

TRACKS

A Publication of the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends

March–May
2010

Osprey Update



Photo © Dan Trinidad

NBNF Mission:

- To preserve and restore the ecosystems of Upper Newport Bay.
- To educate the public about the ecological value of the Bay and its watershed and help ensure compatible public use.

CONTENTS

- Osprey Update
- What is a TMDL?
- Calendar of Events
- Special Events!

Long-time readers of Tracks may recall an article published in 2006 about the historic osprey breeding at Upper Newport Bay that year. After many years of courting, a pair of local ospreys finally mated and produced two healthy fledglings from a clutch of three eggs. While ospreys are fairly common from Santa Barbara northwards, and nesting colonies exist in Baja California, this was believed to be the first successful breeding in Orange County for perhaps nearly a hundred years.

The nesting was a particular thrill for Russ Kerr and fellow Naturalists who had erected in 1993 the elevated platform used by the birds to build the nest. The excitement was however twinged with a little frustration, since the nesting coincided with the construction of the Back Bay Science Center (BBSC) in close proximity to the platform. Construction was therefore delayed. To avoid possible future disruption of nesting, California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) staff enlisted the help of a local line crew from Southern California Edison who volunteered their time to erect a new pole further from the buildings, and relocate the platform to it. This proved very successful. In 2007 the ospreys nested again and two of three chicks fledged. In 2008 all three chicks fledged, and in 2009 all four chicks fledged. This is a great success. The original osprey pair is now already nesting again.

We receive many questions about the ospreys. The most common is: "What has happened to all of the fledglings?" Well we know for certain where several of them are, and we can surmise about the whereabouts of the others based on general knowledge of osprey behavior.

Ospreys are found worldwide and nest on all continents except South America and Antarctica. They are generally migratory, but may stay year-round in temperate climes. They feed almost exclusively on fish and are found in coastal areas, and near rivers and lakes. For this reason, the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is also known as the sea hawk. It is awesome to watch an osprey swoop feet first and catch a large fish just below the water surface in its talons. As it rises from the water, it rotates the fish in its talons to align the fish with the direction of flight and heads to a nearby perch to eat.

Osprey pairs build their nests high in trees and on other tall structures, mostly in sight of water, though the birds will forage up to five miles away. Depending on location, nesting may be singly or in colonies. From courtship through fledging the males typically supply nearly all of the meals for the female, who in turn feeds the offspring.

Osprey eggs typically hatch after about five weeks of incubation and chicks fledge about eight weeks after hatching and stay in and around the nest for about another eight weeks before departing. Young ospreys often return to the area of birth a couple of years later. They mature sexually at about three years old and then generally mate for life. They will live to 25 years or more. *(continued on page 2)*



Photo © DeeDee McGann-Gollwitzer



What is a TMDL?

TMDL stands for the Total Maximum Daily Load of a specific pollutant that a specific body of water can tolerate and still meet water quality objectives. Here in the Newport Bay watershed, the anticipated future costs for mandated TMDL programs is likely to be several hundred million dollars. TMDL compliance is therefore a huge issue for the municipalities in the watershed, and those living or doing business in those municipalities. In the past there has mostly been a benign, reactive approach to compliance with individual TMDL requirements. More recently all affected parties have begun to see the need for a more proactive, integrated and long-term approach to compliance with realistically achievable TMDL requirements. The Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends (NBNF) is committed to helping further this approach.

The TMDL development process is defined in the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). States are required to publish and update lists of water bodies such as lakes, streams and coastal bays that have impaired water quality because of the presence of one or more specified pollutants that cannot be reduced sufficiently by control of point sources. "Point sources" are clearly identifiable sources of pollution such as discharge pipes from industrial facilities; "non-point sources" are the multitude of unspecific sources, such as street runoff, that are harder to identify and/or control.

Impaired water bodies are required to be ranked by the states according to priority for TMDL development. For each pollutant for each water body, the specific water quality criteria for the beneficial uses of the water body must be identified. Beneficial uses may include swimming, fishing for human consumption, wildlife protection, etc. In the case of chemical pollutants, water quality criteria may be pollutant concentration in the water or in the tissue of fish, etc. For other pollutants some other measure of impairment must be established. Based on the water quality criteria, the total amount of the pollutant that can enter the water body without impairing the beneficial uses

Depending on the context, TMDL may refer to the numerical target for a specific pollutant in a specific body of water (not necessarily a daily amount), to an alternate water quality objective, or to the mandated program for achieving the numerical target or other objective.

must be established. All of the sources of the pollutant must be identified and a plan established to allocate loads, control the sources and to monitor progress in achieving water quality objectives.

