

Photo by Ross Griswold



Spring 2014
Volume 38 Issue 1

**First Saturday
of the Month Tour:**

**Free tours on the
first Saturday of
each month from
9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**

**Last Saturday
of the Month Tour:**

**FREE bird talk and
nature walk at the
Bolsa Chica
Ecological Reserve.
Led by Amigos docents.
9:00 am.**

**Carpooling is encouraged as
parking at the Bolsa Chica
Ecological Reserve is limited.**

Published quarterly by
Amigos de Bolsa Chica
P. O. Box 1563
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
(714) 840-1575 (Phone/Fax)
www.amigosdebolsachica.org
info@amigosdebolsachica.org
Editor: Tom Anderson
Graphic Designer: Carol Rice

President: Jerry Donohue
Vice President: Dennis Pope
Secretary: Shirley Dettloff
Treasurer: Brian Westcott

Directors:

Thomas Anderson	Vic Leipzig
Dave Carlberg	Tom Livengood
Margaret Carlberg	Barry Nerhus
David Casey	Mel Nutter
Dean Elder	Jennifer Robins
Charles Falzon	Jim Robins
Craig Frampton	Office Coordinator:
Jim Katapodis	Laura Holdenwhite

2014 Amigos Docent Class

By Jennifer Robins

We are thrilled to have 15 new docents for our private and public tours and booth events. The Amigos de Bolsa Chica Docent Class was held for six weeks on Wednesday nights beginning January 8, 2014 at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center. The History session was taught by Chuck Drescher, the Restoration session was taught by Jim Robins, the Ecology session was taught by Dr. Vic Leipzig, the Birds and Endangered Species sessions were taught by Barbara Sentovich, the Fishes and Marine Invertebrates session was taught by Kelly O'Reilly and the Native American session was taught by Dr. Lou Murray. Several experienced docents came back for refresher sessions and shared their experiences with the new docents. Included in the class was a Perimeter Tour led by Vic and a Bird Tour led by Barbara Sentovich.

The 15 new docents are Arthur Barraza, David Beeninga, Terri Lynn Bidle, Richard Boncuk, Michelle Cooper, Nancy Curtis, Blake Enyart, Michelle Gibbons, Merilee Hall, Terry Hall, Kathy Hope, Terry Jorris, Rachael Lloyd, Thomas Powell and Kyle Sirovy. Facilitators for the class were Jennifer Robins and Patti Cacho-Negrete with assistance from Jim Robins, Jerry Donohue and Laura Holdenwhite.



New Docents from left to right: Dave Beeninga, Terri Bidle, Rachael Lloyd, Nancy Curtis, Terry Hall, Merilee Hall, Michelle Cooper, Terry Jorris, Tom Powell, Kathy Hope, Richard Boncuk, Arthur Barraza. Absent: Kyle Sirovy, Michelle Gibbons and Blake Enyart. Photo by Patti Cacho-Negrete.

Fishing Resumes in Outer Bolsa Bay

By Vic Leipzig

For good or ill, fishing is once again allowed at Bolsa Chica. Ever since the beginning of the Ecological Reserve back in the 1970's, there was a small area of the bluffs near the north parking lot where fishing was allowed. Then in 2011, erosion of those bluffs became so severe that public safety concerns led DFW reserve manager Carla Navarro to close the path near the bluff edge. Since the bluff edge itself was closed, fishing was simply not possible. Most of the bluff edge remains closed to the public to this day.

However, the department is obligated to allow some fishing at Bolsa Chica under the terms of the Marine Life Protection Act and the implementation plan adopted by the Fish & Game Commission. So this past January (January 7 to be exact) Carla Navarro reopened a very small stretch of the bluff edge so that there is

once again a small fishing opportunity. The area in question runs for about 30 yards along the channel south of the steel pedestrian bridge.

Fishing is controversial. On the one hand, fishing is a traditional pastime that unites people with nature. On the other hand, items of fishing gear (such as monofilament line, lead sinkers, and barbed hooks) are frequently accidentally lost or carelessly discarded by fishermen and can be hazardous to people and wildlife. In January of this year, an osprey, tangled in fishing line, was observed struggling and ultimately drowning at Bolsa Chica. The Wildlife Care Center at Newland and PCH must frequently deal with birds that are injured or killed by fishing gear. Amigos President Jerry Donohue urges all fishermen to practice their sport with care for the wildlife that we all love.

New Interpretive Signs for Bolsa Chica

By Dave Carlberg

One day late last year, frequent visitors to the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve were surprised to discover that certain prominent and familiar features had disappeared from the parking lots. They were the tall interpretive structures that had dominated the parking lots and blocked views of the wetland since the establishment of the Ecological Reserve in 1978. Long since faded and outdated, the panels along with their heavy wooden supports were removed by state Fish and Wildlife personnel to be replaced in early December by a set of three colorful and informative, four-foot wide and waist-high interpretive panels.

