

# Hastings Reservation News      October, 1990

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## Hastings Natural History Reservation

A Biological Field Station of the Museum  
of Vertebrate Zoology, University of  
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## Weather Report: Warm and Dry Weather Continues.....

October weather continued dry. We had two cloudy days with minor rainfalls dropping a total of 0.10 inch. It was very warm early in the month with highs in the low 90's. By Halloween, we had a hard frost and the daily highs were only in the low 60's (F). Most days were warm, dry and breezy.

Deer, often in groups of up to 50, continued to breed near the offices and along Big Creek, but by the end of the month only 10-20 individuals were consistently present during the early mornings. Ground squirrels seem particularly abundant near the offices this year. Our volunteers removed a 300+ pound European boar from its former lairs along Big Creek. Feral pig damage remains relatively low with only minor areas showing rooting activity.

## Research and Teaching: DNA Lab Work ,Oak Symposium, Fall Classes

Walt Koenig and Janis Dickinson spent the month in Berkeley, conducting DNA fingerprinting at the MVZ-Orrego lab. Walt and Janis returned to Hastings on weekends. Walt hosted Wesley Hochachka, a potential MVZ post-doc, for a weekend here. Amy Knight, our only field assistant for the woodpecker project, is holding down the fort in the bunkhouse. Mark Stanback and Nancy Popkin (Red House) continued field observations of their woodpecker groups, and Phil Hooge (Fanny's Cabin) developed, with Elizabeth Ross' help, computer-based overlays for aerial photographs of Hastings. Jim Griffin spent the month organizing a major oak symposium held in Davis from October 31 to November 2. Jim's samples from his usual set of oak trees revealed that acorn production in 1990 was mediocre to medium and many acorns seem to be infested with insects. Jim has never seen the Scrub Jays so aggressively removing the acorns from the crowns of the trees. Elizabeth Ross, MVZ, banded jays and collected acorns for later tempting jays into traps as a part of her ongoing doctoral research. Pam Muick (UCB-Forestry) spent 2 days taking data from her acorn seedling plots. Susan Lingle moved into the Hasting Cabin on October 8 and spent the rest of the month filming breeding behavior and the running behavior of the mule deer here. Susan is comparing the ways white-tailed deer (from elsewhere) and resident mule deer (a.k.a black-tailed deer) move during predator escape behavior sequences. Susan is making both high speed film recordings as well as video recordings. John Barthell (UCB-Entomology) worked with his solitary bee traps on October 14 and 15. Tyson Holmes, (UC Davis) spent a day re-sampling individual oak trees he had marked last year, again noting a rather poor acorn crop.

Dr. Sue Opp, California State University- Hayward, and 8 students used the Robertson House over the 19th in their field class in entomology. Dr. Tom Parker and 24 students from San Francisco State used the Robertson House the 27-28 during their annual Field Botany class. Both groups had a great time and really appreciated the accommodations.

## Administrative: Mark Johnson Joins Hastings Staff

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Maggiara Brother Drilling replaced the pump motor Oct 2. I sent in the paperwork to Betty Holland at MVZ to claim this on the university insurance.

Dr. Gordon Frankie donated a 1976 Toyota Land Cruiser to Hastings. It needs to have the main bearings rebuilt, and it is now in a garage in Berkeley having this repair done. John Barthell directed the towing of the vehicle from storage at the Gill Tract to the garage. Betty Holland moved the PO through purchasing for us. We expect to have the vehicle ready by late November. Thanks to all who are helping with this project.

Dr. Frank Pitelka and Mark Stromberg interviewed candidates for the Reserve Steward position on October 9 and 10. The position was held open for four weeks, until Oct 26. After review of all the applicants, we offered the position to Mark Johnson. Mark accepted and will start work at Hastings on November 14. Mark brings over 20 years of experience in the construction trades to us, having worked the last 8 years at the Navy Postgraduate School's housing maintenance shop. Mark will be working with "only" our 24 buildings, a welcome change from the work he had done on over 900 units at the NPGS. Welcome Mark. We all look forward to working with you.

Now let's see....this makes three persons with the name "Mark" working here....

Last month, I wrote up the story of how the Robertson House passed down from the Robertson family to Fanny Arnold and then to the University. My Gentle Reader observed two mistakes. As this newsletter serves as a record of sorts, I couldn't agree more that I should correct my errors. With apologies to all concerned, the correct spelling of our source of historical information is Amelie Elkington. Further, Flavia Flaven-Edgren's father was the playwright Martin Flavin. We also learned that Josephine Zane, [Mary Josephine Zane] who lived in the Robertson House, passed away Nov 6, 1990. Josephine's sister, Elizabeth Goodwin, still lives in Pebble Beach. Amelie Elkington continues to document the Robertson family history and recently has forwarded copies of voting and marriage papers from the Robertson family.

Mark Stromberg attended the Natural Areas Association meeting in Concord on Oct 17 to host a group meeting for NRS. Mark Stromberg also facilitated a work session at a Science Fair Workshop for primary and secondary teachers put on by the Monterey County Office of Education on Oct 20. Mark prepared a proposal for a radio communication system at Hastings and submitted it to Jeff Kennedy-NRS. Mark met with Tom Gray of Rancho San Carlos on Oct 25 to discuss access to RSC for researchers from Hastings.

## Facilities, Maintenance and Buildings

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The usual variety of things needed attention. Maggiara Brothers Drilling repaired our well motor on Oct 2, and I sent the paperwork for the insurance claim to Betty Holland. The well continues to produce water, we can only hope it rains. The Arnold Spring continues to be dry. Mark Stanback and Stromberg moved the beds from the Schoolhouse garage rooms to the Green House for storage. We also sorted and threw out some ancient mattresses. The hot water heater in Fanny's cabin sprung a leak. We called in a plumber from the Village House to replace the heater. Luckily, we had just set up a standing purchase order with this plumber, but at their rates, we will use them only in an emergency. We bought two lamps for the Hastings Cabin and Phil Hooge installed them. Jim Griffin and Mark Stromberg ordered the parts for a remote rain gauge to be placed on Poison Oak Hill. The parts arrived and we assembled the device and tested it at the headquarters. Jim Griffin continued to monitor the water tank and turn on the pump when necessary. Phil Hooge and Mark Stanback made a recycling trip to the village. I cleaned out several water bars and culverts on the dirt roads. I also had to fix the gutters on the Robertson house; several inadequate screws had to be replaced. Two new 8-foot banquet tables were purchased and installed in the porch at the Robertson House.