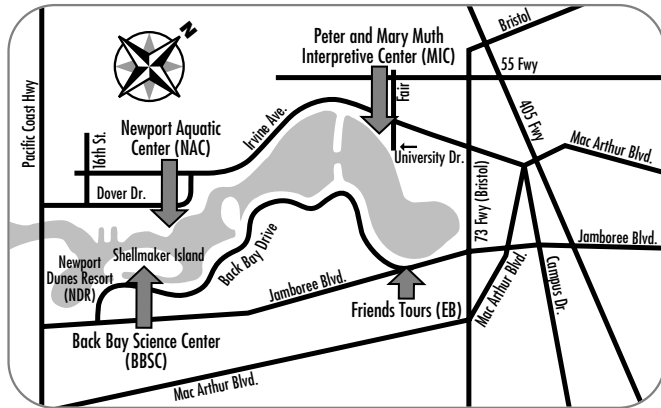


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### WEB SITES

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends: [www.newportbay.org](http://www.newportbay.org)  
Peter & Mary Muth Interpretive Center: [www.ocparks.com/uppernewportbay](http://www.ocparks.com/uppernewportbay)  
Back Bay Science Center: [www.backbaysciencecenter.org](http://www.backbaysciencecenter.org)  
California Coastal Commission: [www.coastal.ca.gov](http://www.coastal.ca.gov)

### TRACKS CREDITS

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### LOCATION KEY

Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center (MIC)  
2301 University Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660

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

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

## Farewell from a Good Friend

Dear Naturalists and Friends,

Thank you for being so supportive these past three years. We've grown ROOTS into a lasting program with more than 4,600 volunteers who helped restore 9 acres of Bay habitat by removing 86,000 pounds of invasive vegetation and installing 1,400 natives grown from seed. Soon, there will be a new coordinator and in my absence interns will lead Stewards Days on Wednesdays and Restoration Teamwork on the fourth Saturday of each month.



photo ©Jim Cokas

Recalling my first days here, when I couldn't identify the smell of sagebrush or the call of a Clapper Rail, I am reminded how much impact you all had on my learning.

It has been an honor to work with such a significant group. In a time when this nation is faced with a lack of personal responsibility and disorganized priorities, you give me hope for the future. In Santa Cruz, I will complete a "How-To Guide" on starting community-based restoration programs for the California Coastal Commission. I hope we are funded to expand the program to the Santa Cruz area so that I may continue in this rewarding work. I also look forward to helping with my family's business, Finstad's Worldwide Diving Adventures.

*Kristina Finstad  
California Coastal Commission  
Restoration Education Program*

Footnote: Kristina Finstad is moving to Santa Cruz and we are so sorry to see her go, but appreciate her need to be with her family. She has done a superb job with the restoration program taking it from just removal and replanting to growing plants from native seeds with her "Roots" program. Good luck Kristina!

# TRACKS

A Publication of the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends

December–February  
2004–2005

## The Birds are Back

They're back! Funneling in from their breeding grounds in the Arctic areas of Alaska and western Canada, millions of birds have headed south along the Pacific Coast and the California Central Valley to escape the harsh winter. Up to 30,000 of these birds can be seen on a winter day at Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve and Nature Preserve, where they enjoy approximately 900 acres of prime real estate in wetlands and adjacent uplands. Our "Back Bay", as it is known locally, is a diamond along this

Pacific Flyway. With over 90% of California wetlands filled in and developed, this rest stop and feeding station is crucial to the survival of many birds. The Back Bay is the largest natural estuary left in southern California. Here fresh and salt water mix under the influence of the tides, making it rich in plant and animal life to nourish the weary birds.

Already you can see the "flying clouds" of western sandpipers in the bay, as they twist and turn in unison by hundreds or thousands, undulating with the light playing off their white undersides. At low tide, thousands of shorebirds are seen frantically feeding in the mudflats, trying to recuperate up to 50% of their body weight which was lost during the migration. Long-billed birds like the marbled godwits and long-billed curlews are probing deeply, while the shorter-billed birds like plovers and sandpipers probe closer to the surface. At high tide, the shorebirds are then resting, while the many duck species can be seen

feeding on the surface of the water in the cordgrass and pickleweed. About two hours after high tide, you can see many of these ducks start heading for the fresh water inlets or the fresh water pond in the Big Canyon area to bathe, rest and socialize.

