Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve safeguards one of the few pristine pockets of Coastal Sage Scrub in San Diego. For a glimpse back in time to see what the region would have looked like before the European presence, turn the page...
It is fascinating to contemplate the appearance and distribution of biological natural resources in San Diego County at the time of the first European contact. Because San Diego County is now one of the more populous counties in the U.S., it is sometimes difficult to imagine what it looked like a mere 500 years ago. All the land that is now covered by urbanization and agriculture was originally natural and inhabited by a wide array of plants and animals — and even more interesting, our ever-present Mediterranean weeds were not here. Imagine land without *Avena fatua* (wild oats) and brome grasses (*Bromus madritensis, B. hordeaceus* and *B. diandrus*) and the ever present Red-stem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*). Their absence means that other species already existed in the areas that they now inhabit. When considering the land that is now converted to urban and agricultural use and the land that is inhabited by non-native weeds, a very large area of San Diego has very different land cover than what originally occurred here.

The first documents were reports of the findings of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542 and Sebastián Vizcaíno in 1602. However, one of the primary sources of information is from the writings and journals of Padre Juan Crespi, who passed through San Diego on foot in 1769. This was already 200 years after the first European visitors.

In addition, a moderately large and stable population of native people lived here, harvesting wildlife, managing the landscape through occasionally burning and using plant resources for survival. Based on recent findings of the San Diego Natural History Museum, people have been here for at least 120,000 years. Their presence already had an influence on the natural history landscape in this region, but they existed in a time of natural balance. There are estimates that there were tens of thousands of people in the area at the time of contact (*Indian Country Diaries 2006, Killea 1975*). The landscape reflected the activity of the local people.

It is well known that even in the first generation of the 20th century, wildflowers were prevalent along coastal areas. Carroll DeWilton Scott (1955) had black and white photos of fields of *Layia platyglossa* (tidy tips) in the coastal areas near what is now Mission Bay as late as the 1920s. The shrubby vegetation would have been present, including the existing coastal sage scrub and chaparral on the upper slopes, but instead of grasses between the shrubs, the openings would have been covered with wildflowers. There are also a few photos around of the Ocean Beach area covered with tidy tips. The tidy tips would have been augmented by a smaller-flowered coastal form of *Eschscholzia californica* (California poppy), and extensive patches of *Camissoniopsis* spp. (sun cups) of more than one species; probably at least on the coastal sandy areas beach evening primrose (*Camissoniopsis cheiranthifolia*), California sun cup (*C. bistorta*) and small-flowered evening primrose (*C. micrantha*).

San Diego Bay was a breeding area for California gray whales, so their spouts, breaches, and spy hops would have been visible throughout the deeper parts of the bay during the winter months. San Diego County was well known for the presence of grizzly bears late in the time of final occupation. Cave Johnson Coutes (1849) remarked about the numbers of grizzly bears encountered on a trip he took through the mountains near Julian down to Fort Yuma. The grizzlies here were also larger, with massive bears being killed near Valley Center and on what is now Camp Pendleton (*Valley Center Historical Society, Tremor et al. 2017*). Grizzlies would have been found in the major river valleys, the San Diego, San Luis Rey, Sweetwater, and Otay, which would have been feast areas with access to a variety of plants and animals. It is not just that there were a few grizzlies around, but based on historic accounts and references, they were numerous.

The coastal beaches and coves such as La Jolla Cove would have supported numbers of harbor seals, elephant seals, California sea lions, sea otters and potentially Guadalupe fur seals, as well as the breeding California gray whales. All these groupings of wildlife suffered occasional mortality, drawing numbers of grizzly bears. California condors would have also been numerous in the county, feasting along with the grizzly bears on the mortality of pinnipeds and whales.

