



PAW PRINTS

Volume 41, Number 6 Newsletter of the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates June 2023

PUBLIC CALENDAR

Nature Center Hours: 10:30 am-7 pm (Saturday 9 am -7 pm) **Gate Hours:** 8:00 am -7:30 pm. Closed Mondays

Docent-Led Family Nature Walk

Every Saturday at 9 am. Meet in front of the Nature Center. No dogs please.

Eaton Canyon Gardening Group

Every Wednesday at 9:30 am and second Sundays of the month at 10 am. Current volunteers only. Meet by Nature Center garage door.

Moonlight Walk

Friday, June 2nd - 7:00 p.m.
\$2.00 per person donation
Free for ECNCA members, or if you wear an Eaton Canyon T-shirt or hat. Reservations required for groups of 10 or more. Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring water. No dogs are allowed on the walk (except service dogs).

Nature Trails Story Hour

Every Saturday at 10:30 am on the Outdoor Patio. Stories and activities for children.

Saturday Nature Center Discovery

Saturday mornings on the Outdoor Patio. Animal Ambassadors: 10 am and 12 pm. Nature Discovery Tables: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm

Meetings:

Pasadena Audubon Society

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium.

California Native Plant Society

Meetings are held in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium, the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm.

Pasadena Group Sierra Club

Program meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month, 7 times a year, at 7:30 pm in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium. Check their website for more information:

Hummingbirds: The Flying Jewels in Your Garden

By Susan Gilliland

Lots of people seem to be noticing hummingbird nests outside their windows lately. Some people say this is a sign of good luck. And of course, they are right! If you find a nest, then you surely are lucky because you may have an opportunity to watch (from a safe distance!) incredible behaviors—nest building, nesting, hatching, and fledging without even traveling to a distant location.

First, you should try to identify which species of Hummingbird you are seeing.

Around Eaton Canyon we are likely to have Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds year-round. In the spring we may see a bright orange Hummingbird, the Rufous Hummingbird, as they make their way much further north. We may also see Black-chinned Hummingbirds—in fact, a Black-chinned Hummingbird was known to nest in the large Western Sycamore on the patio. The gorgeous Costa's Hummingbird is another possibility. The best way to get to know your hummingbirds is to use a field guide like the Birds of North America, or an app like Sibley's Guide to Western Birds, or use the free online materials available through Cornell at All About Birds. <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/>

If you have ever wondered about hummingbirds and their nesting behaviors, here are a few facts:

- Males and females do not share equal care-giving duties. The females do all the nest building and chick raising. The males look superb though!
- Hummingbirds can be picky about where they nest but some, like the Anna's and Allen's Hummingbird, have adapted to humans in their environment and their nests can be found on a branch near your front door or kitchen window, plant hangers or even your front door wreath.



Two-story nest

Photo: Susanna Meiers



A male Anna's Hummingbird, doing what he does best— looking spectacular! Photo by Aaron, student naturalist and birder

•Hummingbirds do require food sources, such as nectar—either from your native plants (this is a great way to attract hummingbirds to your yard) or feeder, and they need sources of water and protein, like insects.

•Hummingbird nests are about one inch in diameter, depending on the species. Nests are bowl shaped and made of soft and flexible natural materials. The female will first create a base layer and then roll spider web over the unfinished nest and tucks the web into the crooks and crannies of the nest, thus allowing the nest

Hummingbirds continued on page 2



Paw Prints is a monthly publication of the ECNCA. Articles and photographs are welcome on topics related to natural history and Nature Center activities. If you see something interesting in the canyon, please share it with us! The deadline for submissions to the July 2023 issue is June 15, 2023. Send submissions to Brenda Hurst eatonmember@gmail.com.

Contributors: Aaron, Kenia Estrella, Susan Gilliland, Marilyn Hildebrandt, Brenda Hurst, Susanna Meiers, Sequoia

Paw Prints Production

Content Editor: Brenda Hurst
Layout: Carole Scurlock
Copy Editor: Laura Joseph

DOCENT AND MEMBER CALENDAR

Bag Lunch and Mini-Inservice: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 at Noon in Classroom 1.

"The Magic of Botanical Printing" with artist Linda Illumanardi. The participants will gather to unwrap a bundle of leaves and discuss the printing capabilities of native plants.

Guided School Tours

School tours are conducted from October to the end of the school season. For reservations call the office 626-398-5420.

ECNCA Board Meetings

The ECNCA board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm in the Nature Center. If you are interested in joining a meeting, please send an email to eatonmember@gmail.com, at least 2 days prior to the meeting.

Sunday, June 4, 2023

2023 Annual ECNCA Membership Meeting and Elections

2:00 - 2:30 p.m. – Voting and reception with refreshments

2:30 p.m. – President's welcome and election results

2:45 p.m. – Superintendent's address

3:00 - 3:30 p.m. – Program:

Eaton Canyon Up close: The Wildlife Photography of Tom Mills

Eaton Canyon Nature Center Patio

Hummingbirds continued from page 1

to be held together and anchored to the branch or other foundation she is using. She chooses natural materials such as that soft, fuzzy material under the Western Sycamore leaves, tiny twigs, bits of lichen, plants and leaves. The time to build the nest takes several days and she works on it several hours a day! The nest materials ensure the nest is camouflaged to keep herself and her little brood safe from predators. Hummingbirds do not reuse their nest, so if she wants to have more offspring, the process starts over again. However there are always exceptions, like the two-story version on page 1!