So, come on out and enjoy the respite from urban life. Bring your binoculars and look for the approximately 200 species of birds that visit the Back Bay. Maybe you'll be fortunate enough to be near an osprey as it looks for prey from 100 feet in the air, then dives down and at the last minute thrusts its talons forward to grasp an unsuspecting fish. But don't wait too long. In February and March many of these migrants heed the call to return to the Arctic and northern latitudes. There they will breed and be able to gorge on food almost 24 hours a day, fattening up themselves and their chicks for the next migration south.

Russ Kerr, Naturalist



Top: a mallard duck

Middle: a cloud of western sandpipers

Bottom: a marbled godwit

all photos ©Russ Kerr

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- The Birds are Back
- A Letter from the President
- Calendar of Events
- Farewell from a Good Friend



### ***Sharkmobile is available for your school***

Sharkmobile is an outreach program that will bring sharks, rays, sea stars and other marine animals to your school. Participants will enjoy learning about local marine habitats through hands-on activities. For more information or to reserve the Sharkmobile please call (949) 640-9956. Location code: BBSC

### ***Scout programs are available after school and Saturday***

Join a naturalist for our 2-hour Brownie and Junior Girl Scout programs and receive a Try-it or Badge; or join us for Tiger Cub, Bear Cub or Webelo badge programs. Call (949) 923-2269 or email scoutssi@sbcglobal.net for reservations and information. Fee is \$7 per child. Location code: BBSC

## **A Letter from the President**

Dear Naturalists and Friends,

As the President of the Board of Directors of the Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends (NBNF) let me introduce myself. My wife, Mary, and I completed the Naturalist training class in 1991. I joined the Board in 2003 and am honored to serve as President for a second year in 2005. I have seen the importance of the Upper Newport Bay grow over the forty years that I have called Newport Beach my home. As the surrounding area becomes more urbanized, the Back Bay has provided open space allowing many of us to ride, hike, canoe, kayak, and bird-watch or simply savor the delightful sunrise and sunset over tranquil waters. I am grateful for all our many supporters who also see the Bay as a vital asset in our community for all to enjoy, and appreciate our joint efforts in protecting the habitat and wildlife. What I find most heartening is the diversity of this support. I would therefore like to share with you three examples of the partnerships we have developed.

One of our strongest supporters over the past several years has been The Irvine Company. In addition to providing generous financial support, they have undertaken to promote us within the local business community and help us extend our corporate membership base. More importantly, however, they have taken on a pivotal role and have worked tirelessly to help ensure federal funding of the Army Corps of Engineers Upper Newport Bay Ecosystem Restoration Project. This roughly \$40million dredging project is to be funded jointly by federal, state and local money. Without dredging, critical habitat will soon be lost. The Irvine Company, like us, has a vision for long-term preservation of important environmental resources through public/private partnerships. This is demonstrated admirably by the recently-created Irvine Ranch Land Reserve, which includes over 50,000 acres of permanent open space and wildlife corridors stretching from Upper Newport Bay to the Cleveland National Forest.

A new NBNF partner is State Street, a global investment management leader with major operations here in Newport Beach. In addition to providing generous financial support, they organize teams of their employees to come out and help on Clean-Up Day and at other special events. We are proud to have one of their Philanthropy Ambassadors as a Naturalist. Like us, State Street has a keen interest in providing programs for disadvantaged inner city kids who would otherwise not have the opportunity to experience the wonders of nature at places like Upper Newport Bay.

The Bay has been an inspiration to many artists from the Southern California Plein Air Painters Association (SOCALPAPA). They decided that a paint-out, art show and sale for our benefit would be a fitting way of giving something back to the Bay. We are grateful not only to them, but also the Newport Beach Arts Foundation and Orange County Harbors, Beaches and Parks, who partnered with SOCALPAPA and us in organizing this event in 2003 and 2004. The staff of the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center deserve special thanks. They worked extraordinarily hard to make this event run smoothly and they continually show a willingness to help us in our many endeavors.