Another plant that would have been very widespread and that even seems to thrive with disturbance was *Dichelostemma capitatum* (wild hyacinth) that has blue flowers on the end of tall stalks. These were harvested by the local people for a meager food source and they could have been also important food for grizzly bears, which were known for eating anything that is edible, even grass. The landscape effect of grizzly bears on the vegetation overall may have been subtle, but they, like coyotes, may have also eaten berries from shrubs including *Arctostaphylos spp.* (manzanita) in addition to other bulbous geophytes like *Allium haematocitchon* (red-skinned onion), *Muilla maritima* (sea muilla) and *Bloomeria crocea* (golden stars) and maybe even *Bloomeria clevelandii* (Cleveland golden stars), which is found only in San Diego County and part-way down the Baja peninsula. In some cases, digging up bulbs of geophytes has a result of stimulating their growth.

The native people were known to use fire to enhance different food plants like the geophytes as well as some seed-bearing plants like *Salvia columbariae* (chia). Early explorers mentioned smoke in the fall in Southern California from the intentional burning that occurred. This would have also opened up the vegetation in the burned areas with a mosaic of lands that had not burned for a while and those that had, creating an equilibrium consisting of a mix of young and old vegetation in a changing surface pattern. Some areas, due to their geographic terrain and moisture regime, would have not burned as frequently; the Torrey Pines area for example, and probably Point Loma.

The original vegetation of Point Loma is an interesting subject of its own. The tryworks (furnaces), where killed whales from San Diego Bay were cut up and cooked to obtain oil from the blubber, were located at Fort Guijarros on the Bay side of Point Loma. Wood for fuel would have likely been harvested from the nearby locations to avoid having to transport it, which would mean that any trees or large shrubs that were within reach would have been utilized for fuel. One can imagine the canyons of Point Loma with dense thickets of *Quercus berberidifolia*.
Adenostoma fasciculata
San Diego County dominated by as favorable for it. The chaparral that still exists in parts of coastal there at that time because of soil and climate conditions that are not as probable that (coast live oak) was growing conditions that could support them exist on Point Loma. However, it is not now present without irrigation and doing well, indicating that the may have grown there as well. Torrey pines that were planted some time ago have grown there as well. Torrey pines that were planted some time ago may have grown there as well. Torrey pines that were planted some time ago are now present without irrigation and doing well, indicating that the conditions that could support them exist on Point Loma. However, it is not as probable that Quercus agrifolia (coast live oak) was growing there at that time because of soil and climate conditions that are not as favorable for it. The chaparral that still exists in parts of coastal San Diego County, dominated by as favorable for it. The chaparral that still exists in parts of coastal San Diego County, dominated by Adenostoma fasciculata (chaparral), Ceanothus verrucosus (wart-stemmed ceanothus), Arctostaphylos glandulosa ssp. crassifolia (Del Mar manzanita), would have occurred in the areas of maritime chaparral that grew on sandstones on Point Loma and other coastal areas. Large Rhus integrifolia (lemonadeberry) was probably also harvested for wood on Point Loma. So, on the coastal ridges, chaparral would have been present as it is today.

The vegetation of what would become downtown San Diego and the lower slopes around San Diego Bay, the mouth of the San Diego River, and the south-facing slopes, which include the canyons, and river valleys, would have all been covered with coastal sage scrub. South of Chollas Creek and east of what is now Balboa Park and down across the mesas southward, most of the vegetation was coastal sage scrub. However, north and west of these locations, including the upper mesas and what is now San Diego State University and Linda Vista on the northern mesas, the vegetation was chaparral on the upland slopes, mostly chamise-dominated but with mixed species on the north slopes. In the northern part of the County, coastal sage scrub would have covered the south-facing slopes and the major drainages, San Diego Bay to the slopes around the lagoons and the slopes on the coastal mesas of modern Camp Pendleton with the exception of areas with fine soils. The fine soils, clays and fine silts, would have supported natural grasslands of Nassella species, probably N. pulchella (purple needlegrass), N. lepida (fothill needlegrass) and a large number of wildflowers, such as Sidalcea malvaeflora (checker mallow), Dichelostemma, Viola pedunculata (Johnny jump-up), Annsinka intermedia (fiddlenecks), Sisyrinchium bellum (blue-eyed grass) and swaths of Layia platyglossa and mixings of Eschscholzia californica. A clay-soil-inhabiting shrub, the Adophila californica (California adolphia), would have been scattered around the fringes of the grasslands on the coastal terraces north of the San Luis Rey River and San Mateo Creek to San Onofre Creek, and patches in a variety of other locations.

