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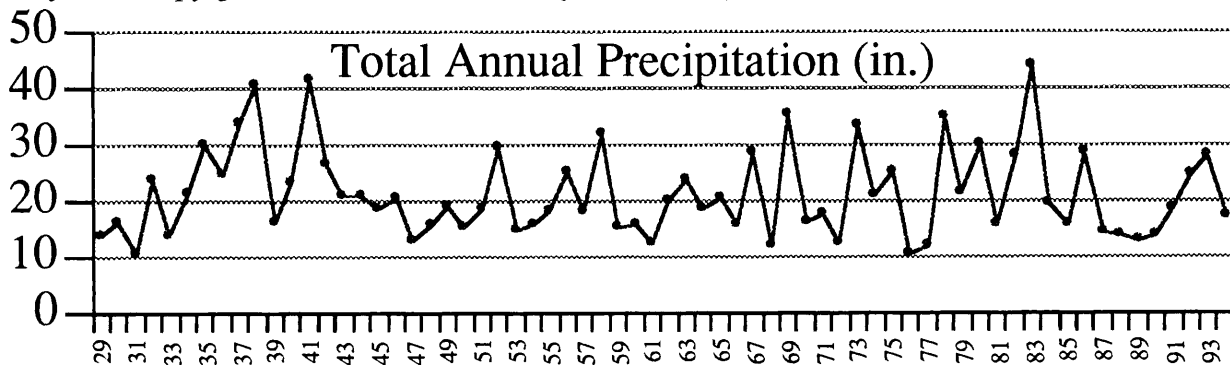
A Biological Research Station of the
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology
University of California, Berkeley
and a part of the University of California's
Natural Reserve System



Weather Report

May, 1994

Our annual rain season seems to have come to an end with a couple of thunderstorms on the 31st. We had a total of 1.46" this May, well above the average 0.49" for this month. Our annual total of 16.99" is below the annual median of 18.9" and annual average (21.06"). Like most years, rainfall was erratic—about 40% of this year's rain fell in a single month (February). By early May, most hillsides were well on their way to a crispy gold, but the late rain brought on some greening wild oats.



Ending Year in Annual Rain Cycle

David Richardson, spending days watching Orioles, obtained some close-up photos of a bobcat with a ground squirrel. Later, David noticed a mountain lion about 40 feet away, slipping into the forest, but this encounter was too brief for a photograph.

Summer has arrived with its face flies and the usual fungal infection on the sycamores denying them leaves until July. Many bird nests have now fledged and the breeding season for birds was on the decline by late May. Young squirrels are now abundant, and will find many abandoned burrows from the die-off this last year.

Research and Education

Field work on Acorn woodpeckers continued to occupy Mark Stanback, Joey Haydock, Walt Koenig, and field assistants Jeremy Hyman and Katy Semple. Mark Stanback moved back to UW-Seattle at the end of May. Several research awards will allow Mark to return to Africa to study hornbills in Namibia. This ends over nine years of field work by Mark Stanback here at Hastings. Good luck, Mark! Joey Haydock will continue as a resident post-doctoral fellow with the Acorn woodpecker project. Udo Savalli (UCD) spent a couple of weekends out of the Red House looking at blackbirds around Laguna Conejo. Larry Riggs, collaborating with Walter on oak genetics, spent 3 days here with his family. Brad Shaffer (UCD) spent a day here to do the annual spring survey of tiger salamanders. Last year there were thousands of larval salamanders in Blomquist pond, but this year only a few hundred. Dry winter..

Following about 100 nests of Western Bluebirds, Janis Dickinson and field assistants Mary Stapleton, Kevin Ellison, Jennifer Nesbitt and Jenny Krantz are busy making observations on the behavior of the adults and sampling blood from nestlings.

