

### San Francisco Nature Education launches expanded school program

Last month we announced an expansion in our school program to serve fourth- and fifth-graders, in which we will be conducting science education in the classroom with an owl-pellet lab over two mornings. Students dissect pellets, and extract skulls, jaws and bones so that small mammals can be identified.

San Francisco Nature Education is conducting the owl-pellet program in four fourth-grade classes as part of our school program. In dissecting owl pellets, fourth-graders gain the kind of hands-on experience with science and nature that is desperately needed in elementary schools today.

SFNE naturalist volunteers mentored students in dissecting owl pellets, cataloging the pellets' contents and learning more about owls. We look forward to continuing this fun and fascinating program.



SFNE Naturalist Tina Lui assists with an owl-pellet dissection.



SFNE Naturalist Linda Grant looks on as students extract bones from owl pellets.

### Heron Watch update: Great blue herons return to park

Great blue herons have returned to Golden Gate Park, kicking off the annual Heron Watch season.

The herons have occupied one Monterey cypress tree on Heron Island in Stow Lake and, hopefully, more herons will arrive and begin courting.

February heron activities: In February, the herons are still arriving at Stow Lake. The males begin displaying (engaging in distinctive courtship postures and behaviors) in an effort to attract a female. As soon as two herons form a pair bond, they begin constructing a new nest or adding to an existing nest.

March heron activities: By mid-March, the female generally has laid her entire clutch of eggs (usually three or four, but sometimes as many as five eggs). Both the male and the female take turns sitting on the eggs throughout the incubation period, which lasts for 25 to 29 days.



Please see "Heron Watch," page 4

## Upcoming Lectures

February 21, Thursday, 7:30-9:00 PM — Free Program

Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915 with Nancy DeStefanis

Lecture/slideshow and musical performances on ukelele

Learn about the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco's Marina District.

Only the Palace of Fine Arts remains, and it is now undergoing renovation.

The Hawaii Pavilion at the 1915 Exposition introduced the ukulele and the music of Hawaii to the world.

Ka'ala Carmack, Honolulu-born, is an accomplished musician and singer. He is the founder and instructor of the ukulele and Hawaiian singing ensemble J-Town Hui, and will perform songs with many of his students.

If the audience had been able to squeeze into the Hawaii Pavilion 92 years ago, this is the music they might have heard!

Randall Science Museum, 199 Museum Way, Corona Heights, San Francisco



Ukulele lady Nancy DeStefanis

March 13, Thursday, 7:30 PM — Free Program

Wildlife of Golden Gate Park: Why We Need a Management Plan, with Nancy DeStefanis

Slideshow and talk by Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director of San Francisco Nature Education, [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org). Learn about the opossums, raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, owls and great blue herons that call Golden Gate Park and other parks home! San Francisco Naturalist Society general meeting. Open to the public. Randall Museum, [www.randallmuseum.org](http://www.randallmuseum.org), 199 Museum Way, San Francisco, CA 94114. 7:30-9 p.m. For more information, go to [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org), email [JKodiak@earthlink.net](mailto:JKodiak@earthlink.net) or call (415) 225-3830.

## SFNE director featured in "Newsmakers" interview

If you're looking for the latest on CNN Headline News, don't be surprised if instead you see the familiar face of San Francisco Nature Education Executive Director Nancy DeStefanis.

Comcast Local Edition's "Newsmakers" series features an interview with Nancy and host Jack Hanson that will run throughout February. With her interview, Nancy joins the ranks of other prominent local community and government leaders who have been featured on this popular program.

The interview covers the breadth of San Francisco Nature Education's work in science and nature enrichment programs for San Francisco public-school children as well as our programs for the general public in Golden Gate Park, Birding for Everyone and Heron Watch. Nancy even delivers a rendition of her famous song, "My Blue Herons"!

Look for Nancy's interview at 24 and 54 minutes past the hour on the same channel that carries CNN Headline News, Channel 57 on San Francisco Comcast cable service.

## Calling out for volunteers!

Do you love science and nature? Do you want other people to learn to know and love science and nature, too? San Francisco Nature Education needs volunteers like you! We have openings for adult volunteers as well as interns in middle school and high school.

For more information about our adult volunteer opportunities and an application form, please visit [www.sfnature.org/get\\_involved/volunteer.html](http://www.sfnature.org/get_involved/volunteer.html).

For more information about student internships and an application form, please visit [www.sfnature.org/programs/intern.html](http://www.sfnature.org/programs/intern.html).

