the case below, a lost tail, partially regrown, but like our knee replacements, never quite the same.



This **fence lizard's** short appendage suggests that maybe he should stay off the fences, not to mention the concrete culvert, where he makes an obvious target for some birds, & from Jim's experience, possibly a SPVP **turkey**.

One day, while working on his Sonoma Co. property, Jim saw a large gobbler walk down a grassy hill, pause suddenly, tussle with some bounty beneath & jerk its head up, bill laden with a wiggling fence lizard; it gulped the poor head first, then the body, & finally, after another "stab" below, he brought up a wiggling tail hors d'oeuvre—such injustice!

Our most common reptile is a tasty fella to many. So this lizard cleverly hangs around banks of **gopher** holes, like the rodent-studded Walnut Grove Picnic Area, at night sequestering himself inside one, while in daylight hours & during warm nights, the gopher snakes go after the.....; you guessed it. Then when the sun clears the highest euc trees on the Weiler, at about 11am, the activity of this cold-blooded reptile and its **insect** prey increases, more so as the day's eggs are laid in June, and by August they are ready to escape their dirt burial and shell: an exciting time! (see baby at right; all photos from 8/13/'21)

Jim had never seen a new hatchling like this minute fella in our Park; they are more uniformly beige in color than the adult and, tail included, just under 2 in. long. May they flourish in this wildness, despite deft human fingers, like the experienced hand of a man who had fashioned a loop at the end of a pole. He enticed the fence lizard into the loop at the moment Jim appeared around the bend on the Valley View; Jim petitioned him for the survival of fence lizards in this special range, & the man assured him that he only planned to let his kids see one before releasing it in exactly the same spot, but watch for this most dangerous predator. (photos, info-**J. Mackey**; author-**C. Pankow**)



Baby on V.V. fence

OCT'S WEBINAR: EXTINCTION & BIODIVERSITY

WITH KRISTA KEMPPINEN

Report by Carolyn Pankow

Dr. Kemppinen assured us that our wild lands with their biodiverse ecosystems are the savior of life on this Earth and of any single species, as well as each ecosystem. The variety of species that interact in each complex not only ensures a balanced dynamic of food, shelter, water, and protection from diseases caused by habitat degradation, but also a healthier planet for all life: a balance of oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, appropriate nurturing soil systems, control of frequent flooding.

Krista especially details and outlines the numerous ways our ecosystems come to the aid of humans. She lists the type of assistance we rely on as: **A. Regulatory:** Trees providing shade; forests aiding rainfall amounts on land, sequestering carbon, moderating extreme events (mangroves vs hurricanes, e.g.); wetland ecosystems filtering wastes, decomposing detritus via microorganisms, and eliminating harmful pathogens. **B. Supporting:** creating habitats for species of plants & animals, and maintaining diversity of complex processes like the mineral cycles. **C. Cultural Services**, including recreation & beauty. **D.** Krista said the estimated value of well-functioning ecosystems exceeds \$44 trillion/year. Warning: incomplete list! Find the webinar under our website's "lecture recordings" if you feel rather attached to a living Planet Earth.

Krista informed us that humans have annihilated 83% of all wild animals and 50% of all plants on this Earth, that at least one million species are likely to go extinct in the next few decades. She also presented a graphic to show us which groups of animals or plants were most vulnerable. I've written only a sample of some of Dr. Kemppinen's lecture points found on our website; it's a must-see!

And please look again at the list of ways that you might actually be of help in rescuing our biome! Shop less; repair instead of replace, use less energy & plastics, which come from petroleum, stop driving and flying to Timbuktu, eat more plant food, get active in curbing climate change. You could then make a real contribution to the recovery of our biodiversity and to the end of the "coming plague" of extinctions.



OFF WITH THEIR POMPOUS HEADS!