The new panels are the first of about twenty informational signs that eventually will be installed along trails and on overlooks throughout the reserve. Planning for the panels began in 2009 when the three Bolsa Chica organizations, Bolsa Chica Conservancy, the Amigos de Bolsa Chica and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust met with Reserve manager Kelly O'Reilly and representatives of the Acorn Group, a distinguished planning and design company. Out of the meeting came a set of principles and a master plan for the nearly two dozen interpretive panels. Over the next four years themes, subthemes and design criteria were established for the first six signs. It required several months for the three organizations to agree to each of the sign's illustrations and precise



Photo by Dave Carlberg.

wording, for the signs must be accurate, concise, eye-catching and readable by visitors of all ages.

The themes covered by the three newly installed signs are "Wetlands at Work", "Enduring Presence" (Native American history) and "The Battle over Bolsa Chica". Themes to be covered by future signs will include contemporary history, biological diversity, dune and wetland ecology, restoration and other topics. To withstand weather and human abuse, the signs are made of robust resin and steel. The three Bolsa Chica organizations are providing the funds for the cost of the signs, which runs around \$4000 to \$5000 per panel while California Fish and Wildlife personnel are doing the installations. Oxy USA also has contributed significantly toward the costs. Obviously it will be many years before all of the signs are completed and installed.

The Endangered Species Act: A Forty-Year Check-up

By Dave Carlberg

In December, 1973 President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA was written in response to the rampant loss of plants and animals due to hunting, destruction of habitat and other human causes to the extent that many species became extinct. Now that the act is 40 years old, how is it doing? That depends on whom you ask. An optimist will say that in the 40 years of the life of the act, out of the 2000 or so threatened and endangered species that are under its protection, only fewer than 20 have been removed from the list because the act failed them and they have become extinct. A pessimist will tell you that only 31 out of the 2000 species have been delisted because their numbers have recovered and no longer risk extinction. Among the few successes are bald eagles, brown pelicans, peregrine falcons, Florida manatees, American alligators, grizzly bears and black-footed ferrets. The situation was clearly summarized by Dr. Peter Alagona of U. C. Santa Barbara. "... the endangered species act has done a really good job of preventing extinctions, but it's done a really poor job of promoting the recovery of species that are on the list." In other words, how can we get more species off the list.

Recovery requires significant increases in populations, something far more complex than simply encouraging the endangered species to step up their reproduction. Whether one talks about birds, mammals, reptiles or other species, reproduction requires the proper habitats. However, it's not enough, for example, just to provide ample nesting habitat for birds, sufficient food also must be readily available to feed the young, and the young must be protected from predators. Bolsa Chica is an excellent example of how wildlife specialists have been eminently successful in accomplishing the first two criteria, but providing protection from predators continues to be a problem. Breeding of the endangered California least tern in Bolsa Chica has been only moderately successful due to loss of eggs and chicks by coyotes, crows and other predators.

Developers, farmers, stockmen and others interests who exploit open land that is used by endangered species would rather see the law weakened or eliminated entirely. Fortunately the ESA has been able to survive a number of attempts to limit its ability to protect endangered species, but threats rise with regularity. The gray wolf is the poster child when it comes to political influences impacting the ESA. In June of 2013, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to end total federal protection of the gray wolf, that is, delist it from the ESA. As a New York Times editorial described the action, "This was politics masquerading as science." Such proposals are supposed to be reviewed by a panel of scientists, but when three members of the panel failed to live up to the USFWS's anti-wolf stance, they were "delisted", as one victim put it. The USFWS has set March 27, 2014 as the deadline for public comments regarding the proposed delisting of the gray wolf, after which USFWS will make its final decision. Follow these links for more information:

www.fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery/

www.onearth.org/articles/2014/02/flawed-science-behind-efforts-to-delist-gray-wolves

Another potential threat to the ESA is the formation of a so-called Endangered Species Act Working Group, spearheaded by Rep. Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) and Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.). Rep. Hastings has also been involved in attempts to delist the gray wolf. The group released a report in early February, 2014 in which several points to reform the ESA were described, including making it harder for environmental organizations and private citizens to sue the government over breaches in the ESA, and giving states more power over the protection of endangered species. See the working group web site at <http://esaworkinggroup.hastings.house.gov>. The group bears watching. In the meantime, environmental organizations and concerned individuals are on the watch tower, ready for the next attack on the four-decades-old ESA.



FLOW News

By Dennis Pope

On January 28 the FLOW Team hosted our first high school class for an exciting morning filled with water sampling, chemical and microscopic analysis and Bolsa Chica wetlands touring. This class was approximately 40 ninth grade students along with their teacher Alejandra Gonzalez from the Sante Fe High School. FLOW team members included Amigos docents and citizen scientists from our regular Friday FLOW activities.