## Support S.F. Nature Education: Your Donations Make a Difference!

**Our engaging public and school programs couldn't exist without generous contributions from people like you.**

**Would you please send in a contribution today?**

Please mail contributions to:  
San Francisco Nature Education  
3450 Geary Blvd. Suite 208  
San Francisco, CA, 94118

**Or Donate online** at [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org)!

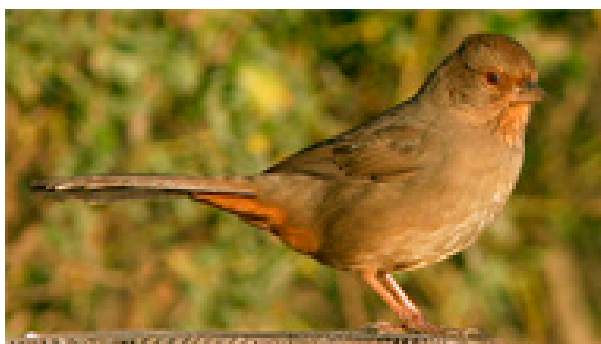


## Birding for Everyone Family Nature Walk

Join us for our guided nature walks on the first Saturday of every month at the San Francisco Botanical Garden, 10 a.m. until noon. Visit our Web site for more details: <http://www.sfnature.org/programs/bfe.html>.

Upcoming Dates: March 1 and April 5 (rain cancels.)

The overcast weather on Saturday, Feb. 2 did not discourage a large number of children and adults who showed up for the Birding for Everyone Walk at Strybing Arboretum. In spite of occasional showers, the birds were out foraging and we made a number of interesting sightings. At the Wildfowl Pond, about 30 American coots grazed on the lawn, allowing unusually good looks at their lobed feet. In the pond we saw three species of gulls, including western, mew and glaucous-winged gulls, along with the resident mallards.



The California towhee is a resident of Golden Gate Park.

Moving on through the gardens, we observed a number of wintering birds, including the hermit thrush, the yellow-rumped warbler and the golden-crowned sparrow. In the Redwood grove, an exceptionally bold ruby-crowned kinglet surprised the group by landing in a branch just above our heads. He continued gleaning for insects in clear view until our attention was distracted by a hermit thrush that alit on the path directly in front of us, soon to be joined by a second hermit thrush. As we turned to leave the redwoods, we were pleasantly surprised by a brown creeper that flew into the last tree, at eye level only a few feet from the group. We also observed a number of year-round residents such as the American robin, the California towhee, the black phoebe and the ever-present Anna's hummingbird. All in all, we saw and heard about 25 species. About 25 to 30 people joined us for the morning, including about six children.

## Update on third-grade program

Students in San Francisco Nature Education's school program for third-graders recently completed winter field trips to the San Francisco Botanical Garden and attended a natural-history slide show focusing on the geology of Golden Gate Park, which was known in the 1870s as the Great Sandlot or the Outlands.

Students learned about the artist John James Audubon and his tremendous work "The Birds of America." Students tried on feathered hats like those fashionable in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Teachers instead sported the Audibonnet, a feather-free hat made for women who did not believe in the killing of wild birds for fashion. At the height of the plume trade, 5 million birds were hunted and killed each year for ladies' hats. In 1918, Congress passed a law forbidding the killing of wild birds for commerce.



## San Francisco Nature Education unveils redesigned Web site

Earlier this year, San Francisco Nature Education unveiled its newly designed Web site, modernizing our look and making it easier for visitors to find out more about our programs and activities.

Our thanks to Webmaster Lori Llanillo and former SFNE Associate Director Clayton Yee for all their hard work to complete this important update.

Please visit [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org) for the latest news on San Francisco Nature Education, a schedule of events, photos, videos and enhanced information on all our programs. While you're visiting, please take the opportunity to donate online. Online donations are a swift and easy way to help support our important work with underserved schoolchildren and the public at large.

## SFNE continues participation in Endangered Species Big Year

San Francisco Nature Education is continuing to participate in the Endangered Species Big Year, in partnership with other leading conservation and nature organizations.

The Endangered Species Big Year is a race to be the first in 2008 to view all 33 of the listed species found within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and complete 33 conservation action items to aid the recovery of these important species. A number of groups, including San Francisco Nature Education, are collaborating on this contest as a way to help connect visitors with the unparalleled natural resources the GGNRA offers and participate in their preservation.

Watch upcoming issues of SFNE's Blue Heron Newsletter for announcements of more Big Year field trips and events sponsored by San Francisco Nature Education and other groups.

## Heron Watch (continued from Page 1)

Last year we enjoyed one of the most successful seasons for Heron Watch so far, with approximately 1,000 people joining San Francisco Nature Education volunteers to observe these remarkable and majestic birds in one of the nation's densest urban areas. 2007 was a successful year for the herons too, as they built or expanded on six nests.

This year marks the 15th year since San Francisco Nature Education Executive Director Nancy DeStefanis discovered nesting great blue herons at Stow Lake in 1993. Please join us on Opening Day, Saturday, April 12, for Heron Watch 2008. Every child who attends will receive a heron mobile.

This year, San Francisco Nature Education's Saturday Heron Watch program will be open to the public on April 12, 19 and 26, and May 3, 10 and 17.

For Heron Watch location and times, please visit [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org).



Heron photos by James Sullivan