



# Least Bell's Vireo's Voice

Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates Newsletter

February 2022

## MEMBER- SHIP DUES ARE DUE



Lets set the alarm for an early renewal of our membership dues

\$30—Individual                      \$15—Senior (Over 62)

\$45—Family                              \$15—Student

\$75 —Friend Associate

\$100 —Patron Associate

\$250—Support Associate

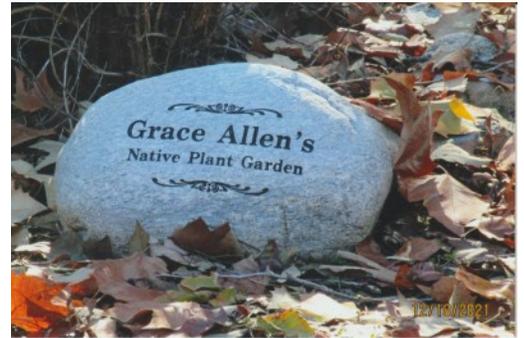
\$1,000—Golden Oak Associate

To: WNNCA

1000 N. Durfee Ave.

South El Monte, CA

91733



### REDEDICATION

Due to the “disappearance” of the first marker denoting Grace’s Native Garden, a new one was installed. Grace honored us with her attendance to the celebration of a new and beautiful marker for our beloved Native Garden, who is Grace’s brain/heart child.



Photos by Christina

Web site access:

# WNNCA.org

Our email:              wnnca@att.net

## MARCH BIRD OF THE MONTH

Vermilion flycatcher  
(*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

**FEBRUARY**  
**Bird of the Month**  
**Red-tailed hawk**  
**(*Buteo jamaicensis*)**



The most common raptor in North America, the red-tailed hawk is apparently increasing in numbers, even adapting to nesting in cities. With its broad, rounded wings and short tail, it is a sight exciting to all paying attention, and his thrilling, rasping call has become synonymous of all raptors, used in films and other media even when a different kind of hawk is shown. It presents many variations in plumage, with many morphs, from very dark to almost whitish tail. Many live in an area year round, joined by others in winter, flying from colder Northern habitats. It needs open grounds for hunting and some high spots for perching, from where they can spot movement from small mammals, reptiles, frogs or toads, as well as bats, insects and other birds, even carrion.

The red-tailed hawk flight is magnificent, using thermals to climb and soaring for long periods, usually in circles. Their courtship displays are spectacular, with the pair in an aerial dance, sometimes passing prey in the air, or grabbing each other talons, spiraling toward the ground before pulling away.

The nest is built by both, made of sticks lined with softer materials, where 2 to 3 eggs are laid, sometimes more. Incubation period lasts from 28 to 35 days. The food is mostly brought by the male, female stays to feed the chicks, who leave the nest in 6 or 7 weeks. It takes a few weeks for strong flight so the young continue to hang around.

***Next page contains info in our very own special red-tailed visitor.***

## ***Meet Sprit.***

Yes, it has a name.

This female (we think) red-tailed hawk appeared one day in the space at the back of the museum, with a damaged wing. Colleen noticed that she was not capable of flight, so she started leaving food within her reach. In a couple of days, she seemed stronger and soon she was flying. Colleen and everyone else was glad she could fly, and thought that she was going to find another territory. Apparently, this hawk had other ideas, and started hanging around the Nature Center, was seen frequently around the parking lot and nearby areas. It is a beautiful example of the species, so someone had the idea to have a contest to name it. The name Spirit was favorite.

Spirit is still visiting the area and we all hope she continues to do so.. .





# Grace's

## Wisdom Corner

*(Featuring a special plant every month)*

### **California sagebrush** *(Artemisia californica)*



California sagebrush, in spite of its name, is not a true sage. It is a perennial brush, native from Western California to Baja, from sea level to 2,600 ft, typical of chaparral environment and coastal sage scrub. It is said to secrete chemicals in the ground to inhibit other plants from growing. It grows from 5 to 8 ft. The leaves are light green to gray, flowering late summer and fall, flowers are not showy. The root system is shallow, promoting rapid growth in early rains, and is very resistant to drought, dropping leaves only in extreme circumstances.



This plant is very aromatic, and it has been used by Native populations for fighting colds and coughs, chewing or in smoke, also as a poultice for asthma, toothache and wounds, as well as a liniment for relieving pain. In a decoction was used for cramps and child birth. It has been discovered scientifically that it has anti-microbial properties.



Close up of a sagebrush branch

Because of its aroma, Natives would rub it on their bodies before a hunt, to hide their scent. It is also said that miners would put branches in their bed to discourage fleas, and cowboys on the trail would also rub themselves with the leaves just before entering a town. You can guess this use was similar to the native use before the hunt. Thus it acquired the nickname of "cowboy cologne." A tale that particularly amuse the children visiting our trails.

