

# Friends of Tecolote Canyon

August 2021  
Volume 6, Issue 4

Header photo: Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)

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## Mystery: Whose Chrysalis

Photos and article by Joan Brosnan



I discovered an unusual chrysalis unknown to me attached to a trash can in my garden. Instead of resorting to iNaturalist, I decided to challenge myself with some observations, deductive reasoning and research. Then I would confirm with iNat. Just another challenge in the life of a part time citizen scientist.



I created a list of the adult butterflies I had seen in my yard then began eliminating the possibilities. This chrysalis was too large for a West Coast Lady, wrong shape for a Monarch, hanging the wrong direction for a Swallowtail, too spiny for a Gulf Fritillary as well as the wrong shape and color for a Cloudless Sulphur.

Whose chrysalis results are on page 2.

## New Addition to Tecolote Nature Center

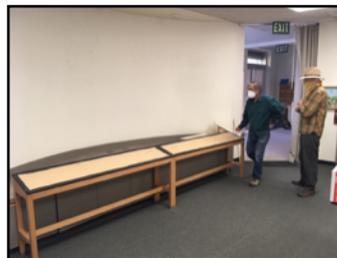
by Marla Gilmore



Diorama completed, photos by Marla Gilmore

The Tecolote Nature Center Staff and Park Rangers are excited to welcome everyone back inside the center, albeit on a modified schedule. We've made some small changes to the inside by reorganizing the main exhibit room, but the biggest change is the addition of a new interactive diorama.

Thanks to some Park Service District funding that became available, we were able to work with Krimmel Arts and Design, Artefact Design, and exhibit artist Brian Gibson to create an educational diorama that focuses on the plants and animals in Tecolote Canyon and their Kumeyaay Connection.



Display rail

This project would not have been possible without the dedication, knowledge, and creativity of the Tecolote Canyon Interpretive Group volunteers, specifically Eloise Battle, Susan Breisch, Lauriel Adsit, and Joan Brosnan.



Diorama in progress



We can't wait for you to experience this beautiful work of art!



Display right

**TECOLOTE NATURE CENTER  
HOURS OF OPERATION\***

Sunday - **CLOSED**  
Monday - **CLOSED**  
Tuesday - **CLOSED**  
Wednesday - 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM  
Thursday - **CLOSED**  
Friday - 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM  
Saturday - 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

The garden, patio, and outdoor restrooms are open every day.  
*Learning Center (Classroom) and Library temporarily closed*

Front Desk (858) 581-9944  
Park Ranger Office (858) 581-9961  
Center Director (858) 581-9959

\*Occasionally, when understaffed, the center may close on short notice.

**WELCOME TO THE  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

**FACE COVERING  
POLICY**



**FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS:**  
Face covering not required  
(City employees must have reported vaccination status)

**INDIVIDUALS NOT FULLY VACCINATED:**  
Face covering required indoors, unless exempt,  
and recommended outdoors when unable to  
maintain six feet of distance from others.

Thank you for your understanding and patience.  
City of San Diego employees are here to help and serve you.

I saw this  
Cooper's Hawk  
eating breakfast in  
the garden. After  
breakfast, it flew  
onto the ewaa and  
then took off into  
the canyon.



photos by Marla Gilmore

By the evidence left behind, I could tell  
that Mourning Dove was on the menu.



**Mystery Solved:  
Whose Chrysalis**

by Joan Brosnan, *continued from p. 1*



photo of the adult Mourning Cloak  
is courtesy of Rich Breisch

This chrysalis was formed by the  
larva of a Mourning Cloak [*Nymphalis  
antiopa* (Linnaeus)].

Why is it called a Mourning Cloak?

The adult butterflies' wing colors and  
shape are reminiscent of the traditional  
maroon brown cloak/cape worn by 19th  
century women while in mourning.

*"There is a time in the last few days of summer when  
the ripeness of autumn fills the air, and time is quiet  
and mellow." —Rudolfo Anaya*

## Thank You to Our Sponsors

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## Neighborhood Nature

by Joan Brosnan

This is the fourth year that Western Bluebirds have raised a clutch in the birdhouse that we set up in our yard.



"Bird Housekeeping: Take Out and Delivery" The male Western Bluebird is removing the fecal sac from the nest box after he fed the nestlings.

## About Friends of Tecolote Canyon



Friends of Tecolote Canyon is a non-profit community organization committed to sponsoring nature education and restoration activities in Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. Our education program, supported by SDGE's "Environmental Champions Initiative", is dedicated to bringing children into Tecolote Canyon and fostering connection through enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful experiences in our unique and precious local habitat.

Like us on Facebook/Friends of Tecolote Canyon  
[www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org](http://www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org)

Your donations are always appreciated and make our programs possible. You can donate to Friends of Tecolote Canyon at Tecolote Nature Center, or at our website:  
[www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org/donate](http://www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org/donate)

**Sometimes being a park ranger** isn't what people picture when they say it's their dream job. Rangers get weighed down by fighting the ever-growing population and the effects that has on parks. We get discouraged by the disconnect some of the public can have towards their actions and the consequences they can have on the natural world.

