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SPRING 2006 SCHOOLS OUTREACH UPDATE

By Carol Hankermeyer

Despite the perverseness of bad weather the first half of 2006, Schools Outreach has had a banner year so far, managing to lead a record 263 children on field trips during the spring season. A fungus-finding hike with San Carlos Middle School in January accounted for 80 of them!

Also, a first this year was FoE-sponsored busing of Taft School at-risk children participating in an after-school program supported by Hidden Villa. School buses brought 84 Taft students to Edgewood on two separate field trips in March.

They were a huge success thanks to our outstanding Outreach docents and a highly skilled and enthusiastic Taft/Hidden Villa program leader. You know you've scored when you ask a student "What is your favorite place to visit?" and he responds, "This place, right here! —I wish I could live here."



Talia Hacke-Davie closes for the Taft School field trip

Besides these school trips, we hosted a 4H

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EDGEWOOD'S ARTHROPODS

By Paul Heiple



Black and yellow garden spider
Mark Moran, <http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/>

With the possible exception of the Bay checkerspot butterfly, many people think only of the large vertebrate animals when they think of the wildlife of Edgewood. In fact, the majority of animal species in the park are insects and other arthropods. They are also the most numerous.

In this first installment in a series of articles

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Diane West-Bourke explains an interpretive principle to attentive Outreach Docents at the docent training workshop

project from Hacienda School and five girl scout troops.

Another boost to the Outreach Program was the second docent training workshop given by Diane West-Bourke on March 17 to help docents learn how to engage children and relate nature to their own lives.



Outreach Docents relax for lunch with Diane on the Sylvan Trail

Diane demonstrated hands-on activities and showed how to use nature as you find it to illustrate the concepts of ecology and make it fun. We were pleased to have a turnout of 16 participants for this 4-hour enrichment.



Chris Overington, Hidden Villa Education Director, speculates with Taft students about a headless dusky-footed woodrat

I am elated to report that we now boast an active Outreach docent list of 17. With this expanded number, we plan to advertise our program and attract more local schools, orchestrating our field trips to support in-class curriculum and state standards as much as possible.

Finally, the docent guide committee, consisting of Toni Corelli, Herb Fischgrund, Frances Morse and myself, is proud to present the first edition of the Docent Guide for Leading Children's Groups at Edgewood Natural Preserve. Thanks to a Volunteer Grant sponsored by the Parks Foundation, we are offering it free to every active Outreach docent and to the FoE Executive Committee.

We hope this manual and the new visual aids available in the locker room will be a useful resource for field trip leaders, who have formerly relied solely on their own resources and visual materials. Perhaps it will inspire YOU to consider becoming an Outreach docent! If you'd like to get involved, contact outreach@friendsofedgewood.org.

Don't forget, too, that the Outreach Coordinator position will be open; I am seeking a replacement as I phase out in 2007 after 10 years of serving as the Coordinator of children's field trip programs. Please let me know if you are interested. ♻️

BEWICK'S WREN

By Lee Franks

“No bird more deserves the protection of man than Bewick’s Wren. He does not need man’s encouragement, for he comes of his own accord and instills himself as a member of the community, wherever it suits his taste. He is found about the cowshed and barn along with the Pewee and Barn Swallow; he investigates the pig-sty; then explores the garden fence; and finally mounts to the roof and pours forth one of the sweetest songs that ever was heard.”—
RIDGWAY 1889; 92-93.



The first recognized Bewick’s Wren, *Thryomanes bewickii*, collected by J.J. Audubon on its wintering ground in Louisiana in 1821, was described by Audubon and named for his friend, Thomas Bewick, a British engraver.

A century ago, Bewick’s Wren was beloved as the “house wren“ of the Appalachians and the Midwest. Today, the species has all but disappeared east of the Mississippi River and has declined in western parts of its range, including California,

The Bewick’s is the most common wren in the Bay Area, especially in shrubby areas, and it prefers the undergrowth areas of Edgewood. These year-round singers are always more abundant than they seem to be, and they frequently nest in the boxes installed throughout the wooded areas of the Park. The mission in this wren’s life appears to involve the investigation of all suspicious noises, which makes it an easy

bird to attract.

Appearance

Recognized by its white eyebrow and breast and long, white-spotted tail (which it wags from side to side). Their upperparts are brown to grayish



brown; throat and underparts are whitish. They have a slender down curved bill.

Behavior

When foraging, this bird uses short, quick hops between perches. It’s highly active, usually pausing only 1-2 seconds at a time. Its main food is arthropod larve and adults (beetles, wasps, caterpillars, butterflies, moths, flies), which it gleans from leaves, branches and trunks of lower strata of weeds, brush, and trees.

