

The Pickleweed

The Newsletter of the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy

Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy, Inc., P.O. Box 5903, Huntington Beach, CA 92615, 714-963-2123

What a year !

Wow, what a year we had in 2003. The Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy had a great year in 2003. Our Fall newsletter highlighted many of the successes we had over the course of the year. With your help and interest, we are looking forward to an equally exciting 2004. The upcoming year promises to be a very busy time for the Conservancy. We are underway on several projects. The engineering firm of Moffatt & Nichol has been selected to prepare a wetlands enhancement plan for all of the Huntington Beach wetlands, located between Beach Blvd. and the Santa Ana River. This planning phase will require approximately one year to complete during which time there will be several public meetings providing the public an opportunity to comment on the restoration plan. Once the plan is complete actual restoration will begin sometime in late 2005.

Construction is scheduled to begin on the WILDLIFE CARE & EDUCATION building at the Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center in late March or early April. The 4,200 square foot building will include a veterinarian hospital, meeting/classroom and visitors center. In addition to the new building, plans are being prepared to construct a decorative wall, curb, gutter and sidewalk along PCH from Newland Street to the end of the Care Center property. Construction should begin mid to late 2004.

As the *Pickleweed* goes to press, restoration has begun on the 3.5 acre "Little Shell" wetlands located on the west side of Beach Blvd north of Pacific View Ave. The project will include removal of invasive vegetation, grading new contours, constructing water control features and landscaping. The result should be a very attractive wetland.

The Conservancy is currently negotiating with Caltrans for the transfer of the coastal sand dunes along PCH between Brookhurst Street and Newland. After completion of the acquisition, the Conservancy will begin removal of the non-native plants & vegetation. In addition, as the property owners, we will be in a better position to keep the dunes free of non-native plants, trash, debris and transients.

Winter and Spring Birds

Recent surveys of our local bird residents have indicated that Talbert Marsh is a healthy marsh providing a resource laden home for many year round and seasonal birds.

Winter is an exciting time to bird the Talbert Marsh. There are more species of birds in winter than in any other season. Next time you are out at the Marsh, don't overlook the gulls. Besides Western, Ring-billed, and California Gulls, you will likely be able to spot Mew, Bonaparte's, Heermann's, Herring, Thayer's, and an occasional Glaucous-winged Gull. Most of the terns will be the Forester's but if you see a big one with a large orange bill, it's a Caspian. The Marsh will be full of Great-blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, and if you get there early or late in the day, Black-crowned Night Herons will be around the edges of the Marsh.

While walking along the bike path, don't be surprised if a Green Heron flies up out of the rocks. A couple of hours after high tide, expect to find a variety of shorebirds like the Marbled Godwits, Willets, Killdeer, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, a Spotted Sandpiper, and a Greater Yellowlegs. Duck species include Mallards, Red-breasted Mergansers, Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, and an occasional Common Goldeneye, just to name a few. Be sure to watch for the Pied-billed Grebes and Eared Grebes diving for fish.

Brown Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants are often resting on the sand. Look on the light standards and telephone poles and lines for Osprey, Red-tailed Hawks, and Belted Kingfisher.

Come Spring, watch the rookery of Great-Blue Herons nesting in the palm trees on the OC Sanitation District property adjacent to the Santa Ana River and Talbert Marsh. Last year there were over nine active nests! From April to August, watch the endangered California Least Terns fly from their nesting site across PCH and forage for fish and listen for the endangered Belding Savannah Sparrow sing from the pickleweed.

We would love to hear from you.

If you have seen a rare, endangered or exciting bird, please let us know. We are always interested to learn about the birds frequenting our local areas. Specific information may prove helpful in our restoration plans.

Volunteers

HBWC has been successful in preserving more than 90 acres of coastal wetlands in Huntington Beach. As we work toward our goal of acquiring and restoring the balance, we must continue to maintain our existing properties. The only way we can accomplish this is with your help. We now have several ways in which you can take an active role in maintaining “our” wetlands.

WETLAND MONITORS - We are in the process of developing a water & soil monitoring program and need “Volunteer Monitors” to collect samples and assist us in performing tests. No previous experience or education is required, we will teach you the simple procedures necessary. We anticipate beginning this program by summer, 2004. If you are interested, please call.

WETLAND MAINTENANCE - We hold our annual clean up day the third Saturday in September, in conjunction with the California Coastal Clean Up Day. Volunteers are needed prior to, and on the day of the clean up. If you are interested in helping organize this event or to work on the event day, please call us.

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Membership

Please consider joining the Conservancy, or renewing your membership for 2004. Your membership provides important operating funds as well as allows us to represent our neighborhood wetlands to local and state government agencies. An active and interested membership base is vital to our continued service in this area.

Please Join Us.

- Great Egret (\$10)
- California Halibut (\$50)
- Least Tern (\$100)
- Brown Pelican (\$250)
- Double Crested Cormorant (\$500)
- Great Blue Heron (\$1,000)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, ST, Zip: _____

Phone / e-mail: _____

Please mail to: **HBWC
PO Box 5903
Huntington Beach, CA 92615**

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