

Hastings Natural History Reservation



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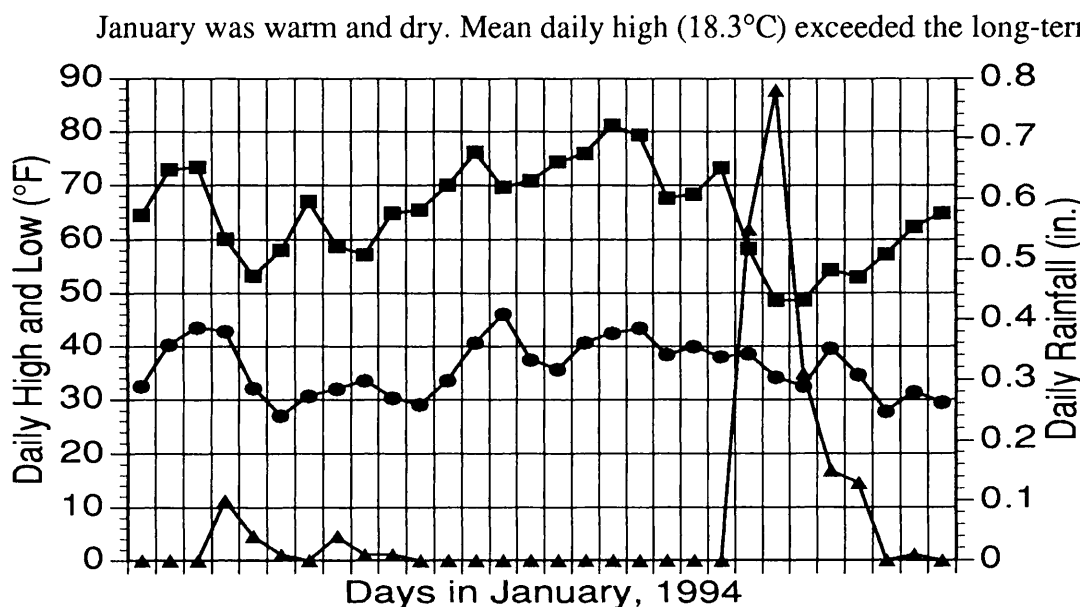
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Research Ecologist (Ret.) ... James R. Griffin Research Associate... Janis Dickinson
Reserve Steward... Mark Johnson

A Biological Research Station of the
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology
University of California, Berkeley
and a part of the University of California's
Natural Reserve System



Weather Report

January, 1994



our mean daily low temperature, 2.19°C, was also above the average of 1.41°C for January. We only had one rainy spell, well into the month, bringing the monthly total to 2.13" of rain (we had no snow this December or January). Our seasonal total of 6.98" is much drier than the long-term average of

Research and Education

Walt Koenig and Janis Dickinson returned from the University of Florida where Janis learned to clone microsatellites while Walter was writing. Janis worked in Wayne Potts' Lab. A research paper by Marty Leonard, co-authored by Walter and Janis, was accepted for publication. This work investigated if there was sex-bias biased provisioning of food to young in western bluebirds (there was none).

Morne Du Plessis, a post-doctoral associate living here last year, had a paper accepted for publication. Morne's paper is on the energetic benefits of communal roosting by Acorn woodpeckers (there is some).

I actually submitted the big grassland paper to Ecological Applications for review. Nice to get that off my desk. Other grassland work included meeting with PG&E to explore building an expert systems database for native grasses, meeting a major vegetable grower from the Salinas valley to discuss native grass production, monitoring stands on Oak Ridge Ranch and planting a patch at Tularcitos Elementary (with Ms. Beth Lawn) as a demonstration plot.

Jen Toby and Wendy Cruso continue to work as our faithful field assistants, gathering sparse data on the unusually absent amphibians at Blomquist Pond, making observations on Acorn woodpeckers, and collecting the monthly data on what falls in the buckets under the oaks. Jean Knops, our long-time graduate student at Arizona State, had a paper come out in Ecology on the number of lizards which fall into these buckets. Apparently they fall out of oak trees relatively frequently, presumably after overzealous runs at insect prey.

