



Least Bell's Vireo's Voice

Whittier Narrows Nature Center Association Newsletter

March 2016

Signs of Spring?



Our First American Robin
(*Turdus migratorius*)

Golden Currant In Flower
(*Ribes aureum*)



A very special California towhee
(*Pipilo crissalis*)

It has unexpected white cheek spots



This month:

March 5. 8:00 AM. Bird walk. Docent led

March 8. 10:00 AM. NCA meeting. Dean Dana Nature Center.

March 12. 8:00 AM. Nature walk. Docent led.

March 16. 10:00 AM. Executive Board meeting.

March 19. 8:00 AM. Bird Walk. Docent led

ALSO: 6:00 PM: Animal presentation.

6:30PM. Night Hike.

March 26. 8:00 AM. Nature Walk. Docent led.

REMEMBER: March 13 Daylight Saving time

**Every Friday:
Water Squad Investigators
Program**

Our email: wnnca@att.net

February 7, 2016
Whittier Narrows Natural Area
Community Picnic

Forty attendees, many high school and college age, delighted in the Whittier Narrows Natural Area picnic area, the perfect weather, their puppy dogs frolicking about, sharing epicurean specialties, listening to an attendee's relaxing guitar playing and occasionally interfacing with the rest of the picnickers. First on the program [photo] was Gregorio, a Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associate and Docent, storytelling. He told us the story he wrote of "Little Tochtli, the Aztec Rabbit." He created the story in a class about nutrition. Little Tochtli learns the importance of being strong and gaining endurance by eating carrot and lettuce soup. The plot has to do with Little Tochtli finding himself far away from his rabbit hole which puts him far away from his mother and father, a scary proposition. This is exacerbated by an unanticipated, frightening thunder storm. After experiencing weakness from neglecting his nutritional needs and finding himself slowed down, he learns he should have eaten his vegetables and that he should have stayed closer to mother and father. By the end of the story he manages to find his way to his rabbit hole and falls asleep in his mother's welcome hug, an important nutritional lesson for our children. The nature loving audience warmly applauded Gregorio's animated Aztec story.

The second part of the program included a nature hike led by Armando, also a Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associate and Docent. He identified one habitat as riparian and distinguished it from chaparral. Riparian habitat is near the river. Chaparral consists of bushes accustomed to dry areas. Participants saw California native plants: elderberry, coffee berry, *nopales*, golden currant, toyon, sages, coyote bush, artemisia. Armando added interesting side comments. Hollywood got its name from toyon, often known as *holly* bush. The introduced *nopal* cactus from Mexico grows more vertical than the native *nopal* cactus. The introduced mustard plant produces seeds that are used to make mustard. Artemisia possesses a pleasant fragrance. Cowboys in the day would come into town smelling of a hard day's work. They rubbed artemisia on themselves to have the "cowboy cologne" fragrance dominate other odors so people would not have to quickly move away from their proximity.

We saw several birds. The Allen's humming bird appeared to be posing for us as it was repeatedly flashing its neon red light. Was it a California thrasher or a mocking bird; they look so much alike. Its song told us it was a California thrasher, almost a different octave. Was it a house finch? Its red color was so deep, almost magenta. The brown towhee and the red tail hawk also made an appearance. We heard the spotted towhee first, then spotted him. When we saw the rare and endangered Nevin's barberry, Gregorio explained that 5% of them are in Whittier Narrows. You are invited to again come to have your picnic. Again, bring your blankets, your guitars, your dogs, your picnic lunch and occupy the Whittier Narrows Natural Area.



Article submitted
by
Gloria Valladolid

Photos by
Jim Odling

FIELD TRIP!!!

BOLSA CHICA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

Fantastic!



Intrepid birders, cloudy day, lots of checking species



Long billed curlew

Both photos: Lou Orr



An endangered specie: **Ridgway's rail**,(a subspecies of clapper rail)
Rarely seen.



