

# TRACKS

A Publication of the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends

June-August  
2005

## “This was our best Earth Day ever!”

exclaimed Gus Chabre, Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends Board President and 15-year Naturalist at the end of the day.

At 8:00 AM that morning the staff and volunteers already hard at work preparing for the event at the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center were not feeling quite so happy. Sunday, April 24 was the 15th annual Upper Newport Bay Earth Day festival and it looked like it was going to be the first wet one. It had already been raining steadily for a few hours, the skies were gray in all directions, and intermittent rain was forecast through the evening. For the first time the event

was going to be held at the Interpretive Center. So much work had been put into organizing a fantastic celebration to showcase the facility that everyone decided the show would go on. In the next two hours nearly fifty booths were rearranged as all of the activities that would have been in the upper parking lot were moved inside the Interpretive Center or onto the more sheltered patio. “It couldn’t have gone any better if we had planned it. The setting was extremely positive.” said Joannette Willert, Senior Park Ranger for Orange

County Harbors, Beaches and Parks at Upper Newport Bay, and manager of the Interpretive Center.

By the time the public began arriving at 11:00 a.m., the rain had stopped and the sun was poking through the clouds.

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All photos by Roger Reinke



Above: Local Native Americans offer Indian prayers in the form of songs.

Right: An owl observes the crowds.



Top and middle: Children of all ages have fun making their own spiders and snakes at the Spiders and Snakes Craft Booth.



Left: Examining mud critters under the microscope.



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**Summer Art Show**—Saturday, June 11th, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Enjoy an ethnic art show and sale featuring 50 artists displaying sculptures, paintings, masks, jewelry and fine arts. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: MIC.

**SOCALPAPA Paints Back Bay**—Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 15 and 16, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

An art show and sale will feature works by southern California artists participating in a "Paint Out" around the Bay. NBNF receives 30% of the proceeds. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: MIC.

### **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**—Tuesday through Saturday upon request

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

## Connecting Urban Youths and UNB

Last December I was fortunate to be involved in a heartwarming program for at-risk teens. It all began with an article I read in the Sierra Club newspaper, *The Southern Sierran*, about their Orange County Inner City Outings (ICO) program and their partnership with the California Coastal Commission to involve urban Orange County youth in the restoration of a critical and endangered habitat—the Upper Newport Bay.

For many years I've been a Newport Bay Naturalist leading school tours, developing scout programs and assisting with other educational activities at the Bay. One of the activities I enjoy the most is the Marine Life Inventory conducted each month on Shellmaker Island by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Local high school and college students volunteer to work alongside dedicated Naturalists, DFG staff and volunteers, and marine biologists to monitor the health of the Bay. These students use large nets and boats to gather and count fish and other marine life from the middle of the bay and near the shore. They also do clamshell grabs off the dock to collect mud samples.

Why not put the ICO teens and the Marine Life Inventory together and develop a pilot program to bring inner city youth to our beautiful Bay for a morning of marine education and adventure? Surprisingly, many of the urban youth that visit our Bay have never seen the ocean. What better way to help them develop a personal and emotional relationship with the environment than with a hands-on program and information on how the impact of urban pollution affects the coastal habitat? With the help of Lisa Hellman (a leader with the Sierra Club's ICO program), Kathy McLean (a teacher at the Santa Ana Community Day School) and State Street grant money used to provide a bus, this became a reality.

The Santa Ana Community Day School is housed in the 2nd story of a church in Santa Ana. It is the final stop for teens who have been expelled from other Orange County schools. Kathy volunteers her weekend time to provide extended education for her students who don't have the luxury of field trips provided by main-stream education. Lisa also

volunteers her time most weekends taking students from various Orange County schools to places such as the Bolsa Chica Wetlands, Crystal Cove and Laguna Wilderness Park. After many phone conversations, I was looking forward to meeting these dedicated women who had become the heart of this pilot program.

