

# 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 Zoologist.... Dr. Walt Koenig  
Reserve Steward..... Mark Johnson

Research Ecologist..... Dr. Jim R. Griffin  
Research Associate..... Dr. Janis Dickinson  
Research Associate..... Frank Sala

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

June-July, 1992

## Weather Report

June and July were typically hot and dry. Traces of heavy fog were recorded on June 15 and 27. Fog was more frequent this June compared to other recent years. On July 12, remnants of a tropical hurricane moving up the west coast dropped a surprising 0.62" of rain at headquarters, 0.23" at the CDF station on the Bell Ranch and Jean Knops recorded 1.1" at the lichen exclosure site. A drive through Carmel Valley village that day found rain above the Arvilla Grade and clear sky in Carmel! Otherwise, daily highs were generally in the 70's or 80's in June and reached the 80's or 90's in July.

Mountain lion sightings have increased. Jean Knops almost had a lion in his lap on the 4-wheeled motorcycle as he roared up the Arnold Road just above Carmel Valley Road. Tracks are common near the water tank. A lion killed a yearling deer in Long Field. Our acorn crop looks average to good this year. Black-Shouldered Kites continue to spend time near their successful nest on School Hill.

## Research and Education

Dr. Jim Griffin, botanist in residence for over 20 years, announced that he will ~~be~~ retire effective November 1, 1992. Taking advantage of an early retirement offer from UC, Dr. Griffin will be finishing several projects over the next few months. Future plans remain unsettled, but there is a possibility that MVZ could call Dr. Griffin back at a very much reduced rate to continue to curate the Hastings plant collection, advise researchers on vegetation and botanical nomenclature and serve as our resident historian.

Research on birds, as described in May, continued through mid-July. At that time, all the field assistants except Valerie Stack left. Valerie continued with the work on Acorn Woodpeckers. Mark Stanback returned to the University of Washington in Seattle, with a trip planned in August to check for fall breeding by Acorn Woodpeckers here. Janis Dickinson and Walter Koenig traveled to visit colleagues in England and on the east coast, planning to return in late August. Jenella Loye continued to work from the Hastings Cabin through mid July. Her field assistant, Laurel Moore, left on July 9.

Jean Knops and Walter Koenig ringed a few more trees with steel bands to measure (micrometers) of growth each year. Walter continued to gather data on acorn production patterns in oaks. Walter, along with several co-authors, prepared research papers on the acorn production data for Carmel Valley.

Walt Koenig checked the traps for California Tiger Salamanders each day until late July. Young Tiger Salamanders continued to emerge from the dwindling pond- sometimes 5-10 a day. By the first week in August, when Valerie Stack took over, the pond had dried to only a few inches of warm, green water. As it did, a sudden burst of salamander emergence swamped Valerie; up to 65 young left the pond one night! By August 10, this number dropped to only a handful each night. Many Taricha (California newts) emerged in early August as well. We put a fluorescent powder on the tails of the salamanders and tracked them under UV lights. Young salamanders seemed to blunder around within a few hundred feet of the pond and eventually disappear. Often the powder wore off, but many seemed to fall into burrow entrances of the abundant California ground squirrel. Blomquist Pond seems to have produced over a thousand young salamanders, but we still do not know where they go. Dr. Brad Shaffer, UC-Davis, will be moving to Hastings in September for a few months to study these salamanders, and maybe he will be able to figure out a way to follow the slippery little guys.

Karen Rasmussen is working up the data on the first year's results of experimental plantings of

native grasses. Karen is now an official graduate student at UC-Davis under Dr. John Menke, and the paper-work has come through so she is supported by the Carmel Ranch Company fellowship. Between vacation, meetings and other work, Mark Stromberg continued work on a manuscript describing the vegetation ecology of Carmel Valley annual grasslands. If not this deadline, then certainly the next, we will have an article for the newsletter of the California Native Grass Association- honest Paul.

Frank Sala and Mark Stromberg set up a data base for the insect names for the Hastings collection. Using FileMaker Pro, pinning labels for the first 100 species have been made up and we are entering up to 1,000 species names and official "MONA" numbers (from a monograph, "Moths of North America"). We are also preparing new species labels to attach to the envelopes of the specimens from the 1939-1945 collection.

Other researchers visited Hastings. Dr. Joe MacBride (UC-Berkeley, Forestry) came to sample soil in various settings with grazed and ungrazed blue oak seedlings. Dr. Fred Lohrer, Archibold Biological Field Station (Florida) visited to discuss field station operations. Dr. John Barthell (UC-Davis, Bee Lab) continued to monitor for Africanized bees and to check on the rarer solitary bees. Jean Knops, resident graduate student (Ariz. St. Univ.- Botany), continued his analysis of water, soil and leaf litter under the blue oaks. Jean hosted Dr. Hans De Kroon, University of Utrecht, Netherlands. Mike Baker- assistant from ASU) spent a few days working with Jean. Other visitors included Iris Litt- Stanford, Robert Litt- Univ. of Oregon, Victor Vaughn- Stanford and Eli Holmes- Univ. of Washington. Judy and Jeff Kennedy helped a dozen elementary students from Head-Royce School (Oakland) camp and learn at Hastings June 1-3. What a panic!

### **People, Places and Habitations**

Our big news continues to be the replacement of the Bunkhouse by Daniels and House Construction. Roger Sherman is once again the foreman. Roger directed the work on the Hastings Lab and the Lower Barn in previous years. By late July, the building was framed, drywall was in place and the interior finish work was well under way. The Bunkhouse is almost exactly the same footprint of the old Bunkhouse, with a similar floor plan. However, the new plumbing, wiring, heating, kitchen, bedroom, laundry and bathroom facilities make it a modern house. Vaulted ceilings give it a more open feeling and will allow sufficient headroom over the bunk beds. New furniture was ordered and we hope to see Valerie move in by September 1. Fanny Arnold visited the Bunkhouse on July 29 and chose the exterior colors. It matches the weathered redwood color of the homestead cabins, with green and white trim.

Mark Johnson kept up the good fight to keep things together. A particularly vexing alternator, then later, a voltage regulator in the '84 truck took some time to replace. Various other smaller vehicular repairs kept the fleet of research vehicles going. Mark installed a propane hot water heater (purchased by Walt and Janis) in the School House. This should mean considerable savings for residents in the School House (over electric hot water heating). Mark watched over the construction of the Bunkhouse while Stromberg was on vacation. Mark replaced our worn or shot-up signs along the Carmel Valley Road and Martin Road.

Martin Road continues to consume a lot of attention by Mark Stromberg. Working with the legal staff at UC, a long series of draft agreements between UC and the Tregea family estate have been reviewed. Considerable details were provided, and several meetings were attended. We hope we can conclude the agreement in August.

Replacing our 1920's water system is still on the agenda. Mel Dixon (UCB) and Mark Stromberg continue to work on documents and background information to move the project through UC. We must have a construction document with sufficient technical detail to provide a basis for bids and potential enforcement of terms. Engineering firms capable of drawing up such a document provided estimates for doing such plans. The minimum cost of the planning documents amounted to a quarter of the entire amount we have on hand for the actual construction! Given the severe cuts UC is facing, we have no hope of finding more money to cover these costs. We are now searching UC Agricultural Station expertise for an in-house version of the planning document.