I am looking forward to a successful 2005 as all of us enjoy the work of preserving and enhancing the Upper Newport Bay. If you are already a Friend, thank you for your support. We hope that you will continue that support by renewing your individual or family membership for 2005. If you are not yet a Friend, please take this opportunity to join us by completing and returning the form on the left. To find out about the benefits of Friends Membership, or obtain information on our new Corporate Membership program, please call (949) 640-1751 and request a brochure or visit us at [www.newportbay.org](http://www.newportbay.org).

Gus Chabre  
President of the Board of Directors

### ***Yes, I want to be a Friend in 2005 at the membership level noted:***

- \$25 Pelican (Individual)
- \$50 Tern (Family)
- \$100 Egret
- \$500 Osprey
- \$1,000 Heron

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My check payable to the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends\* is enclosed.

Please charge my  Visa  Mastercard  Discover

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make an additional gift of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount given: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*A registered 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Your donation is deductible to the full extent of the law.

### ***Mail completed form and payment to:***

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends  
P.O. Box 10804  
Newport Beach, CA 92658-5008



# Upper Newport Bay Calendar of Events

December 2004–February 2005

## SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

### 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 (323) 350-1085. Location Code: BBSC

### Canoe the Back Bay—Every Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Join a trained naturalist for a guided 2-hour canoe tour of the Back Bay. Fee is \$10 per person. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: BBSC

### Kayak Tours—Every Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–Noon

Join a trained naturalist for a guided kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Aquatic Center on Northstar Beach. Fee is \$15 per person. NBNF members pay \$10. Be prepared to get wet. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: NAC

### Kayak Tours—Every Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–Noon

Join a trained naturalist for a guided kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Dunes Resort. Fee is \$20 per person. NBNF members pay \$10. The Dunes also charges a parking fee. Be prepared to get wet. For reservations call (949) 729-1150 (weekends only) or (800) 585-0747. Location Code: NDR

### Scout Programs—Tuesday–Friday after school and Saturdays

Join a naturalist for our 2 hour Brownie or Junior Girl Scout program and receive a Try-it or Badge; or join us for Tiger Cub, Bear Cub or Webelo badge programs. Call (949) 923-2269 or email scoutssi@sbcglobal.net for reservations and information. Fee is \$7 per child. Location Code: BBSC

### Walking Tour—Saturday, Dec. 4, Dec 18, Jan. 15, Feb. 5, Feb. 19, 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

### Intermediate Plein Air Painting—Saturday, Dec 4, Jan. 15, Feb. 12, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

The class will paint the Back Bay while exploring composition, light, the nuances of color and value, paint application, brush stroke techniques and more. All materials are provided. Dress comfortably in layered painting appropriate clothing. Bring a sun hat and drinking water. \$20 per adult. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Families Paint En Plein Air—Sunday, Dec 5, Jan. 16, Feb. 13, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

Enjoy a wonderful morning painting the Back Bay with family and friends. Jean Marie will demonstrate and present traditional Plein Air techniques. All materials are provided. Dress comfortably in layered painting appropriate clothing. Bring a sun hat and drinking water. \$15.00 per child ages 8 to 18, and \$20 per adult. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Plein Air Painting—Wednesday, Dec 8, Jan. 12, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

The weather is changing and the bay is alive with activity. This out door painting class is perfect for Home Schoolers and your family and friends. Jean Marie will demonstrate and present traditional Plein Air techniques. All materials are provided. Dress comfortably in layered painting appropriate clothing. Bring a sun hat and drinking water. \$15.00 per child ages 8 to 18, and \$20 per adult. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Electric Boat Tour of the Bay—Saturday, Dec. 11, Jan. 22, Feb. 26, 11:30 a.m.