Following an introduction at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor's center, the class was divided into two groups. One was bused to the South parking lot to collect water samples from the footbridge, measure water temperature and salinity and to go on a mini-tour of the wetlands. The other group stayed at the Visitor's Center to conduct water sample analysis and microscopic identification of collected plankton species. Mid-morning the two groups switched locations and activities. Students had prepared beforehand for the field trip in their school classes and also received recommended post trip follow up activities. The opportunity for extensive one-on-one science skills development coupled with the wetlands sampling and mini-tour offered all a unique and fun learning experience. Additional class visits in the spring are scheduled for March, April and May.

Also in January the FLOW Team had a special opportunity to assist the California Department of Health.



The class is shown how to identify phytoplankton with microscopy at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center



Citizen Scientists Brian Westcott, left, and Jim Robins show the class how to perform chemical analysis on samples of water collected at the tidal inlet.

Continued from page 4 –

After reviewing submission of one of our Friday water samples, they were able to confirm the presence of the phytoplankton *Alexandrium*. Our citizen scientists had also, as part of our regular Friday routine and prior to sample submission, identified and noted the same *Alexandrium*. This species is one of many that produce toxins with the potential to harm marine life.

Next the Department of Health requested that we collect a sample of mussels from the same area the water had been sampled from. In this case that was Bolsa Chica tidal inlet. Two of our citizen scientist volunteers collected the mussels and then packed them in ice and mailed them to the Department of Health. Not long after that, we received confirmation from the Department of Health that the mussels had shown indications of PSP (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning). PSP is very harmful to shellfish and is caused by toxins (i.e., saxitoxins) produced by the species *Alexandrium*. In this instance the Department of Health alert level for PSP is 80 micrograms/100grams sampled and our mussel sample was found to be at 38micrograms/100grams sampled. While this situation did not warrant any additional action, the early warning identification and testing success is an excellent example of how citizen scientists can continue to work with government agencies for the benefit of all our communities.

If you think you might be interested in participating in future FLOW activities or possibly arranging for a class tour, please contact the Amigos de Bolsa Chica at (714) 840-1575 or by email at flow@amigosdebolsachica.org.



Water sample collection at the walk bridge in the Reserve.



Citizen Scientist Dennis Pope tells the class how to observe and record water salinity and weather conditions that affect the amounts and kinds of phytoplankton found in the water. All photos by Joana Tavares-Reager.

President's Tern

By Jerry Donohue

Five years ago I was contemplating retirement and what that held in store for me. I had been a teacher for 35 years and enjoyed the interaction of ideas and young minds. I had been an Amigos member for 30+ years but basically in name only. I had ridden my bike many times past the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve and occasionally stopped to watch the birds. My wife Lori and I decided we would take the docent class. This wonderful class infused me with new insights on what a precious resource is in our midst yet all too often taken for granted. Five years later I have landed in the President's chair after being tutored and mentored by our great docents and volunteers.

In our docent class we talk about niches that allow a certain organism to exist in a specific environment. I see many niches within the framework of Amigos that allows us to accomplish our mission statement. We need to renew our advocacy for the "preservation, restoration and maintenance of the Bolsa Chica." Some of us may have that thought that this mission has been accomplished since we have a functioning wetland and the Department of Fish and Wildlife has a physical presence on the site. Yet oil is still being extracted

within the Reserve and questions persist concerning silting in the full tidal basin.

Our educational programs tie book learning to the real world on a docent-led field trip. This month we celebrate the one year anniversary of our FLOW program. Every Friday, neither rain nor wind keeps our FLOW volunteers from collecting their water samples to test for invasive algae and harmful chemicals. Middle and high schools, now send students who perform the same tests as our Friday Citizen Scientists. This month, we have also formed a co-operative association with Bolsa Chica State Beach and hope to continue our summer Junior Ranger program again, built on the FLOW model. We are also planning evening campground programs extolling the virtues of crossing PCH and seeing life on the other side.

Finally, I would hope that the 3 wetland groups can find common ground in the new year and see opportunities for cooperation to enhance Bolsa Chica's reputation as an ecological gem in the midst of civilization. Again, your continued support of our programs brings wetland education to young and old alike. Thank you.

Thank You to Year-End Donors and New Members!

Many thanks go to all who contributed to Amigos year-end fundraising drive. Those who wished to be recognized:

John Bateman, Charlene & Ralph Bauer, Elizabeth Bolinger, Barbara Delgleize, Marilyn L. Harris, Mary Ellen Houseal, Jeff & Nancy Jacobs, Jim Karis, Paul Kratz, Sally & Bob Kurz, Larry & Karen Lee, Dianne & Tom Livengood, Glenn Moeller, Christan Mondor, Florence Purdy, Raymond Sherrard, Gary Stewart DDS, Marge Swanson, Terri Taylor, Dave & Sharon Telford, and Barbara Tilmant.