It also probes at crevices in branches and trunks, and flips and probes (but does not scratch) dead leaves on the ground. Generally forages solitarily.

Their flights are generally short, 1-2 meters; but longer when chasing intruders or commuting to and from feeding nestlings. In scolding intruders near nests, darts from branch to branch. Adults roost individually at sunset in unmodified depressions, niches and cavities in trees, posts and nest boxes. Young birds roost together for about one month.

Bewick’s use territories for courtship, mating, nesting, and feeding. Territory size and shape vary with distribution of vegetation and with the

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BIOCONTROL REPORT VII: WAITING FOR THE NEW AGENTS

By Paul Heiple

As I predicted last year, Yellow Starthistle (YST, *Centaurea solstitialis*) is still a common weed in Edgewood and throughout the state of California. The weevils and flies do put enough pressure on YST to decrease the number of plants, but with the lower densities of the stands, the plants grow larger and the area of cover remains the same. This change has made it easier to weed; there are fewer plants to pull. Weeding can proceed faster while pulling plants; however, dealing with the larger plants can slow down the process, as they are more difficult to bag. Overall, I think we are covering more ground in less time.



The new rust pathogen, *Puccinia jaceae* var. *solstitialis*, released last year is not yet in Edgewood. This

Puccinia jaceae var. *solstitialis*
Baldo Villegas, CDFA
<http://www.apsnet.org>

biocontrol was not released in

San Mateo County because the rust also affects an agricultural crop in the county, Bachelor's button or *Centaurea cyanus*, grown in San Mateo County as a cut flower crop. Oddly enough, this plant is also considered a weed in some areas of California.

On the horizon are many other agents that may tip the balance for YST. Testing has been completed

on the root crown weevil *Ceratapion basicorne* and permission for field



Root crown weevil, *Ceratapion basicorne*

release has been requested. Should the approval be given, this insect will be released as early as next year.

The root crown weevil feeds on the plant during the vegetative period long before seeds are forming. The larva eats the inside of the root just below the rosette, cutting off the leaves from the root and killing the plant. The history of successful insect releases for YST is not good however. Of six species approved for release, only two insects are common and doing extensive damage: the hairy starthistle weevil (*Eustenopus villosus*) and the false peacock fly (*Chaetorellia succinea*), and the latter was not one of the insects approved for release. To cover



Hairy starthistle weevil, *Eustenopus villosus*

this difficult gap in successful insects, four more insects and a mite are being tested along with four more fungal diseases. If one of these is as effective as the two already successful controls, maybe YST will finally become uncommon.



False peacock fly, *Chaetorellia succinea*

Insect photos taken from http://www.cal-ipc.org/symposia/archive/pdf/2002_symposium_proceedings2390.pdf. ☺

PARK VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENT

By Nick Ramirez, Volunteer Coordinator

The County Parks Division is planning a "Park Volunteer Recognition Event at Flood Park on October 21 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. A great barbeque, brief presentations, and great giveaways will all be part of this fun event!

Please pencil this date on your calendars let other people who helped our County Parks through volunteer projects and other forms of County Park support be made aware of this special event. More details of the event will be forthcoming in the next few weeks. This is also a family event so we look forward to having families with children there as well.

The Parks Division is looking forward to extending their appreciation for your work, time and energy that contributes and keeps making a visit to our San Mateo County Parks a memorable and rewarding experience for all our park visitors. ☸

(*ARTHROPODS, Continued from page 1*)
about Edgewood's arthropods, I will begin with two species of large spiders that are now common in Edgewood's grasslands. They are *Argiope aurantia*, the common garden spider, and *Argiope trifasciata*, the silver or transverse Argiope.

The genus *Argiope* is one of the genera of orb web weavers, in the family Araneidae. The distinguishing feature of this genus is that the spiders weave a zigzag pattern in the center of the orb web. The purpose of this structure is not entirely known but some research indicates it confuses the prey items by making the web less visible. Another proposed explanation is that it keeps birds from going through the web.

The black and yellow garden spider *Argiope aurantia* is a species I have known for a long time. It is found from coast to coast. In Edgewood, the black may be replaced by brown in some individuals, a variation I did not see in

the eastern individuals.

Full-sized females can be found as early as August 1. Nearly an inch long, this is the largest Argiope in California. The male spiders are not often seen; they are about a quarter of the length of the females and much thinner. To find them, look around the upper edges of the female's web in early August. They can be found in their own webs close to the edge of the female's. Eggs are encased in brown silk pouches which are round to tear shaped and located within a foot or two of the web.