Join a Naturalist on a 2 hour guided tour of the bay on our comfortable electric pontoon boat. This is a great time of year to see migratory birds. Fee is \$10 per person. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: BBSC

### Marine Discovery—Saturday, Dec. 11, Jan. 22, Feb. 26, 8:30–11:30 a.m.

Marine biology students ages 8 and up are invited to participate in a variety of marine life monitoring programs in Newport Bay. Anyone under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Fee is \$10. For reservations call (949) 642-5031. Location Code: BBSC

### Friends of Newport Bay Walking Tour—Saturday, Dec. 11, Jan. 8, Feb. 12

Walk along the Back Bay listening to Naturalists and visit Interpretive Stations featuring specialists addressing different natural history topics. Tours leave every 15 minutes between 9:00 and 10:15 a.m. Free. No reservations required. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: EB

## SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

### Holiday Nature Crafts for Kids—Sunday, Dec 12, 10:30 a.m.–Noon

Come learn about how nature is a part of holiday tradition. Make nature crafts for gifts or to decorate your home. Parent participation required. \$7.00 per child, ages 5-11. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Toddler Time "Holiday Nature Crafts"—Wednesday, Dec 15, 10:30–11:30 a.m.

Come learn about how nature is a part of holiday tradition. Make nature crafts for gifts or to decorate your home. Parent participation required. \$7.00 per child, ages 3-5. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Roots Restoration Teamwork—Saturday, Dec. 18, Jan. 22, Feb. 26, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

Join ROOTS in the field and help restore Back Bay habitat by planting natives. Volunteers get hands-on experience installing, maintaining and identifying plants while learning about wetland ecology. Reservations required for groups of five or more. Refreshments and tools provided. Call (323) 350-1085 for more information. Location code: BBSC

### Toddler Time "Animal Senses"—Wednesday, Jan. 5, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

Join us for this parent and child playtime to learn how the animals see, hear, taste smell and feel. \$5 per child, ages 3 & 4. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Bird Watching for the Complete Novice—Sunday, Jan 9, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Join Ranger Sue and Junior Naturalist Leigh Johnson for this introduction to the joy of bird watching. No experience is necessary; all birding materials will be provided. Come prepared to hike. \$4.00 per person, ages 8 and up. For reservations call (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

### Toddler Time "Whooo's That Owl"—Wed. Jan. 19, 9:00 or 10:30 a.m.

Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child playtime with an owl theme. Enjoy stories, movement and hands on fun for 2 to 4 year old junior naturalists. \$5 per child, ages 2-4. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Night Hike—Saturday, Jan. 22, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

When the sun goes down another world of wildlife becomes active. Join us for a night hike in our nature reserve. This program may be rescheduled due to weather. Dress warm for the evening chill. \$5 per person, ages 5 and up. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Astronomy Night—Saturday, Jan. 29, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Join members of the Orange County Astronomers for an inspirational tour of the night sky. This program is open to all ages and will include a presentation and observation with telescopes. No fee, only a suggested donation of \$2 per participant. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Toddler Time "Birds of Prey"—Wed. Feb. 2, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

Join us for story time and hands on fun all about birds of prey that live in the estuary. \$5 per child, ages 3-4. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Monthly Naturalist Meeting—Thursday, Feb. 3, 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

Join the Naturalists for a presentation related to the Upper Newport Bay. Refreshments are at 6:30 p.m. and presentation is at 7:00 p.m. Free. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: MIC

### Train for a Day, Be a Volunteer—Saturday, Feb. 5, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Be a part of this dynamic estuary - volunteer at Upper Newport Bay! Learn about the habitats and wildlife of the bay. Participate in habitat restoration and special events. Assist with canoe, kayak, walking, and school tours. Help us greet and educate visitors at the Interpretive Center and Back Bay Science Center. Call (949) 923-2295 to reserve a space. Location code: MIC

### Toddler Time "Sharks and Rays"—Wed. Feb. 16, 9:00 or 10:30 a.m.

Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child playtime with a shark theme. Enjoy stories, movement and hands on fun for 2-4 year olds. \$5 per child. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

### Monarch Butterfly Migration—Saturday, Feb. 26, 1:00–2:30 p.m.

Learn about the Monarch Butterfly that migrates over 1,000 miles to enjoy our warm winter weather. Join us for a pollination relay, a migration activity, to plant butterfly plants and more. \$5 per person, ages 5 and up. Call (949) 923-2295 to reserve a space. Location code: MIC