As the bus pulled up at 8:30 am, I was apprehensive, but thrilled to finally meet Lisa and Kathy as they were first off the bus and greeted me warmly. Following them was a group of teenage boys, somber and dragging their feet. There was a very high tide that morning and the water was up to the parking lot with many egrets near the fence. I was excited by such a close viewing, but no visible reaction from the boys. We went into to Back Bay Science Center where John Scholl, DFG interpreter, gave the introduction to the Marine Life Inventory and introduced the program leaders. The boys were quiet but not very focused on the speakers.

Yet by 11:30 am I was being offered Cheetos by a group of laughing boys who didn't want to leave the island. Were these the same boys who got off the bus 3 hours ago? Why the change? Could it be that they had been out on a boat in this beautiful Bay pulling in nets full of halibut, sponges and other invertebrates? Could it be that they had been standing in the mud picking shiner perch out of nets and putting them into buckets of water to be counted? Could it be that they had been rinsing off the mysterious creatures that live in the mud and then looking at them under microscopes? Could it be.....?

At the wrap up when the leaders of the stations were discussing our findings for the morning, I watched the boys. I watched their eyes go to each person with rapt attention as they spoke about what we had learned that morning. I saw the light in their eyes when questions such as 'How can we get jobs like these?' were answered. I saw excitement in their faces at the prospect of coming back to do more community service. And I saw a group of boys, just like any other group that visits here, having their spirits lifted by our Bay—a tranquil oasis of peace, harmony and beauty.

*Donna Flower-Carroll, Naturalist*



Above: Examining the marine life trawled from the middle of the Bay.

Right: Gathering in the shore net.





# Upper Newport Bay Calendar of Events

June–August 2005

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

Protect the Bay's unique genetics by collecting seeds & propagating plants for our restoration sites. Learn how to grow natives in your backyard, attract wildlife and conserve water. For information call (949) 640-0286. 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. \$10/person, 8 & up. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location code: BBSC

## Kayak Tours—Every Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Join a trained naturalist for a guided kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Aquatic Center. \$15/person, 8 & up. \$10/NBNF members. Be prepared to get wet. Reservations (949) 923-2269. Location code: NAC

## Kayak Tours—Every Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Join a trained naturalist for a guided kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Dunes Resort. \$20/person. \$10/NBNF members. Parking fee. Reservations (949) 729-1150 or 729-3863. Location code: NDR

## Silkworms—Saturday, June 4, 1:00–2:30 p.m.

Learn all about the lifecycle of the fabulous silkworm. Hands-on fun includes making a treat to eat. \$10/child ages 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## Walking Tour—Saturday, Jun. 4, Jun. 18, Jul. 2, Jul. 16, Aug. 6, Aug. 20, 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

## Train for a Day, Become a Volunteer—Saturday, June 4, 9:00 am–3:00 pm

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) 923-2295. Location code: MIC

## Electric Boat Tour of the Bay—Saturday, Jun. 18, Jul. 16, Aug. 13, Aug. 29, 11:30 a.m.

Join a Naturalist on a 2 hour guided tour of the bay on our comfortable electric pontoon boat. \$10/person. Reservations (949) 923-2269. Location code: BBSC

## Back Bay Bat Walk—Jun. 18, Jul. 9, Jul. 13, Aug. 17, Aug. 20, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Join bat expert Stephanie Remington and learn about these beautiful creatures of the night. \$7/person, 8 & up. Call (949) 923-2275 to register and find out location.

## Marine Discovery—Saturday, Jun. 18, Jul. 16, Aug. 20, 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. Under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Free. Reservations (949) 640-9956. Location code: BBSC

## Evening Marsh Prowl—Saturday, Jun. 18, Jul. 16, Aug. 20, 7:30 p.m.

Join a naturalist on a guided tour of the bay at dusk on our Back Bay Science Center boat. Use spotlights and binoculars to search for owls and other night creatures. \$10/person. Reservations (949) 923-2269. Location code: BBSC.