David Richardson and Mike Cant (U. Leicester) continue climbs to trees to obtain nestling Northern oriole blood samples for later DNA fingerprinting to match up with their observations on potential parents. Dave and Mike have been joined in the Bunk house by various visitors. Gordon Frankie (UCB) was here twice to collect bees. Uli Wittman, (Univ. Heidelberg) visited for a week to explore graduate study opportunities. Dane Post (UCB) spent several days finishing up a senior thesis on

grasslands. Mark Stanback moved to the Bunk house in anticipation of a group from Arizona State University. David Villarreal, a new graduate student at UCB with Gordon Frankie, spent a couple of days looking over potential research on bees.

Tom Nash, Corrina Gries (ASU, Botany) and Uwe Kuhn (ASU and Max Plank Institut) moved into the Stucco house on the 15th. They set up some very elaborate equipment to sample atmospheric gasses and to measure photosynthesis and potential uptake of COS by lichens.

Jenella Loye (UCD) and her assistants Ian Hanna, Aaron Gabbe, and Andrew Rosser are working out of the Hastings Cabin. Their field work on nest parasites of Western bluebirds continues on Hastings, Rana Creek Ranch and Rancho San Carlos. An independent film crew visited Jenella in early May to document her work and tie it to a release by Avon of a new insect repellent, based on their "Skin so Soft" product. Release of the film coverage is scheduled for early June.

Grassland research continued at Rana Creek Ranch. Mark Stromberg carried out an evaluation of the establishment success of native grasses with varying levels of agricultural input. An early summer burn is being planned for the six acre plot on Oak Ridge Ranch, if CDF can provide staff.

We had several groups and classes visit. Mark Stromberg gave a tour to the Monterey Organization of Science Educators, a diverse group of about 15 secondary teachers and others on the 21st. A field trip by Monterey Audubon was held on the 22nd, and Walt Koenig met with Kent Johnson's USCS Ornithology class on the 27th.

People, Places and Habitations

Fanny Arnold visited Hastings with her cousins from England and Australia on the 11th. All of the Hastings staff who could attend were at Fanny Arnold's 80th birthday party on the 7th in Menlo Park. Then, on the 28th, Fanny and the Hastings staff gathered in Carmel Valley to mark the end of an era. Jim and Joan Griffin will be moving to their retirement home near Auburn, leaving Hastings on June 14th. Frank Pitelka, our senior liaison with MVZ for so many years, was able to join us in this last gathering. We all offer our best regards to Jim and Joan and hope they can visit often.

Mark Johnson, along with Barry Powell and Dave Smith, continue to work on sealing up the Hastings buildings. A new stucco exterior wall was finished at the Robertson House and preparation for a similar exterior wall to below ground at the Red House is almost done. Trapping continues, and we have now started using Dave Ribble's ultraviolet fluorescent powder to dust live-captured mice to allow us follow their tracks to discover entry points. New points of entry continue to be found and closed at the Stucco House, the Hastings Cabin and School House.

Purchasing at UC placed the order for the tractor at Coastal Ford. We are very anxious to see it; delivery is scheduled for early June. Thanks again to Fanny Arnold and Helen Johnson for their support!

Maggiara Bros. and Purchasing at UC have worked out the details of the contract to finish the installation of the water main from the hydrant at the Workshop to a new hydrant at the School House. So, in the next few weeks, trenches will be underway through all the housing units, connecting each to the new system. The old pipe will be left in the ground for future archeological musings. Every effort will be made to close trenches each day, and not to interrupt access or water to houses for very long during the transition, but some difficulties are almost inevitable. So- hang in there.

Fire Season is here. Please do not drive over or park on tall grass. Exhaust and catalytic converters from cars frequently start wildland fires. Report any suspicions of wildland fires. Thanks.

Now Through July 3: Hastings Natural History Reservation: 55 Years of UC-Berkeley in Carmel Valley. Display of cultural and natural history of this biological field station of UC-Berkeley. Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History. Highway 68, stay on it- changes to David Street. Museum is on corner of David and Central. One block west of Lighthouse Ave. Open Tues-Sun, 10 am- 5 pm. Free.