



# Least Bell's Vireo's Voice

Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates Newsletter

November 2021



**GIFT SHOP IS OPEN**



**Lots of seasonal merchandise  
40 % OFF**

**Saturdays 10:00 am to 3:00 pm**

**Sundays 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm**

## Coming Attractions



**Saturday Nature Walks  
8:00 am**



**Gift Shop Open  
Weekends  
Sat: 10 to 3  
Sun. : 12 to 4  
All 40% off**



Web site access:

**WNNCA.org**

**Our email: wnnca@att.net**

**DECEMBER  
BIRD  
OF THE MONTH**

**YELLOW-RUMPED  
WARBLER**

# November Bird of the Month

## Northern mockingbird

*(Mimus polyglottus)*



Its scientific name means “mimic of many tongues.” They are no less beloved because they are all around. A native of the United States, and present in the entire country, we can hear its songs everyday if we pay attention, having an uncanny ability to imitate sounds, including human generated ones.

Research has shown that they can also repro-

duce frogs and toads calls. John James Audubon called mockingbirds “the king of song.” They even sing at night, and in flight.

Residing across towns and cities, it is seen in parks, open lawns or backyards, searching for insect pray. They also eat berries and

fruits. A familiar behavior consists on leaping into the air and fluttering back down. With patches on wings and outer tail feathers, they are unmistakable. They also land on the ground with spread wings. There are a couple of theories as to exactly what is the purpose of this.

Mockingbirds nest in shrubs and trees, the male starts several nest and the female will choose one. Sometimes the female will lay another clutch while the male is still tending to the fledglings. The clutch is from 3 to 6 eggs, and the incubation period is 12 to 13 days. The nestlings leave in about the same length of time. Extremely territorials, they seem fearless even in the



presence of larger birds.

So, every time you see that tell-tale flash of white in the wins and tail, do not think “It is just a mockingbird.” Its energy and plain beauty, and its beautiful songs, are a gift from Nature that can lift our spirits if we just acknowledge its presence.



# Grace's

## Wisdom Corner

(Featuring a special plant every month)

**Coffee berry**

**(*Frangula californica*)**

Not spectacular in appearance, coffee berry is a dense evergreen shrub that can grow to 15 feet. Its leaves are dark green with a reddish tint, flowers are small and modest, greenish-white, and many times dusty looking. It produces berries that start out green, then yellow, red, purple, and finally black, indicating ripeness.



Berries are edible when ripe. There are claims that seeds are edible, and also claims that they can be used as a laxative, but in the wrong dose can cause nausea and vomiting.

Native populations, whose territory centered in San Diego County and border with Baja California, used the bark and berries boiled in a decoction to use as a physic or to treat poison oak rash. Also, an infusion of berries could be taken as a tonic.

Coffee berry plants are sturdy, like open woodland, canyons, and chaparral. Apparently its proper name is California buckthorn, but it is more commonly called coffee berry because of its similarity to a coffee plant.

Spring flowering →



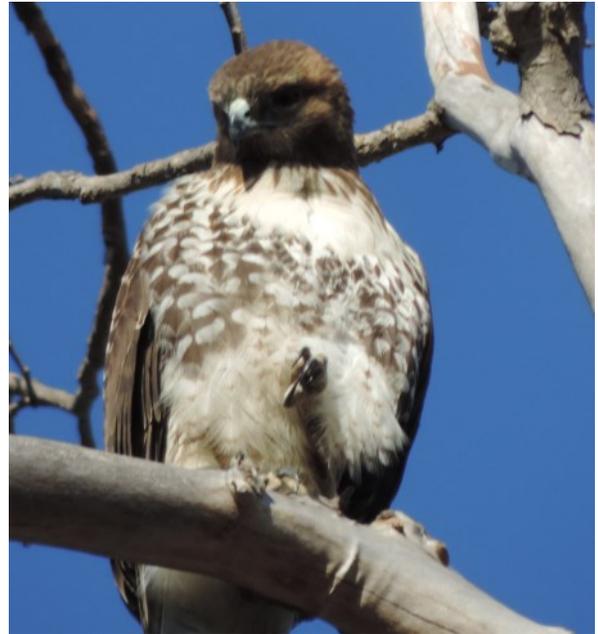
# LAKE AQUATICUS IS NO MORE



In a recent fire, the WNNC lost approximately 10 acres, in the area around what it used to be Lake Aquaticus. It has been said that the area, when and if restored, will not include any plans for a lake.

When a group of us visited the area, a pair of vermilion flycatchers were spotted amid the desolation, almost as to alleviate the bleakness of the sight, reminding us that if we allow nature to evolve undisturbed, it will heal.

However, even recognizing the function of fire in Nature, it is difficult to see wanton destruction on a place that many of us look upon as an extension of home turf. Let us hope that this scene will not be repeated at least, not caused by the careless hand of man.



A rare visit  
Lewis  
woodpecker

Photo by Lou



A bedraggled Snowy  
Plover, victim of the re-  
cent oil spill on the  
coast. In spite of it all,  
he will survive!

Photos copied from file

