

Hastings Natural History Reservation



38601 E. Carmel Valley Road
Carmel Valley, CA 93924
Office: (408) 659-2664
Fax: (408) 659-3649

Reserve Home Page: <http://nrs.ucop.edu/reserves/hastings.html>

Editor, Resident Director- Mark R. Stromberg
stromber@socrates.berkeley.edu

Reserve Steward- Mark Johnson
msjohnso@uclink4.berkeley.edu

Research Associate- David Gubernick
perocal@garnet.berkeley.edu

Research Zoologist- Walter Koenig
wicker@uclink.berkeley.edu

Research Associate- Janis Dickinson
sialia@uclink2.berkeley.edu

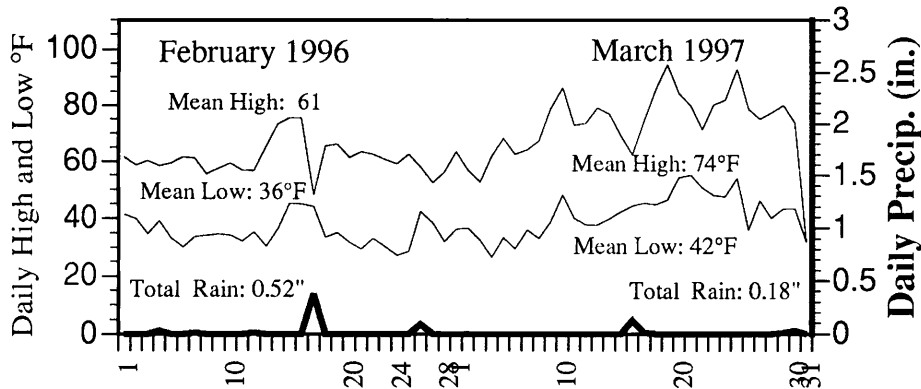


A Biological Research Station of the
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology
University of California, Berkeley
and a part of the University of California's
Natural Reserve System



Weather Report

February - March 1997



Floods of December are now only a memory- prospects of another wet winter dried out. February and March were warm and dry. Our grasses are turning brown in early April and CDF is talking about the earliest start of the fire season on record.

February's average temperatures were only slightly above normal, but the daily high in March was 12.5° above normal! The daily low was only 5° above normal. February average rainfall is 3.9" and we average about 3.5" in March. Even with our abysmal 0.70" for both months, we are still at an annual total of 21.18", well above the average of 18.4" for this time of year. But, most of this winter's

moisture year fell on cold soil, before the plants had germinated. In my observations of grasslands plants, this is an odd year- many of the late species (eg. *Trifolium*) have barely germinated yet are drying without flowers. To quote Robert Renard, at the NWS in Monterey, "this is the driest February/March combination in at least the last 134 years".

Research:

Peter Trenham and Katie Kurkjian could only watch as storm after storm fizzled out. But, Peter did implant radios and track adult tiger salamanders, and he found that even some of the tiny (2.5" long) newts marked in Laguna Conejo were found as far away as mile marker 27 on the Carmel Valley Road (2 miles over hill and dale). Peter found that the number of adults at Blomquist Pond continues to drop (less than 10% of our first observations) while hundreds are still captured at Laguna Conejo and adjacent ponds. Peter presented his findings at the first of our Thursday afternoon seminars. Peter returned to UC-Davis in late March. Katie Kurkjian continued on with Ginger Bolen, assisting with the yellow-billed magpie study.

We had hoped to call Helen Johnson over for a night of slithering salamanders and to admire the new signs. However, it figures. We never had a decent night of rain after we got the signs up. Helen's signs did attract a reporter from the local Carmel Valley Sun newsletter- people are fascinated by the signs. None have been stolen- yet. Peter reported that he and Katie peeled off some 1500 newts from a one mile stretch of the Carmel Valley road through the Hastings reserve.

Walter, David Gubernick and Rickey Wolfe have produced yet another edition of "The Condor" from the Linsdale library. Carol Church and Jeff Parks are working with Walt on the acorn woodpeckers. Carol and Jeff left in late March for new jobs in South Carolina. Our new acorn woodpecker assistants are Denise Woods and June Kaiser. Joey Haydock, a postdoctoral fellow with Walter, left Hastings for these months to work on DNA techniques in labs in England (Leicester University).

Matina Kalcounis, with Andrew McAdam, worked nights along Robertson Creek and in Madrone Canyon. Trapping all the deer mice, they have installed radios on some and tracked them. Matina mastered the new GeoNavigator program and used it to do the triangulation and to calculate locations for her radiotelemetry. Hundreds of locations were calculated and data were exported for analysis in traditional home range programs. David Gubernick continues to consult with Matina and share previous information on the California deer mouse in this study site.

Ginger Bolen started a very intensive period of study of the yellow-billed magpie behavior. Ginger has three assistants in the Bunk House; Katie, Mary Stapleton, and Emily Cohen. They will work through the next couple of months, conducting daily watches of the banded birds between Hastings and Oak Ridge Ranch.

Janis Dickinson and Jon Akre welcomed new study assistants for the western bluebird project; Rebecca Jansen, Michelle Soenksen and Kara Peterson. Our field assistant crew this year is remarkably biased towards females.. Jon used GeoNavigator to map the territories used by the Western Bluebirds. Jon and Janis also put new radios out on bluebirds and started new radio-telemetry, using maps printed from the digital files.

