



Finch Creek Gazette

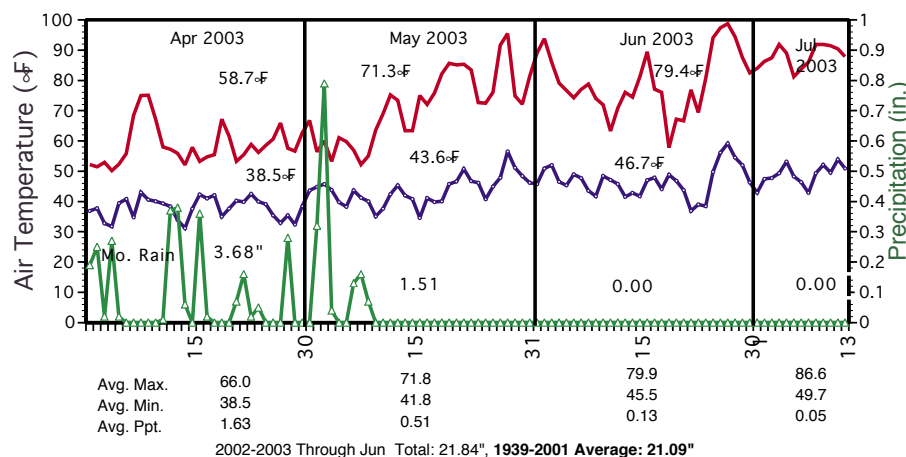
The Quarterly Newsletter for Friends and Members of the Hastings Natural History Reservation

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

Website: <http://www.hastingsreserve.org> (for more information)

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Weather



Weather and Other Field Notes

Our old newsletter format is back. The printed copy, like the summer heat, is again possible. For those of you who can get our newsletter online, this is a familiar PDF file. Feel free to print one out. For our neighbors and supporters who still prefer a printed copy, we will mail a few out.

Our spring season finished up with a prolonged, green period. Hard to look back on it from August, but the spring brought a series of storms that kept Finch Creek constantly wet, but never at flood stage. This brought us to very near the long-term average total rainfall for winter. We had a nice pulse of early flow that brought down the ash from the prescribed fire on the Boekenoogen ranch. In a few weeks, the constant storms cleared the water and a thin black line in the silt along the banks cut by later slow flows is all that remains of the ash flow. We had relatively few

fingerling steelhead in Finch Creek this year, and no large adults. When the plunge pool at the Hallisey House dried this year, only a dozen or so fish were stranded. Finch Creek was dry under the Martin Road bridge by the last week in July. With the constant spring rains the grasses and other forage plants had a great year.

We had our share of mountain lion sightings, with one loping



Photo by Ian Tait across the Carmel Valley Road at the Hallisey House. Lauryn Benedict was watching California towhees along the entry lane when two lions raced down Haystack Hill and across Long Field. One

lion was aggressively chasing the other. As they discovered Lauryn on the lane, they came to a sudden halt and each ran away from Lauryn in opposite directions. Mark Stromberg encountered a lion at very close range (10 feet!) while checking a dead pig on Big Creek. And Danika Klieber in early April may have nearly walked over a lion on Haystack Hill near a dead pig. As Danika approached, she saw the lion moving away from her. So far, all our lion encounters have been uneventful and the lion has left the scene as soon as possible.

For much of the winter and early summer, the CDF weather station up on the hill above the offices was not working. In late July it was put back on line with hourly reports logged to the internet. Our Ranch House weather station is fine and data from that station are also available on the Hastings website.

With a camera that was not longer being used by Rana Creek, we replaced the Hastings weather cam. If you go to our website, navigate down to Current Weather and you will find an image of Hastings that is updated every ten minutes. If you want to see how the scene changes with the seasons, we have a time lapse movie of the view from the headquarters down the entry lane to the lower barn. We have many other weather-related links on the Hastings weather page, including the current weather from the CDF weather station.