The silver Argiope, *Argiope trifasciata*, is nearly as large as the black and yellow garden spider. In Edgewood it may even appear to be larger in some specimens. Also occurring from coast to coast, this species tends to live near marshes in the east. It matures later, usually around September 1. The egg cases are light gray with one side flattened. This species tends to open up a space in the grass where the web is spun, like a ball-shaped cavity.



Silver Argiope
<http://www.cirrusimage.com/>

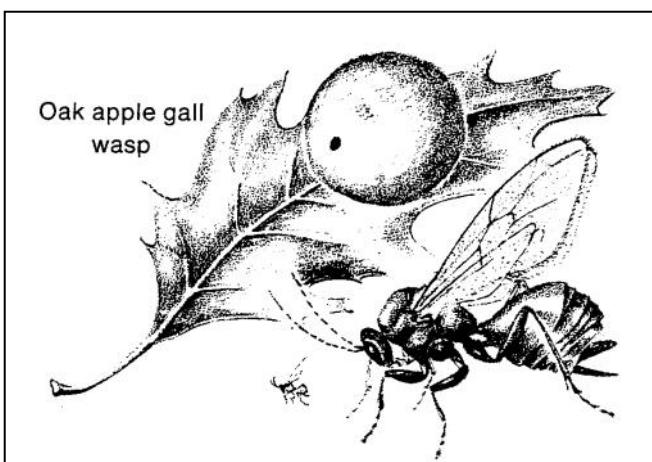
To distinguish between these species, look at the upper surface of the rear-most body segment (the opisthosoma). On *A. aurantia*, a dark band (black or brown) covers the full length of the segment with four yellow spots in it and many branches of the dark band dividing the yellow area. With *A. trifasciata* the dark band alternates with bands of silver or yellow. ☸

OAK GALLS

By Kathy Korbholz

Have you ever seen a “tumor-like” growth on an oak or a willow? These growths, called galls, are caused by the interaction of a specific insect and a specific plant. Each kind of gall is the plant’s predictable defense against the intrusion of its tissue by a specific irritant.

This reaction is so unique, scientists use galls to help differentiate between similar plant species. Unlike animal tumors, galls do not continue growing out of control and rarely harm the host plant. One notable exception is the grape phylloxera which causes serious damage to European varieties of grapes.



Gall formation starts as the female wasp deposits her eggs into plant tissue, which causes a minor local swelling around the eggs. Once larvae emerge, their chemical secretions stimulate abnormal cell division. Threadlike fibers grow around the little creature and they continue growing until they are enormous compared with the larva.

Galls provide both protection and food for the developing offspring. Soon, the larvae stop eating and change to pupae. When the pupal stage is completed, an adult insect emerges by boring a small hole in the shell-like wall of its home. This plant-insect relationship ends until the adult is ready to lay its own eggs; then it returns to the host plant.

Oaks host more galls than any other native tree or shrub in the western United States. More than 200 species of cynipid wasps are associated with California native Oaks.

It is not unusual for a single blue oak tree to be “decorated” with the galls of 20-30 species of wasps. Galls can be in a variety of shapes, including pinheads, tiny cups, flatter saucers, stars, sea urchins, clubs, and royal crowns. They are often brightly colored.

One of the most noticeable galls, known as the “oak apple,” grows on the valley oak, *Quercus lobata*. It looks like a tan ball ranging in size from golf ball to baseball.

Galls most commonly form on leaves, but can be found on stems, roots, seed pods, flowers, and acorns. Another very visible gall is the bright red-orange with yellow dots, marble-sized twig gall found on the scrub oak, *Quercus dumosa*. ☼

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

By Ken Seydel and Bill Korbholz

The section of I-280 adjacent to Edgewood continues to reflect the natural beauty of the Preserve, thanks to the efforts of 11 dedicated freeway warriors.

Pat Bennett, Brian Cole, Carolyn Dorsch, Billy James, Bill and Kathy Korbholz, Jane Kos, Susan Russell, Ken Seydel, Jan Smith, and Michael Yantos volunteered for our monthly cleanups in July, August, and September.

The summer is generally the time of year when drivers are most careless, and this year was no exception. 27 bags of trash were removed from the east side of I-280 north and south of the Edgewood Road offramp.

If you have an interest in joining our great group, contact Ken Seydel. We typically go out the first weekend of the month and spend about 2 ½ hours. We will see that you are safety trained and equipped with your very own Picker, hard hat, goggles, gloves, and bright orange vest. ☼

(BEWICK'S WREN, Continued from page 3)

number of birds. They defend territories by countersinging, chases, and sometimes fights.