New Members:

Conrad Banks, Robert B Banzett, Murnez Blades, Richard Boncuk, Richard Boulter, Mary Jean Cason, Caroline Cass, Angelique Crest, Nancy Curtis, Rick Diamond, Lesly Garcia, Peter Gordon, Jim & Lisa Harbin, Mark Hole, Kathleen Hope, Terry Jorris, James Kennedy, Elaine S. Kruempelstaedter, Eva Lydick, James Maley, Lance E. Marcus, Ann Michelangelo, Barry Nerhus, Aaron Pai, Marilyn A. Rowe, Andreas Saloman, Connie Smith, Stacie Soucy, Stacey Steinhart, Kevin Sullivan, Eric Tate, Dave & Sharon Telford, Dan Ward, Eric Watkins, and Cynthia Wyels.



Amigos April Events, Volunteers Needed

Earth Day at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve

Saturday, April 12, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Amigos will have 4 booths, general information, merchandise, history and kids activities.

Annual Environmental Fair at the Deane Dana Friendship Park and Nature Center in San Pedro

Saturday, April 19, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

The Amigos booth will have a Plastics and Pollution Activity, photo display and informational brochures.

MUZEO Green Expo

Saturday, April 26, Noon - 3:00 pm

241 S. Anaheim Blvd, Anaheim

MUZEO is Southern California's newest museum, a center for arts, knowledge, entertainment and culture.

The Amigos booth will have a Plastics and Pollution Activity, photo display and informational brochures.

www.muzeo.org/home.php

BDR Fun Run at Bolsa Chica State Beach

Sunday, April 27, 10:30 am - 1:00 pm.

Amigos will have an information and kids' activities table.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jennifer Robins, 714-894-8381 or jjrobins@dslextreme.com.

Brunch Save The Date – June 29

By David Casey

Spring is already here and summer will be upon us before you know it. The Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve is beginning to burst with new energy as it welcomes terns, skimmers and many more migratory friends that join us each year. The warmer months also bring with them the opportunity for Amigos to join together and celebrate our friendships and accomplishments at the Annual Bolsa Brunch.

The Brunch will be held on June 29 at the Seaciff Country Club and promises to provide a wonderful opportunity to renew old friendships and enjoy fellowship with new Amigos and to also introduce potential new members to the Amigos de Bolsa Chica family.

There will be great food as well as opportunity tickets for wonderful prizes and a silent auction to benefit our outreach program for children who would otherwise not have a chance to learn and experience nature in such an exciting environment.

Please put the date of June 29th on your calendar – it will be here before you know it – see you there!

Amigos at the Festival of the Whales

By Jerry Donohue

Sunday March 2, Amigos again participated in Ocean Awareness Day at the Festival of the Whales in Dana Point. Ten minutes before we arrived at the site, we were hit by a deluge of rain that led some of us to think that the event would be cancelled. We waited out the weather and were rewarded with a cool but dry day. Our brave band of docents included Jim and Jennifer Robins, Nancy Boyd-Batstone, Laura Holdenwhite, Jerry Donohue, Chuck Drescher and new docents Nancy Curtis and Arthur Barraza. Although the number of people visiting our interactive games (Birds and Beaks, Plastics and Marine Mammals) was lower due to the inclement weather, the enthusiasm of docents remained.



NON. PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Huntington Beach, CA
 Permit No. 486

THE TERN TIDE

Volume 38, Issue 1
 www.amigosdebolsachica.org
 info@amigosdebolsachica.org
 (714) 840-1575 (Phone/Fax)

- 2014 Amigos Docent Class***
- Fishing Resumes***
- The Endangered Species Act***
- California Least Tern 2013 Breeding Results***
- President's Tern***
- Thank You Donors and New Members***
- Amigos Events***

AMIGOS DE BOLSA CHICA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I support the specific and primary purpose of Amigos de Bolsa Chica, which is to advocate the preservation, restoration and maintenance of the Bolsa Chica, to encourage the public acquisition of all the wetlands and sufficient surrounding open space to create a viable ecosystem, and to provide education about the importance of wetlands.

ANNUAL DUES

- \$ 10 Student
- \$ 25 Individual
- \$ 40 Family
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$1000 Life Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Additional Contribution:

\$_____ Fund operational expenses \$_____ Fund education projects \$_____ Total enclosed

Please check if you are interested in volunteering for:

Education outreach ___ Grantwriting ___ Social media ___ Wetlands cleanup ___ Leading tours ___ Fundraising ___

*All contributions to Amigos de Bolsa Chica are tax-deductible as allowed by law under IRS Code Section 501(c)3.
 No goods or services were provided in consideration of this gift.*

Return application to: Amigos de Bolsa Chica, P.O. Box 1563, Huntington Beach, CA 92647