Another large mammal with a strong presence in coastal San Diego County was the pronghorn. The early explorers observed numerous bands of them across the mesas and terraces. They are known browsers and while in modern times they are found in parts of the west where Artemisia tridentata (Great Basin sagebrush) grows, in coastal San Diego County, they fed on coastal sage scrub, probably including Artemisia californica (California sagebrush). Their presence in good numbers would have also enhanced the openness of the vegetation in some places. The mix of browsers and periodic fires in a vegetative mosaic would have helped maintain a variety of levels of shrub density. Where the shrubs were older and more dense, they would have supported the now endangered California gnatcatchers. Where shrubs were less dense, they would have supported rufous-crowned sparrows. Again, the lack of weedy grasses means that their place in the ecosystem was represented by other species that would have included some native grasses but also areas composed mostly of native wildflowers.

A large part of the flat mesas was covered with depressions and mounds. The mounds were covered with shrubs but, just as today, not the depressions. This is because standing water drowned the roots of the shrubs in the deeper basins that fill with winter rainfall. Vernal pools with their array of flowers and reproducing toad and frog larvae may have been food for grizzly bears who could have harvested the larvae and adult animals and extracted the Brodiaea orevutia (Orcutt’s brodiaea) that grows in profusion in pool bottoms. Eryngium aristatum var. parishii (San Diego button celery) could have also been a food source and the geophytic root bases would have been prolific in the pool bottoms along with Pogogyne abramsii (San Diego Mesa mint) and P. nidiuuscula (Otay Mesa mint). While conditions right along the coast would have supported Eschscholzia californica mixed with other species, such as Linanthus dianthiflorus (fringed ground pink), which I have seen covering whole hillsides, one cannot overstate the importance of Eschscholzia. Explorers moving northward in ships along the California coast are reported to have thought that the hills were on fire because they were covered with orange California poppies. Other important species include Leptosyne maritima (sea dahila), which itself forms dense patches of bright yellow, but would have had a greater opportunity in canyons and Encelia californica (California encelia) and Bahiopsis lacinata (San Diego sunflower) would have painted south-facing slopes yellow, particularly immediately along the coast and inland to the foothills following good rainfall seasons.

Riparian river valleys were undoubtedly wetter than they are now because wells did not draw down the water tables at that time and dams did not collect rainfall runoff. Dense forests of riparian vegetation would have existed in the major stream and river courses extending to the coast. They would have also had some variation in age and density of vegetation due to the periodic flooding that would have occurred, scouring out trees and shrubs that would then establish anew. We still have many of the major riparian areas but with reduced area, particularly in the valleys and interior regions.

Coastal San Diego County was a wildlife wonderland with grizzly bears, jaguars, and pronghorns along with southern mule deer, coyotes, bobcats, California condors, Swainson hawks, golden eagles, bald eagles, peregrine falcons and other wildlife species we still have. The views across the landscape following a good rainfall season must have been spectacular with multi-hued patches of orange, yellow and blue in the foreground over the terraces and valleys mixed with shrubs and hillocks of dark chaparral covered blue and white in the spring due to Ceanothus tomentosus (woolly-leaf ceanothus) and Ceanothus verrucosus (wart-stemmed ceanothus), with the unmarred Black Mountain, San Miguel Mountain and Mount Soledad as the dramatic backdrop.

