



Least Bell's Vireo's Voice

Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates Newsletter

March 2021

LOVING REMINDER And UPDATE

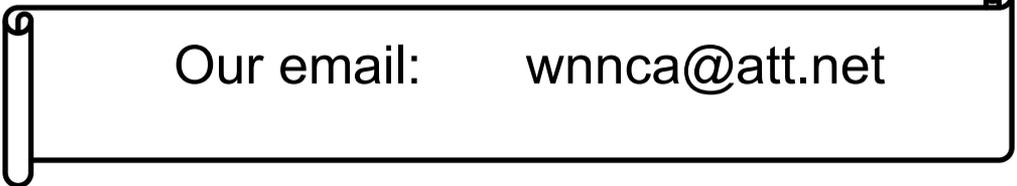
We hope this does not resemble nagging in any shape or form. Just like it says above, a loving reminder. More than ever, with so many changes, including all the refurbishing work that will be done in the Nature Center, we need to know that we have your steadfast support.

When we are able to renew all activities, you might see several changes that are being nurtured now. Many new plants in different locations, a new bee enclosure that looks like a work of art, and some changes in the building itself.



Web site access:

WNNCA.org



March Bird of the Month

California Scrub Jay

(*Aphelocoma cali-*



California scrub jays are very intelligent, as all corvids are, and it has been discovered that the ratio of brain-to-body mass in our jays compares with that of chimps and cetaceans. Studies show that they are the only non-primate showing the ability of planning ahead, and have an enviable memory, capable of remembering 200 food caches and their contents. According to new research at the University of California at Davis, they can summon others to a body of a dead jay and hold strident “funerals” up to one hour.

Lively, raucous jays. It’s a safe bet that we have all enjoyed their shenanigans at one time or another. Impossible to ignore, but don’t ever call them “blue jays.” They used to be lumped with other scrub jays under the label of Western scrub jays, but a split was effected and now they are its own species. Native to the West, scrubbies range from British Columbia to California, and Western Nevada.

The California scrub jay is a medium size bird, app. 11 inches long and a wingspan of 15 inches, sporting a long tail. They mate for life, laying a clutch of 4 to 6 eggs, females doing most of nesting duty, incubating for 16 days. The chicks leave the nest around 18 days after hatching. Chicks are born gray, acquiring the lovely blue of head, wings and tail as they mature.

It is well adapted to urban living, eats frogs lizards, eggs, sometimes other small birds, insects, nuts berries and fruits and vegetables as available. It forages in groups and can become very familiar, not averse to being handled.





Grace's Wisdom Corner

(Featuring a special plant every month)

*This month:
Nevin's Barberry
(Berberis nevinii)*

This is truly a Southern California native. It is an evergreen shrub, growing only in Los Angeles County, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura and San Diego Counties. It also has the dubious distinction of being an endangered species, with an estimate of less than 600 shrubs in existence. Coupled with the usual suspects of human interference, this fascinating species is slow growing, and does not seed frequently, making its protection even more imperative.

It can grow up to 13 feet, with dense foliage in shades of green, with bright yellow flowers and reddish berries, protected by sharp spines. Berries appear in summer, darkening to a shade of blue, and is a favorite of phainopeplas, wrentits, Western bluebirds, thrashers, and hooded orioles, as well as bees and butterflies. Berries are edible, raw or cooked, although very seedy. It can be grown at home, thus increasing the population. Makes an excellent barrier with all those spines, and it will be a fabulous draw for birds, right in your view.



Native populations value this plant very highly for its medicinal properties, containing a substance proven to have antibacterial and antitumor effects, among other benefits not completely studied yet.

Dyes were also obtained from different parts of the shrub, the roots and leaves providing a dark green dye, violet and dark blue from berries.

In the Nature Center, we have the privilege to have several samples, one right on the parking island, another right by Woody's trail, plus a couple more.

SIGHTS



Spirit in a frequent visit, always keeping us grateful of its presence.



New Bee's home waiting for tenants



One of several new plantings by the Eagle Scouts

Membership Application

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Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates (WNNCA) is a volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization actively looking for new members. WNNCA is a chapter of Nature Center Associates (NCA) of Los Angeles County.

WNNCA has been founded and is operated for educational, scientific, charitable and benevolent purposes, primarily concerning the promotion of the welfare and education of children and adults living in Los Angeles County, by the creation and/or operation of interpretive programs of Whittier Narrows Nature Center administered by Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Date ____/____/____
(also used as annual *renewal* date)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Annual Membership Levels (circle one)

- \$30 Individual**
- \$15 Senior Citizen (*over 62*)**
- \$15 Student**
- \$45 Family**
- \$75 Friend Associate**
- \$100 Patron Associate**
- \$250 Supporting Associate**
- \$1,000 Golden Oak Associate**

Checks and Cash accepted in the Gift Shop or
Send Checks payable to: Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates (WNNCA)
to the address above.

Thank you for your support! We look forward to working together.