Judy Bacon



Maryann Huey



Maryann Huey

Clockwise from upper left:

1. Volunteer Coordinator, Stu Smith, Carl Schwab, Bing Huey, Maryann Huey prepared for Valley View onslaught on **Pampas grass**;
2. Bing, Stu and Carl excising the enemy's heads way up on the Valley View:
3. A triumphant finish: Stu, Bing (with camera, of course) and Carl lord it over the bags of **severed Pampas heads**

Some of workers came out for 3 Tuesdays: September 7, 14, and 21, 2021!



Where it all took place: Valley View Trail entrance on August 17, '21

"Lizards Galore"
By Dr. James Mackey
Professor Emeritus, SFSU*
August 17, 2021



Male Fence Lizard with Tail Regeneration



New Fence Lizard Hatchling



Disguised , Heated Fence Lizard;
Shade and Sun



Older "Baby", Blending in a Bit

*See Article—page 5

Is This Why Our Squirrels are Grey and Our Chipmunks Brown-patterned ?



Merriam's Chipmunk by Bing Huey; September 26, 2021; Hazelnut Trail

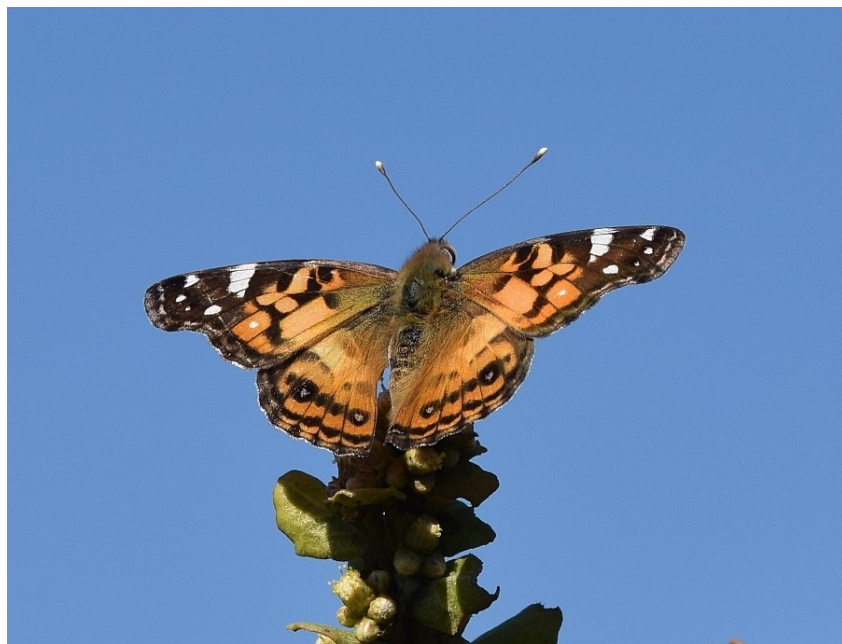


Eastern Grey Squirrel on Walnut Tree (not CA black) by Joseph Piro; Backyard on Rosita Rd., Pacifica. This is the most common squirrel in SPVP.

The Fierce & the Fashionable; 2021



Darner Dragonfly; Bing Huey;
August 26; Hazelnut Trail



American Lady, *Vanessa Virginiensis*;
Bing Huey ; Aug 26; Hazelnut Trail



Geometrid moth *Nemoria pistaciaria*,
On Sword Fern; Bing Huey; Montara Mt. Trail Aug. 13

Herbivore, Omnivore and Carnivore in 2021 From Orders Mammalia, Aves, and Reptilia



Buck on the Prowl; Enid Ansgarius; 10/20, He had approached a group with 2 grown does, who had no interest in him; he's using his vomeronasal organ to sniff their urine.



Bing Huey's Spotted Towhee & Chick; 9/26; Hazelnut Trail



Bing Huey's Young Gopher Snake; Sept 14; Weiler Ranch Rd.