We are grateful to Tom Oberbauer and the California Native Plant Society-San Diego for permission to reprint this excerpt from “Botany in San Diego County Before European Contact.” We encourage you to read the full article, found online at www.cnps-sd.org/chapter-blog/2018/2/13/botany-in-san-diego-county-before-european-contact. It is an eye-opening vision of what has been lost – and a reminder of how critical our remaining native habitats are, both for us and the “birds and other wildlife” we cherish.
With only 4.13” of rain this year so far there is very little evidence of much of a spring flowering show this season. Only the Hoary-leaf Ceanothus took advantage of the late rains and went into full bloom during mid February. The Manzanitas also have produced a few of their urn shaped flowers.

On February 21st temperatures dropped to 22 degrees, creating a wintry early morning scenic landscape. Sparkling frost crystals animated the White-flowering Currant’s (Ribes indecorum) leaves – while still adorned in their late seasonal bloom.

Preparations are in progress for the upcoming education program events. The Barona Charter School will be coming out with all eighty students, 1st through 8th grade, for two events. The Silverwood Science 4th-grade program has two events scheduled with Lakeview Elementary.

Despite the chilling cold weather, love seemed to fill the air, as a male Bobcat was observed roaming the observation area calling out to our resident female and sniffing every shrub he passed for her sent. Although bobcats rarely vocalize, they yowl and hiss during the mating season. Male bobcats will constantly circle their large territory searching for signs of a female bobcat in heat. Once the male finds scent markings from a receptive female he tracks her down and begins courtship.

Silverwood also received some much needed help out on the trail from two new volunteers, Elijah Smith and Kate Cunningham, who helped to prepare the trails for predicted (hoped for!) rains by building up erosion control berms and clearing out brow ditches. Thank you both for your help.

This April we should expect to see many of the spring migrant species of birds such as Ash-throated and Pacific-slope Flycatchers. Crowding in at the hummer feeders are the Costá’s, Black-chinned and Rufous Hummingbirds.

Birdathon is a friendly bird-watching competition held by San Diego Audubon each year during the month of April to raise important funds to support our Conservation, Education, and Sanctuary programs. Teams of birders identify as many bird species as possible in a 24-hour period within San Diego County. Each team decides its own strategy – where to go to see different bird species, what time of day to visit and how long to stay at each location, and how many locations to squeeze into the day. Birdathon teams compete not only to record the most species but to raise the most funds for San Diego Audubon.

Last year the staff team, Team U-Terns, spotted 110 species total. We were joined by the Silent Siskins, Wandering Totalers, and White-Crested Nut-Batch, among others …and Team Too-Tired Birders made a day of it, biking, birding and finishing up with a beer downtown. If you’re interested in forming a Birdathon team, please contact Chris Redfern at redfern@sandiegoaudubon.org or (858) 273 7800 x 102. Visit www.sandiegoaudubon.org to donate or sponsor a team.
Thanks to months of planning and the dedication of scores of volunteers, our annual Love Your Wetlands Day event took place on Saturday, February 10th, and it was a huge hit! Over 175 members of the public were in attendance for this rare opportunity to explore the typically off-limits Kendall-Frost Marsh Reserve. Participants of all ages learned about the important ecosystem services that wetlands provide, the legacy of wetlands lost to development in Mission Bay and around the world, and what can be done to help protect this fragmented and highly modified habitat.

Volunteers went out into the marsh to remove litter, install native plants and even assisted with fixing nesting platforms for the endangered Light-footed Ridgway’s Rail. Dozens signed postcards to their City Councilmember in support of ReWild Mission Bay’s vision of climate-change resilient wetlands, and the crowd was awed by the Raptor Institute’s up-close look at live birds of prey. Artwork from students at Bernard Elementary was on display, with the winning drawings slated to become signage at Mission Bay’s California Least Tern nesting sites in an effort to increase public awareness of the needs of this endangered bird.