But then we have these minute, yet monumental moments that we make us relish being a park ranger, and we realize how spending so much time in nature can shed so much light on the world we live in.

Ranger Steve and I experienced one of those moments recently as we patrolled in Marian Bear Park. We came across two hikers who asked for help. The couple had found a tiny hummingbird in the middle of the trail. They walked back with us to show the spot where the baby bird was found. Ranger Steve, Marla & I scanned the surrounding area for a nest, no luck.



Baby hummingbird on Ranger Steve's hand

As I called Project Wildlife to see if they could help the fledgling, two other park users came along the trail. Luck would have it that these two were birders. They identified the fledgling as an Allen's hummingbird and played us a recording of the adult call. We all became silent and listened.

Meanwhile, Project Wildlife recommend bringing the baby in to them if we were unsuccessful in finding a nest and if we did not hear an adult in the area. Silence . . . and no nest found, we were discouraged. And then, a high-pitched trill was heard! Yes! It was an Allen's calling! Ranger Steve had noticed as he searched for a nest that the little bird would let out a peep when he walked under a certain oak tree. So, the birders and us rangers, decided to leave the baby on a branch in this oak tree in hopes that the mother would find it and continue feeding the fledgling until the little one was ready to fly. Very reluctantly the baby left the comfort of Ranger Steve's hand and clung to the branch.

The birders continued their hike and we continued our patrol, planning to check on the little one on our way back. As we patrolled on down the trail, Ranger Steve noticed an old, unused hummingbird nest on a broken branch. We took the branch with the old nest and walked quickly back to our little hummingbird friend, who was still perched on the oak branch. We wanted to get the bird into the nest and somehow attach the old nest to the tree. The little hummer showed its approval by jumping right into the nest, happy to have the warmth and security of the wall of feathers and spider web. But now, how to get it fastened on to the tree . . .

Feeling like a super-hero, I pulled my hair tie out of my hair and wrapped it carefully around the base of the nest. Ranger Steve held the nest while I trimmed a few small branches on the oak, and took and looped my hair tie around the cut branches. The new old nest felt secure and the hummingbird seemed content.

But we wondered, would the mother hummingbird find and continue to feed her baby?

Continued on p. 4



Rangers Steve and Erika attaching the nest

## Micro, Monumental

*continued from p. 3*

We moved away from the nest and remained quiet and still. A few minutes passed and we heard the call of an Allen's hummingbird. Was it the mother?

A hummingbird appeared and zipped through the air stopping and hovering when she heard the baby peep. Her back and forth jerky movements added to our anticipation. She got closer to the oak tree that held her baby, we held our breath and whoosh, a mountain biker flew down the trail! The noise spooked the bird and she surged out from the oak right towards the trail almost colliding with the biker! The bike had scared her off and we worried she wouldn't return.



*Hummingbird on its new nest, attached to the oak with a hair tie*

We waited silent again.

And in a few moments, the determined mother hummer darted towards the oak and her peeping baby. She landed on a branch above the baby, checked the area, and then hovered next to the nest and fed her baby. Relief and happiness were felt by all! We sat in awe of nature and we were grateful to be reminded of our responsibility as park rangers in protecting these open spaces and their sometimes small but miraculous inhabitants.

## Environmental Champions

by M. Eloise Battle



*Pictured left to right: Morgan Justice Black of SDG&E, M. Eloise Battle, and Sherlie Miller*

### Friends of Tecolote Canyon

received a generous grant from SDG&E in support of our educational program, ESCAPE (Environmental Stewards Canyon Program) for 2022.

The check was presented to president of Friends of Tecolote Canyon, Sherlie Miller and board member, Eloise Battle by Morgan Justice Black, SDG&E Community Relations Manager, at the Tecolote Nature Center, 5180 Tecolote Road on July 14.

Miller: "We are grateful to SDG&E's Environmental Champions grant for its continued support of our educational program in 2022, after the interruption due to the COVID Pandemic. We are looking forward to expanding ESCAPE next year."

## Day Brighteners

by Marla Gilmore, Center Director



*At center: Marla (Center Director) with day brightening visitors*

Pictured (left) are kids who visited the canyon just about every day during the pandemic with their teacher/caregiver and always brightened my day with their questions (and answers), and smiles and laughs.

They always wanted to know how they could help protect nature and teach others to care about the canyon.

Pictured below are special sightings and moments they've shared.



"Good morning,

It has truly been a pleasure getting to know you over the past 11 months. Marla, you have become such an important person in our daily routine as you know, and I thank you for engaging with us as you have. You making sure to pause to say hi during your hectic days out has not gone unnoticed."



## More Nature in the Neighborhood

by Joan Brosnan



*Western Fence Lizard hatchling*