Sounds

The territorial song of this wren resembles that of the song sparrow and generally consists of three distinct parts; a high, quick opening of 2 notes, then lower notes, and ending with a high trill.

Individual repertoires range from 9 to 22 song types. They often will repeat each song 20-50 times before singing another song. Only the male sings. During the breeding season, the male sings from many high perches in all parts of his territory. Autumn songs are given while foraging on or near the ground. Both sexes use call notes for contact purposes while foraging.

Breeding

The male initiates nest building, usually in March, but both sexes participate in building.

The Bewick's wren is a cavity nester, so they make use of the nest boxes in the wooded areas of the Park. It takes about 7 days to complete a nest.

The first egg is usually laid between the first and third morning after nest completion. Their clutch size is 5-6, which get incubated over a period of 14-16 days. The female does the brooding, but both parents feed the brood.

Nestlings depart their nest 14-16 days after hatching. These young birds remain together and are fed by their parents for about 2 weeks after fledging. At about 5 weeks of age the young disperse.

References

The Birds of North America No 315, 1997; E. Dale Kennedy and Douglas W. White.

Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area; Chris C, Fisher and Joseph Morlan. ☼



MEMBERSHIP DUES

New or renewing members may clip and complete this section to pay **tax-deductible** annual membership dues. Please send your check payable to **Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve** to the return address on the back of this panel. Renewing members can determine their membership expiration date by checking the six-digit code to the right of their name on their mailing label. For example, if the code is 06/2006, membership runs through June 2006. Questions, call (866) GO-EDGEWOOD or contact membership-coordinator@friendsofedgewood.org.

- \$10 Student/Retired** (includes quarterly newsletter)
- \$25 Friend** (newsletter)
- \$50 Advocate** (newsletter, set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards)
- \$75 Supporter** (newsletter plus choose one):
 - Set of 6 Edgewood photo reeting cards and 1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
 - Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood
- \$100 Steward** or **\$250 Guardian** (newsletter, set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards, plus choose one):
 - 1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
 - Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood

Please do not send any premiums.

I am enclosing a gift of _____.

Please send ___ copies of *Common Native Wildflowers of Edgewood* (\$2.50), ___ copies of the *Edgewood Vascular Plant List* (\$3.00), ___ copies of the Apr-Jun 2004 BAY NATURE magazine (\$6.00), ___ copies of Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve (\$25.00). Includes tax, S&H. All items subject to availability.

I would like to participate in the following:

- Docent program
- GIS/GPS mapping
- Newsletter/web
- Public relations
- Weed management
- Schools outreach
- Habitat restoration
- Adopt-A-Highway

Name

Address

City State Zip

Day Telephone Eve Telephone

Email



UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❑ *Sunday, Oct. 22, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.* See the article on this page for details.
- ❑ *Tuesday, Nov. 7, ELECTION DAY.* Don't forget to vote. The Friends of Edgewood have endorsed Measure A, the Parks for the Future tax measure, and encourage you to support it.
- ❑ *Monthly, BIRD WALKS.* Meet Audubon Society docent Lee Franks at 8 am at the Day Camp kiosk on 9/24, 10/29, and 11/19.
- ❑ *Monthly, ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY.* The next sessions are scheduled for 10/7, 11/5, and 12/2. Contact Ken Seydel to volunteer or for more information. ♻️

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OCT. 22

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 22, when the Friends of Edgewood will host our annual general membership meeting from noon to 3 pm at the Day Camp picnic area.

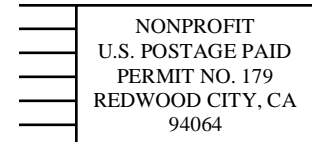
You'll have a chance to socialize with Friends, learn more about the exciting programs in which the Friends of Edgewood are involved, elect Board members, and see who has won the coveted Best Friend award for 2006.

We will also have the latest information about the Bay checkerspot butterfly release scheduled for next year.

Again this year we will provide a picnic lunch for members and invited guests. Please plan to come out and have some fun. ♻️

The Edgewood Explorer is published quarterly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Edgewood for the human, plant, and animal generations to come. The newsletter is produced by Bill Korbholz with assistance from Laverne Rabinowitz and contributions from many Friends. For more information about the Friends of Edgewood, visit our web site at www.friendsofedgeswood.org, mail us at PO Box 3422, Redwood City, CA 94064-3422, call or fax toll-free at (866) GO-EDGEWOOD (866-463-3439), or email info01@friendsofedgeswood.org.

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Save The Date
Sunday Oct. 22
General Meeting