Representatives from I Love A Clean San Diego, the River Park Foundation, the Living Coast Discovery Center, the San Diego Tracking Team, the Climate Science Alliance and the San Diego Mission Bay Park rangers made this a well-rounded, fun chance to explore the numerous opportunities for the public to get involved with on-the-ground conservation efforts. Of course our avid birders were there with a spotting scope, giving attendees a look at the diversity of shorebirds that call Kendall-Frost home. It’s inspiring to see the community support surrounding this often-overlooked, fragmented wetland. Now let’s keep at our efforts to Rewild Mission Bay!

Drawing Birds as Living Animals  
A Bird Drawing Workshop for All Skill Levels

Birds are stunning in their beauty but difficult to “read” visually in their often deceptive costume of feathers. But beneath all the darting movements, blur of wings in different stages of flight, and the ability to bend, twist, and fold their necks and limbs in decidedly non-human ways, the basic tetrapod animal form remains the clearly articulated framework on which everything else depends. The goal of this two-session, eight-hour workshop is to show how it is possible to visualize and draw a bird from the inside out – beginning with the four-limbed skeleton of a typical passerine (perching bird), seeing how the musculature animates the bird’s range of motions, and finally “clothing” the bird with its intricately structured cloak of feathers. We’ll take time to focus on wing design, and the graceful movements of winged flight unique to birds. You’ll learn to see more intuitively the proportions of basic bird anatomy and become better attuned to the bird’s constantly recalibrated lines of balance.

If you are someone who is a serious art student, enjoys sketching on a modest level, or are simply interested in being able to better understand what is going on beneath all the feathers, this workshop will be of interest and value to you. Printed materials will be provided for each participant, and the key steps in producing a completed drawing will be illustrated in a PowerPoint presentation. There will be ample time for drawing, of course, and some helpful lessons to complete between sessions. The class size will be limited to eight to facilitate one-on-one attention. The workshop leader will be David Stump, a long-time contributing artist and graphic designer for San Diego Audubon. The dates will be two consecutive Saturdays, May 26 and June 2. See page 6 for workshop details, and visit www.sandiegoaudubon.org for registration.
The Nature Discovery Workshop Series is a year-round schedule of classes and workshops on a variety of nature topics. Enjoy more wildlife around your home, increase your birding skills, become more observant in nature, and explore some of San Diego’s amazing habitats. Visit the SDAS website for more details as they become available.

Bird ID for Beginners: How to Become a Bird Watcher
April 7 & 14, 2018 (Two Saturdays) Taught by Dr. Matthew Binns
Are you new to bird watching, or maybe intimidated by the overwhelming number of bird species there are to learn? Have you ever wondered what kinds of birds visit your garden? Then join us at Tecolote Nature Center for a new bird identification workshop for beginners running two consecutive Saturdays – April 7, 9 am - 12 pm, and April 14, 8 am - 11 am The Nature Center is located at 5180 Tecolote Road.

This workshop will be led by Dr. Matthew Binns, a molecular geneticist who has had a deep interest in birds since his early childhood in England. Dr. Binns is also a highly experienced bird photographer, whose work appears in Sketches.

The first day will be an in-class lesson on getting started in birding. Participants will learn about the characteristics and adaptations of common backyard birds, discover computer and app resources, learn about the best birding tools, and become familiar with the most important locations and habitats for birding around San Diego. The second day of the workshop is an interactive field trip on the trails of the Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. Participants will identify native birds with a focus on how to spot relevant field marks of many common species.

Cost: Students and limited income, $60; Member of SD Audubon, $85, general public, $105. Register at www.sandiegoaudubon.org. Contact Jill Cooper at cooper@sandiegoaudubon.org with any questions.

Drawing Birds as Living Animals –
May 26 & June 2, 2018 (Two Saturdays) Taught by David Stump
An in-depth step-by-step, two-session presentation of the artistic anatomy of birds, focusing on a typical perching bird but also looking at the great diversity of bird forms. Learn to “see” the underlying body form of birds, to understand how all the parts fit and move together, and to discover ways to make your drawings seem more life-like and dimensional. Printed materials will be provided for each participant, and each step will be illustrated in a Powerpoint presentation. You will need to bring a sketch pad, (at least 8.5 x 11) with ample blank pages, and a supply of sharpened pencils or other sketching instruments.

