



Least Bell's Vireo's Voice

Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates Newsletter

October 2021

WE ARE ALMOST THERE



Construction is finished, building was released for occupation. Colleen and her staff, plus WNNCA volunteers, emptied the storage bin and move it all into the building. Now the task is to put everything in its place. The date for opening is near.

Web site access:

WNNCA.org

Our email: wnnca@att.net

Coming Attractions



Building released for use after renovation.. WNNCA will be preparing to open giftshop and occupy an office



Starting September 24,
Hogwart's Movie Nights \$3.00
Fridays and Saturdays, 7:00 pm.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED:
reservations.lacounty.gov

NOVEMBER BIRD OF THE MONTH

**Northern Mockingbird
(*Mimus polyglotus*)**

CHRISTINA RECEIVES VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD AT EATON CANYON



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On September 11, at the NCA annual meeting, where volunteers from the different Nature Centers are recognized, it was Christina's turn to be thanked for her willingness to help our Association, with unfailing kindness and cheer. The award is very well deserved. Lovely lunch under the Eaton Canyon oaks followed.



But that was not all. The following Saturday, at our regular WNNCA monthly meeting, we celebrated some more. We shared some yummy food, and even Christina's sister graced us with her presence. We are fortunate to have Christina as our member, with her passion for nature and her helpful disposition.



October Bird of the Month

House finch

(Carpodacus mexicanus)



Photo by Lou

Abundant and adaptable are two attributes that house finches possess. They are about 6 inches, with streaked underparts, and head, bib and rump typically red, although also showing up in orange or yellow. Females and juveniles are less colorful, showing streaked underparts that can become very familiar to birders.

They are native to Western United States, but in 1940 a small number was illegally released in New York and spread rapidly,. Today, they are seen all over the country, including Hawaii. They have been even called "invasive," but they do not seem to care. They take care good care of themselves, able to be aggressive and opportunistic in finding food..

They eat all kinds of plant offerings, from seeds to fruits, including poison oak seeds, as well as some insects. They like to nest in cavities, whether in buildings, hanging plants, outdoor decorations or reusing abandoned nests. The incubation lasts from 12 to 14 days and the young leave 11 to 19 days after hatching. They can have two or more broods a year. The female builds the nest, both parents feed. The male sometimes feeds the female during incubation.

Mites infestations are common in the nest, more harmful to the male chicks than to the females, so the mother lays the eggs containing females first, in order to reduce the time of exposure to mites for the male chicks. Neat trick!

Predators are often cats and Cooper's hawks, but other birds , rats, skunks, racoons and even some squirrels, raid their nests, destroying the next generation. Global warming seems to be influencing their range, but they are still forcefully claiming their places in our yards,, even managing hummingbird feeders to their advantage.



Photo by Tom



Photo by Lou



Grace's Wisdom Corner

(Featuring a special plant every month)

Sugar Bush
(*Rhus ovata*)

Sugar bush, sugar sumac , or mountain laurel, is a compact evergreen shrub, with oval leaves, dark green on top and lighter below . Blooms in April and May. Flowers are small, but densely grouped in terminal clusters. Fruits are also small and reddish, covered with a sugary substance and said to be edible. Not a spectacular presence, but remains attractive all year.

Grows in Southern California, Arizona and Baja. Likes full sun, but requires little water.

Some natives used it to treat colds and coughs and some used the seeds to make a lemonade-like drink.



Growing in our parking lot island