## Our Feathered Friends Zoomobile—Tuesday, Jun. 21, 10:30–11:30 a.m.

Learn all about birds in this hands-on program including live birds and creation of a bird craft. \$10/child, 3–5 years old. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## Roots Restoration Teamwork—Saturday, Jun. 25, Jul. 23, Aug. 27, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

Help restore Back Bay habitat by installing and maintaining native plants while learning about wetland ecology. Reservations required for groups of 5 or more. Refreshments, tools provided. (949) 640-0286 for information and location.

## Campfire Program—"The Special Inhabitants of the Back Bay"—Wed., July 6, 7:30 p.m.

Join a Park Ranger for a campfire talk about the endangered and other interesting species living in the Back Bay. Dress for the weather. Rain cancels. \$4/person. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## Plein Air Painting— Saturday, July 9, Aug. 6, 9:00 a.m.–Noon Wednesday, July 13, Aug. 10, 9:00 a.m.–Noon Sunday, July 17, Aug. 21, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Enjoy a wonderful time painting the Back Bay. Jean Marie will present and demonstrate traditional Plein Air techniques. All materials are provided. \$15/child, 8-18, \$20/adult. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location Code: MIC

## Fun and Creative Nature Journaling—Sunday, Jul. 10, 10:00–11:30 a.m.

Basic journaling skills are covered including fun tools and activities for parents and children. Children need to be accompanied by an adult. Fee includes sample journal booklet. \$5/person, 7 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275.

## Ladybugs and Beetles—Thursday, Jul. 14, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Learn all about ladybugs and other beetles at this hands-on program which includes creation of a craft and a treat to eat. \$10/child ages 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## "The Animal Guys" Preschool Presentation—Tuesday, Jul. 19, 11:00–Noon

Gets a close look at some of nature's most fascinating creatures including a fox, snakes, alligator, bugs and much more! \$10/child, ages 2–4. Registration (949) 923 2275. Location code: MIC

## "The Animal Guys" Mammal Mania—Saturday, Jul. 23, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Get a close look at some of the most interesting mammals from around the world. \$10/child, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## Our Big Backyard—Saturday, Aug. 6, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Join staff members of Wild Wonders Inc., for a hands-on interactive look at animal ambassadors from North America. \$10/child, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## "The Animal Guys" Life in the Rainforest—Thursday, Aug. 11, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Learn about the plants and animals that live in the rainforest and meet some of these creatures up close. \$10/child, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## Habitats and Adaptations—Sunday, Aug. 14, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

The Wildlife Company will bring the zoo to you for an educational, interactive learning experience. \$10/child, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923 2275. Location code: MIC

## Tigers of the Sky—Saturday, Aug. 20, 1:00–2:30 p.m.

Learn about predators. Meet owls from the Orange County Birds of Prey Center and do a pellet dissection. \$5/person, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## The Games People Played—Wednesday, Aug. 24, 9:30–Noon

Join a Park Ranger to explore the games Native American children played. Make a toy to take home. \$7/child, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## Night Hike—Friday, Aug. 26, 7:30–9:00 p.m.

When the sun goes down another world of wildlife becomes active. Join us for a night hike in our nature preserve. Dress warmly. RAIN CANCELS. \$5/person, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## Astronomy Night—Saturday, Aug. 27, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Join members of the O. C. Astronomers for an inspirational tour of the night sky including observation with telescopes. Family program. No fee; suggested donation of \$2/person. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

## The Lizard Wizard—Sunday, Aug. 28, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Join us for a hands-on look into the world of reptiles, amphibians and arachnids. \$10/person, 5 & up. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC

### Toddler Time

Join a Park Ranger for a parent-child experience with stories, movement and hands-on fun.

## "Butterflies"—Wed., June 15, 9:00 (2–3-year-olds) or 10:30 (3–4 year-olds)

A butterfly-themed playtime.