Both sessions will run between 8:30-12:30 and will be held at the SD Audubon Conference Room at 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite #100, San Diego, CA 92117. Cost: Students and limited income, $60; Member of SD Audubon, $85, general public, $105. Limit eight participants. Register at www.sandiegoaudubon.org. Contact Jill Cooper at cooper@sandiegoaudubon.org with any questions.

CNPS Plans Native Garden Tour of North County
Join us on the 6th Annual California Native Plant Society-San Diego Chapter Native Garden Tour that will be held in North County and includes the areas of Encinitas, Cardiff, Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos and Escondido. We are featuring 17 residential gardens and several non-residential and public gardens. Spend a day or two exploring some lovely neighborhoods and backcountry areas. We have a great variety of lovely gardens including features such as gardening on slopes, dry streambeds, bioswales, water catchment, charming water features, bridges, garden art, striking sculptures and much more.

The tour runs Saturday, April 14 at 9:30 am and Sunday, April 15 at 4:00 pm. Check in at the Lux Art Institute at 1550 South El Camino Real, Encinitas, CA 92024. Tickets are $25 and can be purchased online. You can add a guided tour of Sky Mountain Permaculture demo site for an additional $10. Buy tickets at cnpssd18.bpt.me.

Volunteer to help with the tour and receive free ticket(s). Apply at cnpssd.org/garden-tour-volunteers.
APRIL 2018 SAN DIEGO AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

These walks are devoted to enjoying the varied habitats and avian inhabitants of San Diego County. Registration is open to all. Our trips are very popular, and most fill up quickly. To attend a SDAS field trip, follow these three steps:

1) Follow our listings at sandiegoaudubon.org (Birding, Local Field Trips). Trips listed in Sketches are first posted for registration online, generally towards the end of the month prior to issue date.

2) Online registration is required for all field trips. This is a simple but necessary step. Attendance for trips is now capped at specific numbers (see trip descriptions), and all trips are filled in order of registration. NOTE: Some trips will require a small fee. This can be paid when registering online. Trips may be cancelled due to rain or excessive heat.

3) Note details of the trip, especially gathering time and location. Some trips may require parking fees. Plan to arrive a few minutes early. Bring binoculars, scopes (if you have one), water, sunscreen and hat. Google Maps info is provided for each trip. If you have questions, call Peter Thomas at 858-571-5076, or email your queries to prthomas1@yahoo.com. All trip information is available at sandiegoaudubon.org.

Santa Ysabel Preserve – Eastern Entrance
Sunday, April 1, 2018, 8:00 am – 11:00 am
Google Maps: Santa Ysabel East Preserve
Leaders: Peter Thomas, 858-571-5076, and Millie Basden
Santa Ysabel Preserve is one of the best secret places in San Diego County. The 3,800-acre preserve offers more than 11 miles of trails through oak woodlands, riparian, chaparral, and grassland habitats. Birds seen in the past have included Wild Turkey, California Quail, Band-tailed Pigeon, Western Wood-Pewee, Mountain Chickadee, Oak Titmouse, and Lazuli Buntings. Restrooms at the trailhead. Participation is capped at 25.

Lake Morena County Park
Saturday, April 7, 2018, 8 am – 11:00 am
Google Maps: Lake Morena County Park
Leaders: Rich and Susan Breisch, 858-278-6280, and others
Lake Morena County Park is a popular fishing lake and campground in eastern San Diego County, which we have not officially birded in a number of years. Possible target birds include American White Pelican, Acorn and Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Oak Titmouse, Greater Roadrunner, Loggerhead Shrike, Rock Wren, Western Bluebird, several sparrow species, and migrant warblers. Restrooms available. Participation capped at 25.