In California the identification of impaired water bodies and development of TMDLs is done by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. The Newport Bay Watershed is under the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, which has a strong reputation for working collaboratively with stakeholders in implementing practical regulations to gain achievable results in reasonable timeframes given the recognized technical and financial constraints. However, TMDL development and implementation is subject to oversight of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which is required to approve the listing of impairments and the development of TMDLs by the states, and to impose pollutant limits and schedules for compliance if state actions are deemed inadequate. EPA also recognizes the difficulties faced in implementing certain TMDLs. But it too is constrained by court actions to enforce an aggressive approach to TMDL development. California is currently operating under three consent decrees, including one covering several pollutants in Newport Bay and its tributaries.

Given the growing costs of TMDL implementation and the shrinking financial resources of the cities and other entities responsible for TMDL implementation, NBNF believes that informed discourse is needed between all stakeholders on TMDL priorities and consolidated implementation and funding, and is working to help initiate the discourse.

Osprey Update (cont.)

A lot is learned about bird behaviors by placing numbered bands on the legs of chicks before they fledge. Local zoologist and raptor expert Pete Bloom bravely climbed up to the nest in both 2008 and 2009, risking attack from the parents, to band the BBSC chicks. These bands are easily readable by birders using powerful spotting scopes or cameras with large telephoto lenses. Sightings of UNB ospreys have occurred from Crystal Cove to Bolsa Chica. Amateur wildlife photographers and members of the Sea and Sage Audubon Society recently discovered one of the 2008 fledglings is paired with another un-banded bird and building a nest at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. According to Bloom team member and Audubon Conservation Chair, Scott Thomas, this is the first confirmation of any of the banded birds breeding. It is a bit young; most ospreys are at least three

years old before they breed. So the team is anxious to track its success this spring. There is also a nest being built near the Anaheim Lakes area, making three confirmed nests in Orange County. It looks like this magnificent bird is making a comeback in southern California!

If you see an osprey with a leg band please report your sighting (with band number if known) to Scott Thomas at redtail1@cox.net, or call Sea and Sage Audubon at 949-261-7962.

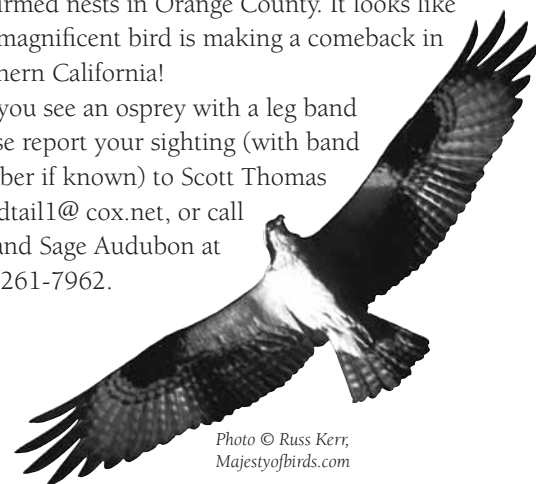


Photo © Russ Kerr, Majestyofbirds.com

Pollutant List* for Newport Bay and its tributaries	
Lower Newport Bay	
A	Chlordane
A	Copper
A	DDT
B	Nutrients
B	Pathogens
A	PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls)
B	Pesticides
A	Sediment Toxicity
Rhine Channel	
A	Copper
A	Lead
A	Mercury
A	PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls)
A	Sediment Toxicity
A	Zinc
Upper Newport Bay	
A	Chlordane
A	Copper
A	DDT
A	Metals
B	Nutrients
B	Pathogens
A	PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls)
B	Pesticides
A	Sediment Toxicity
B	Sedimentation/Siltation
Peters Canyon Channel	
A	DDT
A	Toxaphene
San Diego Creek Reach 1	
A	Fecal Coliform
B	Nutrients
B	Pesticides
B	Sedimentation/Siltation
A	Selenium
A	Toxaphene
San Diego Creek Reach 2	
A	Metals
B	Nutrients
B	Sedimentation/Siltation
B	Unknown Toxicity
A = TMDL to be developed or approved	
B = TMDL approved	
* From latest list published by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2007 in accordance with Section 303(d) of the CWA.	



Upper Newport Bay Calendar of Events

March–May 2010

Kayak Tours — Every Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–noon

Join a trained naturalist for a guided kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Aquatic Center. \$20/person, 8 and up. \$10/NBNF members. Be prepared to get wet. Reservations (949) 923-2269. Location code: NAC

Walking Tour — Saturday, Mar. 6, Apr. 3, May 1, 9:00 a.m.

