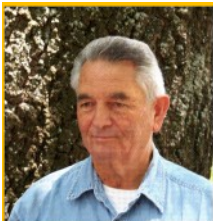




Friends of Canada de los Osos Ecological Reserve

Spring 2023



From The Chair - Henry Coletto Restoring the Land

Over the last 100 years many of California's native plant and animal species have lost habitat to agriculture, poorly managed livestock grazing on both private and public lands, fire suppression, development, and the introduction of non-native invasive species.

Grasslands in California have declined by 99 percent, and are continuing to decline in both quantity and quality for native animals and plants. Native grasses have been largely replaced by non-native annual grasses and forbs. Riparian habitats have also been destroyed or degraded by human and livestock activities throughout the decades. Like many streams and creeks throughout the West, the banks of Cañada de los Osos Creek had been denuded and eroded by decades of cattle grazing. By the time the property was purchased by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the adjacent grasslands were dominated by weedy non-native species.

Riparian and grassland habitats provide fawning and feeding areas for blacktail deer, as well as nesting habitat for native birds and hunting grounds for raptors, including red-tailed hawks, kestrels, kites, and golden eagles. In 2007 the Cañada de los Osos Ecological Reserve received a grant from the California State Wildlife Conservation Board to restore one-half mile of the Cañada de los Osos Creek with native trees and shrubs, and to restore about 45 acres of uplands adjacent to the creek with native grasses. Over a decade later, the planted native grasses and riparian vegetation are thriving, and provide some great habitat for the local wildlife. With the help of dedicated volunteers, this is just one of many projects that have made a difference for wildlife on the Reserve.

Happy New Year, and thanks to all of our supporters over the last 23 years. With your help, we'll keep working for wildlife!

Henry

CDLO Creek Restoration



The coronavirus that changed the World as we know it.

Dr. Dave Jessup, Wildlife Veterinarian

The best evidence available is that the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, cause of the COVID 19 disease, developed in bats in China and passed through several other animals before jumping to humans in late 2019. During 2020 it became clear that other animals including dogs and cats, but also mink on mink farms, big cats and gorillas in zoos, and others species could become infected. This virus has recently been confirmed in white-tailed deer in 14 states (USDA APHIS, 2022) and the variants found closely align with the timing and virus types concurrently present in humans. This and other evidence suggests multiple human-to-deer introductions occurred, as well as subsequent deer-to-deer transmission. Samples from hunter killed deer taken in late 2021 in Ontario, Canada identified a highly divergent and deer-adapted SARS-CoV-2 virus with evidence of deer-to-human transmission. This suggests that white-tailed deer could become a new reservoir host, with significant public health implications for humans, particularly hunters. With few exceptions white-tailed deer generally show little sign of illness and recover uneventfully. As most readers may know there are no free-ranging white-tailed deer in California. Research has shown that SARS-CoV-2 can replicate in mule deer, although not in elk, both of which are present in California and the Mt. Hamilton range. However, this does not necessarily mean that mule or black-tailed deer will become infected under natural circumstances. California Department of Fish and Wildlife are using tissues already being collected for screening deer for chronic wasting disease to test for presence of SARS-CoV-2 in selected locations

The COVID 19 pandemic has disrupted global economies, strained relationships between nations, and changed laws and social norms. This is what the One World–One Health concept tells us—the health of animals, people, and environments are inexorably bound together (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2021).

The Birds of Canada de los Osos Ecological Reserve

Contributed by Dave Stocks

The year 2022 was another good year for the birds of Canada de los Osos. It was a great year for those lucky enough to spend time with them! The bird project has two major components. The first is a survey of the reserve to determine which bird populations are present. This varies seasonally. Some birds are year round residents, some come for only the summer and others are winter migrants.

The project is led by Rick Herder. As we began our third year, I asked Rick for his thoughts on what he has found most exciting. This is his response:

“Two of the most notable birds on CdIO are the Tricolored Blackbird and the Lawrence's Goldfinch. The Tricolored Blackbird is on the California Endangered Species list. “Trikes” are wanderers. Their nesting sites are unpredictable and can change year to year. However, Tooth Lake is a reliable nesting site, and they've returned here for breeding for years. They only stay for a few months, then they wander again. The Tricolored Blackbirds are sometimes found in mixed winter flocks with Red-winged Blackbirds and Brewer's Blackbirds



Tricolored Blackbird

(Photo courtesy of Cornell University, Lab of Ornithology)

The Lawrence's Goldfinch is another wanderer. They may favor an area for several years, then disappear. CdIO has been very reliable for this bird for several breeding seasons. Lawrence's Goldfinches can be found on Jamieson Road leading to CdIO and also far in the back country. Its favorite food seems to be Fiddleneck, which is abundant in CdIO.

Lawrence's Goldfinch

(Photo courtesy of Cornell University, Lab of Ornithology)



. This year we found both Rufous-crowned and Grasshopper Sparrow pairs during the breeding season. These are uncommon birds that are also shy and hard to see.

Wintering raptors this winter have included Ferruginous Hawk and Merlin, two birds that migrate long distances to winter in this area. Swainson's Hawks passed through in the late summer, on their way to Argentina. Swainson's have been making a comeback, now breeding in Santa Clara Valley after being gone for almost 100 years. They also breed on the east side of Pacheco Pass. So, someday they may return to CdIO for breeding.

We've recorded 102 species of birds since we started our surveys in the fall of 2021. We've reported our findings in eBird and are slowly building up a bar chart showing their abundance in CdIO." See that chart at: <https://ebird.org/barchart?r=L9084185&yr=all&m=>

The second part of the bird project involves monitoring nest boxes. We have four types of nest boxes: Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Wood Ducks and what we call Bluebird boxes but are inhabited by several different species. All the boxes, except the Kestrel, were occupied by breeding pairs and fledged young. Of particular interest were the Bluebird boxes. The collected information from the boxes is shared with both Cornell University and the California Bluebird Recovery Program. This year we fledged fewer birds than in 2021, but a higher percentage of eggs hatched and resulted in fledglings. In 2021 we had 79 Bluebird eggs that resulted in 43 fledglings (54.4%). This year we had only 51 eggs, but they resulted in 32 fledglings (62.7%). In 2021 we had 298 Tree Swallow eggs that resulted in 148 fledglings (49.6%). This year we had 211 eggs that resulted in 138 fledglings (65.4%). There are several theories regarding the differences that include diurnal temperatures and interior nest box temperatures. 2023 is going to give us the opportunity to test some of these theories.

Another very exciting bird related item concerns Condors. They have been sited in the Pacheco Pass area. Hopefully one day they will be common at CdIO!



White tail deer in native grass stand