I have been able to sample the vegetation on several coastal terrace prairies, and have started to move inland along the Sierra de Salinas, to compare prairies from Hastings to the coast. Inland prairies are drying out too fast this year to allow sampling comparable to

that of last year. I continue to work with Paul Kephart at Rana Creek Ranch, as his native grass business expands and more land is planted. I finished the three plots for native grassland restoration on Hastings for the third year! But, Paul finally planted large areas of the seeds from grasses we hand-gathered here at Hastings. We will actually plant those bare areas this fall with these Carmel Valley native grasses. I spent two days at Asilomar and nearby Rancho San Carlos, helping teach a class with John Menke for the State Parks ecologists. The class covered vegetation analysis techniques. Marilyn Tomkins (with Gordon Frankie, UCB) made the periodic visit to check the local bees.

Paul Neal returned from Haifa, Israel to re-sample the oak flowers high on the Arnold property (now his 4th year). Gretchen LeBuhn (UCSB) returned with Paul to help and write up her studies at the Southwest Field Station. Peter Kaplan (Univ. Colorado-Denver) returned for another spring trip to compare vocalizations of towhees. Francisco Calderon (Post-Doctoral fellow) and Louise Jackson (UCDavis, Crop Science) visited in March as a part of a new field project they intend to start soon. Jim and Carol Patton and Majorie Matocq (MVZ) spent several days in March trapping wood rats.

Classes included Steve Takata's trip with MVZ students, and Walt Koenig's weekend behavior seminar for UC-Berkeley students.

People and Places: Open House- Saturday May 10

We are once again inviting our neighbors and friends of Hastings to a day when we have our researchers talk about what they are doing and let people look around at the facility. We look forward to seeing you on May 10, Saturday. We ask that you bring your lunch. We will have a few grills set up and will provide plenty to drink and ice in chests for your drinks. Let's hope for a warm, dry day! After the invitations were mailed, I have heard from many of you and expect a pretty good crowd. Park down by the lower barn- the electronic gate will be open that morning. We will have the grills fired up by 11am and will start the talks at 1pm. We will finish up by 4pm.

Mark Johnson was busy keeping up with the buildings, as usual. Our dry late winter did not give us a good opportunity to grade the roads, but they are in pretty good shape. We had to dig out PG&E twice; once a repair crew and once a tree trimming service hired by PG&E. We spread the chips from the tree trimming at the Robertson House and Fanny's Cabin; not that there was any mud after we moved the chips over there! Oh well. Both Mark and I made trips to Sacramento for surplus property- mostly furniture. We also moved split wood from a local provider to the Robertson House and Hastings Cabin.

One of the UC Regents, Jess Bravin, visited Hastings March 1-2 and stayed in the Ranch House- just to see a reserve. Peter Stent, formerly NAS national board member and land conservationist, paid a similar visit on March 31. On Feb 21, Mike Hamilton, from the James Reserve, presented an invited talk on his GIS-based "Fire Safe" program to officials at the Pebble Beach Company and other members of the Pebble Beach Open Space Advisory Committee who share an interest in using fire in vegetation management.

Lee Krasnow and other Carmel High students continue to volunteer on Wednesdays; helping with many research projects. Lee has visited many of the tall white plastic tubes sheltering our seedling valley oaks. With his late planting, it appears that few germinated and survived the dry, hot end of winter. Most will have to be replanted again next year.

After nearly two years of discussion, on April 1, Mark Johnson and I joined with Vince Silva, Steve Benoit, and two radio technicians (all from CDF) to move the CDF Remote Access Weather Station from the Bell Ranch to a hilltop on Hastings. This location is much improved over the Bell location, as it gives an unimpeded access to the air flow patterns of the upper valley. Thanks to Oak Ridge for the use of the auger for the new fence posts. Anyone can now access hourly weather data from the "Cahoon" station above the Hastings Cabin on the internet: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-bin/queryF?s=cah>

Hastings Residents and Visiting Scientists

Resident Hastings Staff, Families

Mark Stromberg
Barb Stromberg
Brian Stromberg
Andrew Stromberg

Janis Dickinson
Walt Koenig
Dale Koenig
Phoebe Koenig
Judine Kroetz
Jocelyn Kroetz

Non-Resident Hastings Staff

Mark Johnson
Rickey Wolf

Resident Graduate Students

Ginger Bolen (UCB-Koenig)
Peter Trenham (UCD-Shaffer)
Matina Kalcounis (U. West Ontario)

Visiting Graduate Students

Lara Hansen(UCD)
Gretchen LeBuhn (UCSB)

Visiting Faculty and Staff

Jess Bravin (Regent, UC)
Jim Patton(UCB-MVZ)
Louise Jackson (UCD)
Francisco Calderon (UCD)
Paul Neal (Univ. Haifa)
Peter Stent
Marilyn Tomkins (UCB-Entomology)

Resident Field Assistants

Jeff Parks (Woodpeckers)
Carol Church (Woodpeckers)
Jon Akre (Bluebirds)
Andrew McAdam (Calif. Deer Mouse)
Katie Kurkjian (Salamanders, Magpies)
Denise Woods (Woodpeckers)
June Kaiser (Woodpeckers)
Rebecca Jansen (Bluebirds)
Michelle Soenksen (Bluebirds)
Kara Peterson (Bluebirds)
Mary Stapleton (Magpies)
Emily Cohen (Magpies)

Carmel High Students

Austin Camp
Lee Krasnow
Jenny Waddel
Lilly Woytak
Maia Entropo

Resident Visiting Researchers

David Gubernick (UCD-Psychology)
Joey Haydock (UCB-Koenig PD)