

Hastings Natural History Reservation

A Biological Field Station Office: (408) 659-2664
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology Fax: 659-3649
University of California, Berkeley
38601 E. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley, CA 93924

Manager/Editor..... Dr. Mark R. Stromberg Research Ecologist..... Dr. Jim R. Griffin
Research Zoologist.... Dr. Walt Koenig Research Associate..... Dr. Janis Dickinson
Reserve Steward.....Mark Johnson

Hastings is a Reserve in
the University of California
Natural Reserve System

July 1991

Weather Report

July weather was clear and cool. Weather data from Monterey are summarized each month by Bob Renard of the Navy Post Graduate School. He reported that May and June this year were the coldest, on average, in the last 25-30 years. July no doubt continued this trend. The first and last week had highs near 100 (°F). Otherwise, daily high temperatures were in the 70's and lows in the 50's. By the end of July, the general landscape was dusty and brown. Many California buckeyes were dropping dried leaves. Walking through ripgut in tennis shoes can be crippling this month. Face flies are remarkably few this year, perhaps due to the hard freeze last winter or perhaps the continued cold weather. Coveys of tiny quail now scurry down the dirt roads. Our resident gray foxes and raccoon have discovered a way to feed at the jay feeders put out just a few months ago.

Research and Education

Birds

Walt Koenig and affiliated field assistants updated the data files with this year's information on the cooperatively breeding acorn woodpeckers. Dr. Rob Magrath, Australian National University, visited with Walt and Janis from July 1-4 to discuss studies of cooperative breeding. Steve Schoech, University of Washington, visited with Dr. Koenig on July 22 to discuss the role of hormones in cooperative breeding. Dr. Janis Dickinson and her field assistants worked on recording data from this summer's bluebird and beetle studies. Jill Goldstein, Pippa Shepherd and Roger Emond lived in the bunkhouse. Geoff Morse and Dan Albano lived in the Schoolhouse Carriage House bedrooms. Pippa Shepherd and Jill Goldstein finished their work and departed Hastings on July 12. Roger Emond and Danny Albano departed Hastings on July 15. Geoff stayed on through July, house sitting for the Strombergs.

Dr. Mark Stanback (UCB-MVZ) and his wife Nancy kept up the Red House. They are preparing to move to Seattle in mid August when Mark will start a post doctoral appointment at the University of Washington. Mark continued his field work on the acorn woodpeckers. Nancy is now working full time in the education department at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Elizabeth Ross (UCB-MVZ) was house sitting Philip Hooge's garden at Fanny's cabin. Elizabeth continued with her field research on Scrub Jays.

Dr. Morné Duplessis, a fellow at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of Ornithological Studies, University of Cape Town lived in the Hastings Cabin. Dr. Duplessis continued his experimental augmentation of food to woodpecker groups. Morné is also gathering data on the California ground squirrels, watching to see which squirrels are giving the alarm calls and which other squirrels may benefit.

Lichen Ecology

Jean Knops, (ASU-Tempe) and his wife Anne Royalty were in the Bell House in July. Last month I forgot to mention that Dr. Tom Nash, (ASU-Tempe) arrived at Hastings with two temporary field assistants, Mike Kuzel and Robyn Binder. Mike arrived June 6 and stayed through July 6. Robyn arrived June 4 and stayed through July 5, with a brief return July 28- Aug 3. Shorty Boucher (UC-Berkeley, Sagehen Field Station) worked with Jean last month as well, from June 8-11. Jean coordinated data collection on the lichens in Hastings' blue oak woodland. Robyn conducted an independent study of the abundance of plants categorized as simply "grasses" or "leafy plants" along the fence heading west from the Lower Barn. Grasses were relatively more dominant on the grazed areas while leafy plants were more abundant on the reservation.

Oak Trees and Vegetation

Jim Griffin returned to North Field to once again inventory all the oak seedlings. This work was started by Dr. Keith White, resident botanist in the 1960's. By mapping the locations of over 150 trees, Dr. Griffin is determining the fates of oak trees in the eroded, open hillsides. All of these oaks were apparently planted by Scrub Jays. Evidently, the jays did not plant many acorns in the tall grass. Pam Muick gathered data on her seedling oaks June 5-7, although I failed to

mention this last month. Pam Muick returned July 7 to gather more data.

Dr. Griffin started to write up the Flora of the San Benito Mountain Region. Joseph Silveira (US Fish and Wildlife Service) visited Dr. Griffin on July 25 to discuss oak woodlands and maritime chaparral.

Woodrats

Once a familiar face at Hastings, Dr. Pat Kelly, returned July 7-12 to census the woodrat populations he studied as part of his doctoral dissertation based on field work done here several years ago. Cathy Kelly, who once graced the offices of MVZ, joined Pat on this trip to Hastings from their base at UC-Riverside, as did the newest Kelly, 3 year-old Kieran.

Bees

John Barthell (UCB-Entomology) once again spent every Sunday and Wednesday at Hastings. John brought a series of entomologists with him on these day trips, including Rebekah Stone (UCB) and M. Prentice (UCB). The bees John are studying dwindled down over July to only a very few individuals as the flowers also declined. John removed his large experimental boards with artificial bee nests from the headquarters area and Corral Field.

Carmel Ranch Company Research Project

Mark Stromberg and Jim Griffin each took several weeks off to tour northern Wyoming and points south, so the Carmel Valley grassland research was pretty much on hold. Mark finished proofing the field sheets and prepared the grass species data for entry to the spread sheets.

Cini Brown, UCD-Agronomy graduate student has not yet been able to reach a decision regarding our offer made last month to join the project. Evidently a variety of people are on vacation or away from the offices, thus delaying things until August.

Classes did not use Hastings in July.

Facilities

As the field assistants and researchers dispersed, Mark Johnson took on several projects which had been needing attention for some time. Our entrance sign is now completely new and looks great! Look for it on at Martin Road. Our holding corral in the field opposite the Martin Road entrance had been falling down for years, but once again is functional. And, a whole crop of new, engraved wooden signs for the housing units, buildings, offices and residences is just about ready. Mark is engraving redwood planks and will be finished painting and installing them soon. Mark mowed the regrowth of weeds and painted the bridge hand rails and fences in the headquarters area.

July saw the usual list of household repairs, including some notable refrigerator failures. (If any of you out there reading this have a functional refrigerator you could donate, or sell at a good price, please let us know.) Mark kept up with the usual recycling, vehicle repairs, patrol, and general fix up needs as they arose.

After reviewing floor plans for the Bunkhouse, they were mailed to a local contractor for initial cost estimates. Fanny Arnold and Mark Stromberg continued to discuss various options and plans for the Bunkhouse.

Mark Stromberg met with several members of the Carmel Cal Alumni and Mike Desler (UC Development Office) to establish a fundraising program to help fill the gaps left after the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology's budget was cut. Recent budget cuts at UC Berkeley have meant continued cuts in our facility maintenance, and we hope we can find the support we need to maintain our Hastings operations.