Join a trained Naturalist for a 2-hour walk along the Bay. Bring binoculars and sun protection. Free. No reservations needed. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: BBSC

Friends of Newport Bay Walking Tour — Saturday, Mar. 13, departing 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, 10:00, 10:15 a.m.

Walk along the Back Bay listening to Naturalists and visiting Interpretive Stations featuring natural history specialists. Free. No reservations required. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: VP

Shellmaker Discovery Tour — Saturday, Mar. 13, Apr. 10, May 15, 9:00–10:30 a.m.

Join a Naturalist to learn about Shellmaker Island's rich history; the future of the Back Bay Science Center; and discover unusual and endangered plants, birds and crab habitats. No latecomers. Free. Reservations required. (949) 640-9956. Location code: BBSC

Big Canyon Walking Tour — Saturday, Mar. 20, Apr. 17, May 15, 9:00 a.m.

Join a trained Naturalist for a 2-hour walk along Big Canyon Trail and the Bay. Bring binoculars and sun protection. Free. No reservations needed. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: Big Canyon parking lot.

Steward Days — Every Wednesday, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Support the Bay's unique genetics at our restoration sites by collecting seeds & propagating plants. Learn how to grow natives in your backyard, attract wildlife and conserve water. For information call (949) 640-0286. Location code: BBSC

ROOTS Restoration Teamwork — Saturday, Mar. 27, Apr. 24, May 22, 9:00 a.m.–noon

Help restore Back Bay habitat by installing and maintaining native plants while learning about wetland ecology. Reservations required. Refreshments, tools provided. Call (949) 640-0286 for information, reservations and location.

2nd Sundays Restoration Program — Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 9, 9:00 a.m.–noon

Join the staff at the IC to enhance the Nature Preserve habitat with non-native plant removal, native plantings and Butterfly Garden maintenance. Pre-registration required. (949) 923-2295. Minors aged 15 and younger must have legal guardian present at all times. Location code: IC

Marine Life Inventory — Saturday, Mar. 13, Apr. 10, May 15, 8:30–noon

Marine biology students ages 12 and up are invited to participate in a variety of hands-on marine life monitoring programs in Newport Bay with the Dept. of Fish and Game. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Free. Reservations (949) 640-9956. Location code: BBSC

Train for a Day, Volunteer at the Bay! — Saturday, Mar. 20, May 15, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Become a part of this dynamic estuary! Learn about the habitats and wildlife of the bay. Participate in habitat restoration and special events. Assist with tours. Greet and educate visitors. Registration (949) 923-2296. Location code: IC

Movie Night — Thursday Apr. 1, 6:30 p.m. (Social) 7:00 p.m. (Presentation)

Join us for movies and popcorn. Each quarter, in collaboration with the Newport Beach Film Festival, we will be showing stunning short films previously shown in the Environmental category at the Film Festival. Free. No reservations required. Open to all. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: IC

NBNF Guest Speaker Night — Thursday May. 6, 6:30 p.m. (Social) 7:00 p.m. (Presentation)

Join us for our regular quarterly Naturalist meeting and guest presentation. Speaker to be announced. Free. No reservations required. Open to all. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: IC

NBNF Research Workshop Night — Thursday Jun. 3, 6:30–9:30 p.m.

Please join us for the latest in our new series of research workshops, organized by the NBNF Research Committee! This will be another great networking opportu-

nity for the scientific community and a chance for everyone to learn more about the biodiversity and ecology of the Bay, and to volunteer to help with research projects. Free, open to all and no reservations required. Light refreshments will be provided. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: BBSC

Conservation Club — available upon request for groups of 10 or more

Ready to dig in and get dirty? Designed for students aged 2 to 13 years, come work with Preserve staff on establishing healthy habitat for Bay wildlife. Learn the importance of native plants as we clear and protect our own special plot of land. Activities may include weeding, watering, planting and debris clearing. There is no fee for this program. Phone (949) 923-2275, or e-mail unbic@ocparks.com to schedule—dates subject to staff availability. Location code: IC

Sunset Stroll — Friday Mar. 26 (6:30 p.m.), Apr. 30 (6:30 p.m.), May 28 (6:30 p.m.)

Join us for a twilight nature walk and discover the wonders of our “not so spooky” night-time wildlife friends. Discover how nature's night shift is essential to our habitats and create your own nocturnal critter to take home! Dress warmly for the evening chill. All ages. \$3/person. Phone (949) 923-2275, or e-mail unbic@ocparks.com. Location code: IC

Scout Programs — Tuesday through Saturday upon request

Join a Naturalist for a 2-hour Brownie or Junior Girl Scout Try-it or badge program, or a Tiger cub, Bear Cub or Webelo badge program. \$7/child including patch. Call (949) 923-2269 or email scoutssi@sbcglobal.net. Location code: IC or BBSC.