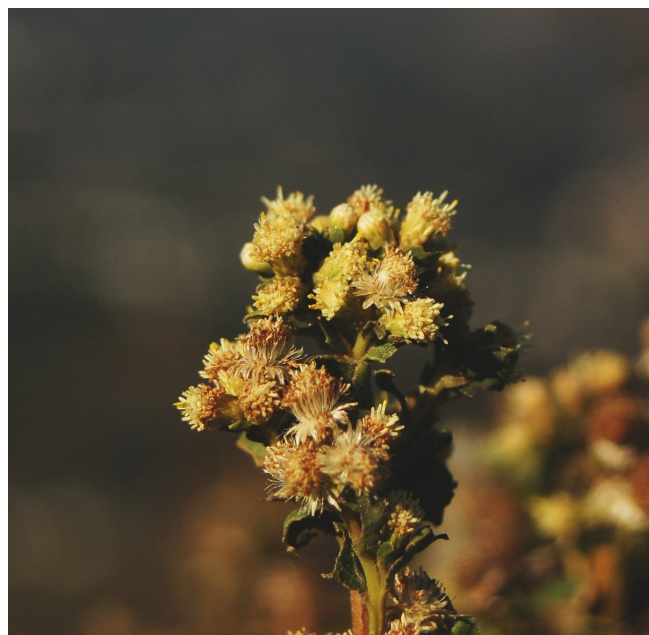
Bing Huey's Coyote Brush; Each Sex Has its Own Plant



Coyote Brush; Female Plant on Left; Male Plant on Right; by Bing Huey
 The whiteness of the Female is due to its sailing strands for seeds
 The yellow of the Male is augmented by pollen.
 October 3, 2021; Montara Mt. Trail



Female Coyote Brush; Oct. 3, 2021;
 Montara Mt. Trail



Male Coyote Brush; Oct. 3, 2021;
 Montara Mt. Trail

Sharron Walker's Spirals in Nature

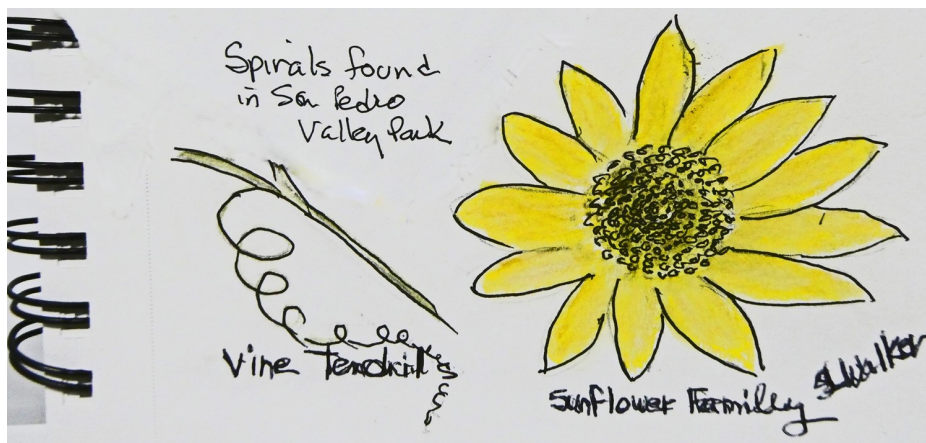
A Nature Journaling Feature



Douglas Fir Spirals
By Melanie Heisler



Tree Rings
By Sharron Walker



Vine Tendrils and members of the Sunflower Family
By Sharron Walker

Five Finger Fern
By Bevan Jones

This whorl of fronds on one of San Pedro Creek's Ferns are a showpiece for Nature's Spirals



Jayesh Kapoor's Peregrine Falcon; Mori Point; 2021



While on a hike at Mori Point on Oct. 10, at 5 pm, I saw this peregrine falcon perched on the cliff. I wonder if it is from the same pair/family that nests at Devil's slide. It seemed to be relaxed & unfazed by the occasional hiker passing by. I saw it perched there for a good 20 minutes, cleaning its talons and possibly contemplating another meal from all the pigeons that congregate near the pier.



And the Rain Came



Mark Golembiewski; Brooks Falls from the Overlook Bench on October 26, '21



So. Fork S.P. Creek at Brooks Creek Junction by Sharron Walker; 10/26/21