We had several great groups come through this spring. In early May, the Hassis Hikers spent a day in the emerald hills. Bruce Lyon's UCSC class of 22 spent the weekend of May 11 studying ecology of these Santa Lucia hillsides and creek bottoms. Janice Edgerly-Rooks' class from Santa Clara University spent the weekend of May 18 here, looking at the insects. On May 24, Craig Hohenberger lead an ornithology class from Monterey Peninsula College to see the infamous blue budgie, as well as our famous Acorn Woodpeckers. It seems that someone dropped off a parakeet sometime in April. This metallic blue bird would hover from tree to tree around the headquarters. Amazingly, it lasted until well into July, and by early August was not much in evidence. This with a Cooper's Hawk nest in the headquarters area. The Jepson Herbarium's public class on insect pollination ecology, again led by Staci Markos, Gordon Frankie and Robin Thorpe filled the Ranch House, Bunk House and Hastings Cabin (with a few tents for the overflow!)



over the long weekend of May 30. Although this may strike you as being a bit late in the year for flowers and bees, indeed there were many flowers still in "riotous bloom" (as



Walt Koenig discusses biology and behavior of Acorn Woodpeckers with the science writers from the San Francisco Bay area.



Vern Yadon phrases it) at this late date when the grasses on the upper hillsides had already were turning golden. It was a relatively good year for lupine, particularly the small *Lupinus bicolor*. Many native bees were seen by all.

Joining them on May 31 was a group of science writers from the San Francisco Bay area. This group included writers from various magazines, for example US News and World Report, as well as freelancer writers working for California

publications. Jerry Booth, of the NRS Systemwide Office hosted this group of about 30 science writers. We gave them an introduction to Hastings with talks by Walt Koenig, Joey Haydock and

Lauryn Benedict. Later, they were hosted by Paul Kephart at Rana Creek Habitat Restoration where they had a tour of that native plant production operation and some discussion of green roofs. Jerry is producing a 30 minute video on Hastings that will describe the history of the reserve and some of the major research programs active here. The video will be available this fall from the NRS office in Oakland.

Research

Hastings hosted a relatively large number of researchers this summer. Probably the best way to show this is a table. Those with (*) would make repeated, short-term visits to Hastings. The others stayed for several weeks or the entire summer.

Walt Koenig	Acorn Woodpeckers	Resident Research Zoologist, MVZ, UC Berkeley
Lindsay Reynolds	Acorn Woodpeckers	Field Assistant, with Walter Koenig
Michelle Wiesinger	Acorn Woodpeckers	Field Assistant, with Walter Koenig
Julie Ketner	Acorn Woodpeckers	Field Assistant, with Walter Koenig
Janis Dickinson	Western Bluebirds	Assoc. Research Zoologist, MVZ, UC Berkeley
Andrew McGowan	Western Bluebirds	Postdoctoral Fellow, MVZ, UC Berkeley
Danika Klieber	Western Bluebirds	Field Assistant with Janis Dickinson
James Rose	Western Bluebirds	Field Assistant with Janis Dickinson
Kate Eldridge	Western Bluebirds	Field Assistant, with Janis Dickinson
Joey Haydock	Acorn Woodpeckers	Assistant Professor, Gonzaga University, WA
Liz Eisinger	DNA Lab	Lab Tech, Bird DNA, Gonzaga University
Stephanie Mgebroff	DNA Lab	Lab Tech, Bird DNA, Gonzaga University
Jennifer Garnett	DNA Lab	Lab Tech, Bird DNA, Gonzaga University
Mark Stromberg	Native Grasses	Reserve Director, MVZ, UC Berkeley
Alan Krakauer	Turkey Behavior	Graduate Student, MVZ, UC Berkeley
Rachel Orben	Turkey Biology	Field Assistant, with Alan Krakauer
Marie Franc	Turkey Biology	Field Assistant, with Alan Krakauer
Luke Robinson	Turkey Biology	Field Assistant, with Alan Krakauer and Lauryn Benedict
Lauryn Benedict	California Towhee	Graduate Student, MVZ, UC Berkeley
Steve Canepa*	Native Plants	Rana Creek Habitat Restoration
Martin Potoff*	Grass/Soils Chem.	Postdoctoral Fellow, UC Davis, Soils Dept.
Virginia Boucher*	California Poppies	Reserve Director, UC Davis
Amy Kochiak	Grass Root Ecology	Graduate Student, Univ. Nebraska, Lincoln
JeanKnops	Plant Ecology	Assist. Professor, Univ. Nebraska, Lincoln
Eric Seabloom*	Grass Ecology	Assist. Professor, Oregon State Univ.
Toshi Yoshida*	Grass Ecology	Research Scientist, UC Santa Barbara
Louise Jackson*	Grass/Soils	Professor, Soils, UC Davis
Katherine Horjus*	Plant/Insect Ecology	Graduate Student, UC Santa Barbara
Paul Neal*	Oak Flower Ecology	Research Scientist, Saloma Foundation
Dan Levitis	Metadata, Hastings	Graduate Student, MVZ, UC Berkeley