## "Hungry Animals"—Wed., July 6, 10:30 (3–4 year-olds)

Explore the food chain.

## "Sneaky Snakes"—Wed., Jul. 15, 9:00 (2–3 year-olds) or 10:30 (3–4 year-olds)

A snake-themed playtime.

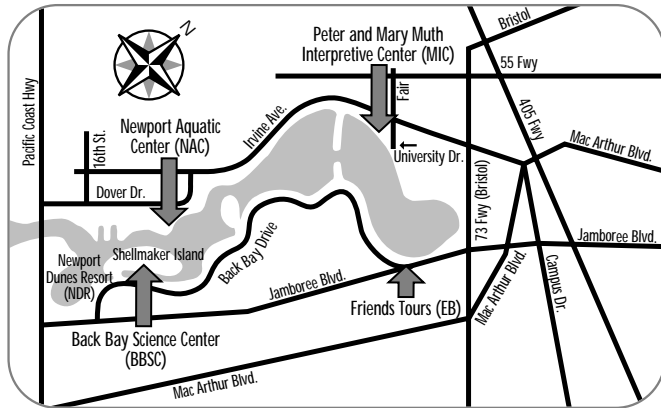
## "Frogs and Family"—Wed., Aug. 3, 9:00 (2–3 year-olds) or 10:30 (3–4 year-olds)

A frog, toad and salamander-themed playtime.

## "Mud and Muck"—Wed., Aug. 17, 9:00 (2–3 year-olds) or 10:30 (3–4 year-olds)

Playtime with a mud theme. Dress for a mess.

\$5/child. Registration (949) 923-2275. Location code: MIC



### WEB SITES

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends: [www.newportbay.org](http://www.newportbay.org)  
 Peter & Mary Muth Interpretive Center:  
[www.ocparks.com/unbic](http://www.ocparks.com/unbic)  
 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

## Earth Day (continued)

Local Native Americans offered Indian prayers in the form of songs and by lunchtime the sky was blue and the weather warm. Crowds of people flocked in throughout the afternoon—over 1,400 in all—causing a few bottlenecks. But everywhere only excitement and happy faces were to be seen. “Who cares if there is a line to get inside the building if you can stand eyeball to eyeball with a live horned owl as you wait,” remarked one attendee.

The Interpretive Center is a 10,000 square foot state-of-the-art educational facility that opened in October 2000. Built into the side of one of the bluffs on the north side of Upper Newport Bay, it offers panoramic views of the Bay yet is nestled so unobtrusively that many local residents do not know it is there. Here young and old alike can take a journey through a series of exhibits and interactive displays that make the Bay come alive.

Construction of the building maximized the use of recycled materials. For instance, nearly 200 tons of used oil filters were recycled in making the steel bars that reinforce the concrete in the floor, walls and roof. Thus this was a very fitting venue for an Earth Day celebration.

Earth Day is a time for all of us to think about how we can protect our planet. There are many ways to do so—recycling, reusing, conserving resources, preventing pollution. Often simple steps are all it takes. We just need to understand what those steps can be. This year’s event theme was “Learning from Nature” and a key new attraction was a set of Scavenger Hunts in which participants could learn how plants and animals reduce, reuse and recycle. A scavenger is a creature that feed on dead animals and plants. Do you know, for instance, which scavenger is seen hovering over the bluffs at the Bay? The answer is the turkey vulture.

All of the UNB staff, Naturalists, exhibitors and others involved in this Earth Day should feel very proud of their efforts in making this event a tremendous success.

*Roger Mallett, Executive Director  
 Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends*

### Cleanup Day—Saturday Sept. 17, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Join Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends and other local volunteers to help clean trash from the Back Bay. Meet at the Interpretive Center. Transportation provided to other sites around the bay. Refreshments provided. For information call (949) 923-2295. Location code: MIC.



Photo by Roger Reinke