Dr. Tim Halliday, from the Open University at Milton, Keynes, (UK) spent two weeks here, observing the breeding behavior of our newts. Loddi Housie, a post-doctoral associate of Tim Halliday,

was here during that time as well. Dr. Halliday was a major user of our e-mail connection, and was able to keep up with his colleagues in UK and elsewhere. Although faced with dry weather for his first week, enough rain fell to provide him with an ample supply of study animals during his second week. Caitlan Gabor, a graduate student at the Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, spent a week with Tim learning about these newts.

Gordon Frankie, UCB-Entomology, checked his trap line for Africanized bees, and brought a couple of graduate students along on the 29th. Joe Haydock, a new postdoctoral associate with Walter, checked out his future housing and work situation on the 21st-23rd. Brad Shaffer made it down from UC-Davis for a couple of days to identify our mystery amphibian larvae and seine Laguna Conejo again. Olaf Ormseth, a potential grad student at MVZ visited with Walt and saw Hastings on the 27th.

An MVZ contingent also arrived on the 27th to spend a night on a collecting trip with included many locations. Dr. Dave Wake, along with Elizabeth Jockush, Meredith Mohoney and Mario Garcia-Paris were able to visit with Tim Halliday and see some of the new facilities here.

We also were treated to a visit by Cindy Stead and Phillippe Cohen, who brought along their son, Benjamin for a 3 day visit just after Christmas. Cindy is the new fundraiser for NRS, and we showed her around. Phillippe is the new Academic Manager at Stanford's Jasper Ridge Reserve. Phillippe and Cindy just moved from the UC's Granite Mountain reserve, where they were co-managers for many years. We hope to have Cindy and Phillippe back for more visits, especially if Cindy finds it helpful to show potential bay area donors a great reserve... Remember Cindy, "TRACTOR".

People, Places and Habitations

Relatively dry weather was a great break for us on two construction fronts. Maggiora Brothers finished the new water distribution and storage system, and we were able to get all the disturbed soil covered with seed and straw before the rains came. We now have a new fill line (2,400 feet of 2.5" PVC between the well and tank site), six 4,000 gal poly tanks, six ozone generators, and a new 4" main to a fire hydrant at the workshop. Tanks are automatically filled using a float switch to the well pump. We chlorinated the pipes and flushed them and as soon as we pass the bacteria tests, we will go on line - probably the first week in February. Maggiora also installed a series of lights at the well to allow us to monitor the operation from a distance, alerting us to potential problems.

Daniels and House also finished up work at the Hastings Cabin. This included insulation in the walls and ceiling, new foundation, some new siding, wiring, plumbing (w/ external water heater), septic system, new interior plywood paneling, kitchen flooring, airtight wood stove, steps and landing, repair of porch walls and windows, and a thorough sealing of the old windows. We now have a tight, up-to-date cabin which will serve our users for many years. And, it really doesn't lack its charm; for example the old bone pull on the kitchen light switch chain is still there. Thanks, Fanny. Hope you can come up and see it next month. Bring Emily.

Mark Johnson was very busy with other things. With some rains, our new gravel in the parking lot and road to the workshop worked into the mud and formed a clean, firm surface. Mark planted grass and hauled and spread hay, and helped coordinate the many people coming and going. Some days it was all he could do to keep workers parked out of each other's way. Mark did a hundred things to keep the water system construction flowing smoothly. And, with the rains, Mark fixed a few bad spots on our roads which kept them in good shape. New tires were needed on the old ('65) Yellow Truck, and Mark kept up with the usual routine. On the last day of January we got the approval to hire a couple of carpenters to work with Mark to start mouseproofing the older houses at Hastings. This will be a major project for Mark and Hastings over the next few months.