For all of the following, call (949) 923-2275 to pre-register or email unbic@ocparks.com. \$5 per child. Location code: IC

Tideland Tots (Ages 2–5)

NEW TIME! Thursdays, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

Join Preserve staff for a fun-filled parent and child experience that may include arts and crafts, story telling, hands-on activities or outdoor nature walks. Come prepared for an exciting outdoor experience! Class fee is \$5.00 per child. Space is limited, pre-registration is required.

The Secrets of Soil — Mar. 4

Amphibian Adventures — Mar. 11

Backyard Birding — Mar. 18

Ring in Spring — Mar. 25

Hip Hop Hares — Apr. 1

Butterfly Beauty — Apr. 8

Earth Day for Today! — Apr. 15

Wetland Wildflowers — Apr. 22

Marine Mammal Marvels — Apr. 29

Bzzz... Bzzz... Bees — May 13

High in the Sky Hawks — May 20

Mud Grub — May 27

Wild Tales (Ages 2–8)

NEW DAY! Fridays, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

Visit with Preserve staff for story-telling fun! After a story, learn more about the natural history of the Bay through crafts, hands-on activities and nature walks. Come prepared for an exciting outdoor experience! Class fee is \$5.00 per child. Space is limited, pre-registration is required.

Ruby in Her Own Time — Mar. 12

Where Butterflies Grow? — Mar. 19

The Bumble Queen — Mar. 26

An Egg is Quiet — Apr. 2

Biggest, Strongest, Fastest — Apr. 9

Actual Size — Apr. 30

Fidget's Freedom — May 14

On One Flower — May 21

Animal Babies — May 28

Bayside Buddies (Ages 2–8)

Thursdays, 3:30–4:40 p.m.

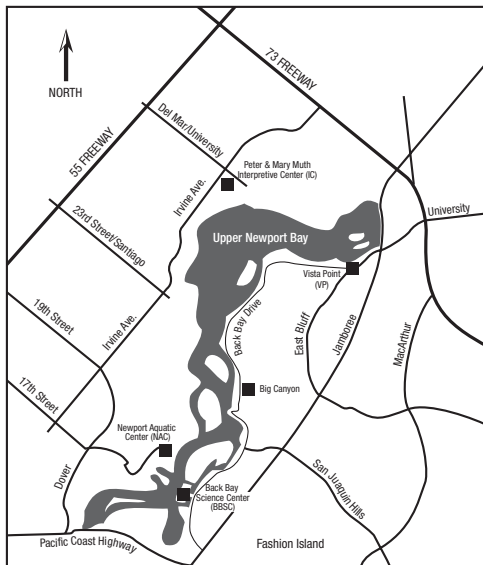
Calling all junior naturalists! Discover our amazing natural world at the Bay through hands-on activities, crafts and nature walks. Come prepared for an exciting outdoor experience! Class fee is \$5.00 per child. Space is limited, pre-registration is required.

Micro-World — Mar. 4

Nature's Gardens — Apr. 1

Metamorphic Magic — May 13

Please give us your email address so
 that we can save trees.
 Go to newportbay.org/trees.htm



WEB SITES

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends: www.newportbay.org
 Peter & Mary Muth Interpretive Center: www.ocparks.com/unbic
 Back Bay Science Center: www.backbaysciencecenter.org
 California Coastal Commission: www.coastal.ca.gov

LOCATION KEY

Peter & Mary Muth Interpretive Center (IC)
 2301 University Drive
 Newport Beach, CA 92660

Back Bay Science Center (BBSC)
 600 Shellmaker
 Newport Beach, CA 92660

TRACKS CREDITS

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Newport Aquatic Center (NAC)
 1 Whitecliffs Drive
 Newport Beach, CA 92660

Upper Newport Bay Earth Day

Learning from Nature



Free admission and activities!

When: Sunday, April 25, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Where: Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center
 2301 University Drive (at Irvine Ave.)

Scavenger hunt, interpretive programs, live sharks and rays, science discovery and craft booths, environmental exhibits, Newport Beach Film Festival films, LEAF “Ecommercial” awards and much more.

Upper Newport Bay Estuary Awareness Day

Connecting You to the Ocean

When: Saturday, May 22, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Where: Back Bay Science Center
 600 Shellmaker Rd. (at Back Bay Drive)

Boat tours of Back Bay, interactive educational activities, touch tanks, aquarium exhibits and much more.



Free admission and activities!

For information for both events: Call (949) 640-6712 or visit newportbay.org

Save the date—Saturday June 5

NBNF will hold a Fundraising Event which will start at 6:00 p.m. and will feature traditional BBQ cuisine from several different countries.