Looking for an elusive octopus



Many life-time birds sighted



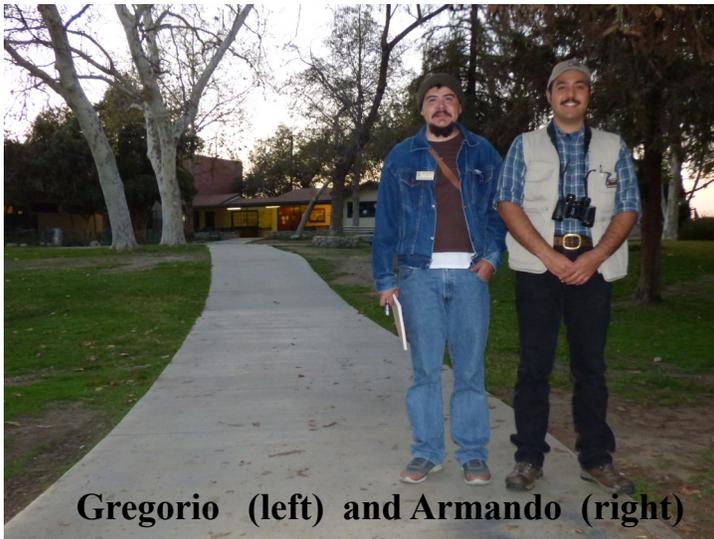
Ed with an enthusiastic group a few weeks ago.

LATEST NEWS FROM THE DOCENTS

Ed Barajas, our Dean of Docents, with his exemplary dedication to always deliver an outstanding job, recently proceeded to bruise his leg, with his usual zeal. For this reason, he has been unable to do our Night Hike or the Saturday bird walk. Although he sneaks a short walk now and then, he is trying to rest his leg, so it will heal as soon as possible. We miss his guidance and expertise, but he also misses his usual walks. We hope he is back in full form very, very soon.

Fortunately, two of our newest docents, Gregorio Gonzales and Armando Abadoy, have agreed to take over the Night Hike duties, and even if they protest that no one can fill Ed's shoes, have done an excellent job and manage to have fun as well.

We thank Gregorio and Armando and hope Ed is completely healthy soon.



Gregorio (left) and Armando (right)

Recently, the Association was asked to contribute a basket of goodies to be raffled off at the Spring Festival to be held on March 5 at the Schabarum Regional Park.

This handsome arrangement was created by Socorro with items from our gift shop.

This demonstrates not only the artistry of our members, but also the intriguing variety of our merchandise. You can find gifts appropriate for every occasion, at a very reasonable price.

COME VISIT!



**Join the fun. Join the Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates.
Membership includes out monthly newsletter and a 10% discount in our gift shop.**

The Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates is a volunteer 501(c)3 nonprofit organization actively looking for new members. WNNCA is a chapter of the Nature Center Associates, a nonprofit support organization of the natural area park system of Los Angeles County.

We were founded to help enrich educational and scientific knowledge in the community. Our primary mission is to help foster an appreciation of the natural world in children and adults and to help preserve the Whittier Narrows Natural Area and the county's other natural areas for future generations.

Our activities include leading school group tours, answering visitors' questions, arranging and leading classes, planting and maintaining plants around the nature center, helping in the nature center museum and in the gift shop, performing light office work and answering phones, and more.

Membership application

Date: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Annual membership levels (circle one)

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

\$45 - Family \$15 - Student

\$75 - Friend Associate

\$100 - Patron Associate

\$250 - Supporting Associate

\$1,000 - Golden Oak Associate

Send with check, payable to the address below.

The Whittier Narrows Natural Area and Nature Center are located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County in the Supervisory District of Hilda Solis. The natural area and nature center are operated by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates.



Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates
1000 N. Durfee Ave.
South El Monte, CA 91733
Phone (626) 575-5523 • Fax (626) 443-5359
Email: www.wnnca@att.net