Photo at Left, Top Row: Walt Koenig, Janis Dickinson, Andrew McGowan, Alan Krakauer

Right Side: Rachel Owen, Danika Klieber

Second Row: James Rose, Dale Koenig, Lauryn Benedict

Third Row: Kate Eldridge, Michelle Weisinger, Lindsay Reynolds

Bottom Row: Phoebe Koenig, Luke Robinson (left to right).

Above: Joey Haydock

Right: Stephanie Mgebroff, Jennifer Garnett, and Liz Eisinger.



Our ongoing research projects, the acorn woodpecker and western bluebird studies, continued to bring in a great group of assistants and collaborators. Joey Haydock, now an assistant professor at Gonzaga University, and Andy McGowan

occupied the Stucco House. Alan's field assistants were in the Red House and the field assistants with Janis and Walter were in the Robertson House. Both the bluebird and turkey studies continue to benefit from hospitality of Rana Creek Ranch for access to study sites. Lauryn was in the Bunk House Cottage with a wider variety of visiting scientists, many here for shorter stays. Some stayed in the Ranch House, and later three students from Gonzaga assisted in the bird research programs while living in the Ranch House. So, for most of the summer, only the Hastings Cabin saw light use.

Facilities and Stewardship

First, a project started 3 years ago with funding from Alex Glazer was completed. The offices were insulated, new windows installed, and new electrical services were added so that an efficient heat pump now heats (and cools!) the main working spaces in the Office and Davis Lab.

Chris Reed, trail builder for several local parks, was able to find and mark a 5%-8% route up Poison Oak Hill for a new 2 mile trail that will open up about 300 ac. of Hastings for research and teaching. Finding a route that missed the amazing steep gulches was a lot of scouting work. With cooperation from Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District and Tom Gray, we still look forward to moving a small bulldozer to the top of Poison Oak hill to help install the trail by this fall.

SBC (Pac Bell) installed a 100 pair cable underground from our entry to headquarters, improving phone service to Hastings and

neighbors.

Our new conference room continued to make progress, with funding from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, UCB. Contracts were written for the site preparation and the modular buildings. Lindsay Friday is doing the site work, which includes removing an older garage and decayed sheds. The building will occupy this area, and will use the existing Bunk House Cottage septic system. We were able to salvage almost all of the redwood planks from the buildings. Fred Ballerini

of Rana Creek used some of this wood as trim around the windows and doors of the refurbished Fort Ord building at the Carmel Middle School's Biological Sciences Project. Mark Stromberg is on the advisory committee for this CMS project. ModTech was selected as the building provider. It will arrive in three, 10' x 32' sections and will be assembled on site. Lopez House Moving from Salinas has been selected to help move the buildings into the tight headquarters area. We hope the building will be in place by the end of September. Cabinets for the kitchen and long counters on two sides were made available at a discounted price from Philippe Cohen from Jasper Ridge Preserve



Future site for Conference Room

at Stanford. Mark Johnson and Mark Stromberg used our new trailer to haul the casework.

With additional funding from the Arnold Family (thank you!), we will purchase kitchen appliances, and provide some nicer tables, and chairs and AV equipment for class and group use. We will also have an area paved adjacent to the building for 4 new picnic tables, and we will landscape a nook for two new picnic tables, down lower where the old sheds once stood. We will be able to keep Jim Griffin's elegant Santa Lucia Fir; it will nestle against the new building.