Blue Sky Ecological Reserve
Sunday, April 15, 2018, 8:00 am – 11:00 am
Google Maps: Blue Sky Ecological Reserve
Leaders: Teresa Norris, 858 449 2863, and others

Blue Sky Ecological Reserve is situated on the western slope of Mount Woodson and just north of Lake Poway. A stream and associated willow and oak woodland are bordered by mixed chaparral and coastal sage scrub on rugged slopes. Birds to be expected include California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees, Bushtit, Wrentit, Bewick’s and House Wrens. Along the way Black-chinned Hummingbird, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting may also be found. Easy hiking on a dirt road. Restrooms available at the trailhead. Participation is capped at 25.

Stonewall Mine and Lake Cuyamaca
Sunday, April 22, 2018, 8:00 am to 11:00 am
Google Maps: Stonewall Mine
Leaders: Terry Hurst, 619-318-7717, and others
Lake Cuyamaca and the Stonewall Mine area give us a chance to sample mountain and spring migrating species. We will start at the old mine shaft, and then venture out on trails through oak and pine woodlands. Possible species include Wild Turkey, various raptors, Oak Titmouse, Mountain Chickadee and Nuthatches. Migrating warblers could include Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Townsend’s, Hermit, and Wilson’s. Views of Lake Cuyamaca should provide Wood Ducks, Mallards, and other waterfowl. Purple Martins have been seen from this area in April during past years. Restrooms are at the Paso Pacheco Campground, just to the south on Highway 79. NOTE: A California State Parks pass, or a day pass (now $10 – available at the trailhead), is required to be able to park either at the mine or at the campground. Participation for this trip is capped at 25.

Fledgling Birders at The Old Mission Dam
Monday, April 23, 2018, 8:00 am to 11:00 am
Google Maps: Old Mission Dam
Leader: Gary Grantham, 858-635-6635
Old Mission Dam is a favorite destination among birders all year round. A variety of resident birds such as California Thrasher, Western Meadowlark, Wrentit, Bewick’s Wren, and Nuttall’s Woodpecker. This bird walk will cover varied terrain and focus on riparian woodland around the historic dam and the nearby grassland. Spring migrants and summer visitors will also be sought, such as Yellow and Wilson’s Warblers, Phainopepla, Western Tanager, Western Kingbird, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak. Porta-potty at the trailhead. Participation capped at 25.

Saturday, April 28, 2018, 8 am to 11 am
Tecolote Canyon Natural Park
Google Map: Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and Visitor Center
Leaders: Anitra Kaye, 619 517 1168, John Walters, and Jack Friery
Tecolote Canyon is one of several protected urban canyons in San Diego that support native plant communities and associated bird life. Birds that are here for the entire year include hawks, Anna’s Hummingbird, California Thrasher, House Wren, Wrentit, and both California and Spotted Towhees. Easy walking. Restrooms at the trailhead. Participation capped at 25.

BEYOND SILVERDOME If you have ever wondered what lies beyond the crest of Silverdome, and wanted a look at the wild and rugged landscape that comprises the expansile trailless section of Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary that stretches well over a mile east of the Howie Wier Trail, the May issue of Sketches will be a special one. Our feature story, amply illustrated with current photography, will show you the old-growth chaparral, live oak groves, sweeping granitic domes, and the boulder-studded peak of Wiedenhoff. The photo to the left is actually a view of Silverdome seen from a mile up the El Capitan Open Space Trail (shown in foreground).
Become a Friend of San Diego Audubon today and enjoy these many benefits:

- Subscription to Sketches, our member magazine (10 issues a year)
- Access to free local birding trips
- Exclusive guided walks at our two nature sanctuaries
- Discounts on nature guidebooks and other merchandise
- Access to a wide variety of volunteer opportunities
- Discounts on special workshops about birds, native plants and more
- Invitations to special events like our holiday party and volunteer celebration
- Email newsletter updates, including advance notice of events

While San Diego Audubon is a chapter of National Audubon Society, we are an independent not-for-profit organization. We encourage you—especially if you are already a National Audubon member—to become a Friend of San Diego Audubon to directly support our local conservation and education programs.