- Hummingbird eggs are about the size of navy beans.
- Most female hummingbirds lay two or three eggs, which they incubate for 15 to 18 days.

- Juvenile hummingbirds fledge (leave the nest) 18 to 28 days after hatching. If you are super lucky, you may get to see them leave the nest.

- Resident Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds in Eaton Canyon can nest most anytime of year, and often start nesting with the winter rains. So maybe that's a reason that we are hearing about so many hummingbird nests being seen this year—RAIN!

- The most important thing you can do to help hummingbirds is to create native habitat for them. Have a look at the Native Plant Garden at Eaton Canyon. Many hummingbird plants are labeled including Hummingbird sage, White, and Black sage, which are all blooming now and providing nectar. Thanks for caring about birds and all wildlife!

- Remember, while it's very exciting to have a hummingbird nesting in your yard, all native birds are protected in the US, under the Federal Bird Migratory Treaty Act. It is illegal to touch, relocate or remove an active nest. If you find one, lucky you! But please observe from a distance, preferably with the use of binoculars. You don't want to tip off a predator, such as a Crow, Raven or Jay to the Hummingbird nest. So please, treat the hummingbird family with the utmost respect.

Sequoia, a student naturalist and birder from the Los Angeles Birders Students group, has written a sestina for the hummingbird—a powerful tribute to this remarkable flying jewel. And if you are unsure exactly what a sestina is, they are complex French verses. You can learn more about sestinas here: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/sestina>

Sestina for the Hummingbird

Fierce but sweet,
The crescendoing trill
Of agile wings.
Through the cold wind
A little bird flies
To his daily perch.
Now off of the perch
To nectar that's sweet.
Here comes the swift flight:
The buzz and the trill
Ride over the wind
With the sound of quick wings.

His rapidly blurring wings
Pause at the feeder's perch.
Look, look past the wind
Then sip the nectar, sweet
and clear. A satisfied trill,
Then back to the flight.

Yet now a rival flies
by, his iridescent wings
Sweeping with an angry trill.
Diving 'round the perch
A battle cry strangely sweet
Weaving through the wind.
Swooping with the wind
Well-matched in flight.
But a victor emerges, triumph—how sweet.
He hovers with strong wings
Then back to his perch,
Closing with a reigning trill.

The bold and proud trill
Floats on the wind.
Hop off the perch
And then, off he flies
His gorgeous wings
Humming so sweetly.

Goodnight, he trills as he ends his lone flight.
Dancing on wind and twisting his wings
Stopping to perch for the cold and sweet night.

Recent Events at ECNC

Beautification Day



School Tours



Plant of the Month

California Sun Cup

Botanical Name: *Camissoniopsis bistorta*

Family: Onagracea (Evening Primrose)

Blooms: March-June

Lifeform: Annual or Perennial Herb

Habitat: Coastal Strand, Coastal Sage Scrub, Southern Oak Woodland, Chaparral

California Sun Cup is a Southern California native annual or perennial that grows from the coast to the foothills below 4,000 feet. It prefers open sandy areas and grows in a variety of natural and disturbed habitats. California Sun Cup starts to grow with winter rains and produce its bright yellow flowers from March to June. The plant spreads from a basal rosette with reddish hairy stems that can reach up to 32 inches long. Toward the end of the stems are the clusters of flowers, each one with four bright yellow petals dotted with red at the base. The flowers are usually less than an inch across. After pollination, petals curl neatly and become tinged with orange before falling off. The fruit is a straight or coiled capsule about a half-inch long. Frequently, large sandy areas will be covered in a field of these sunny yellow flowers after a winter of ample rain as we experienced this year.



California Sun Cup is in the Evening Primrose family, and was originally in the genus *Oenothera* with other evening primrose. Along with other similar species, California Sun Cup was moved to a new genus, *Camissonia*, on the basis of flower structure and also by the fact that these sun cup flowers open in the daytime and the evening primrose open at night. Recently, *Camissonia* was split and California

Sun Cup was moved to (Genus) *Camissoniopsis*.

California Sun Cup is blooming in many areas of Eaton Canyon this spring. Look for them along the trails behind the outdoor classroom, near the Junior Nature Trail, and further up the canyon in open sandy areas. These large bright fields of yellow flowers can't be missed if you are walking in the Natural Area this spring.

Note: Researching this plant, I learned of recent research about an evening primrose species (one that grows on the Texas gulf coast). It was shown to detect the high frequency vibrations of a bee! The plant responded to the frequency by temporarily increasing the sweetness of its nectar and it is postulated that this may attract more pollinators. The thought is that the open bowl shape of the evening primrose flower is similar to that of a radar receptor or satellite dish and may be the flower's adaptation for "hearing." The researcher is calling this new research phytoacoustics. (See: naturecollective.org/plant-guide/details/california-sun-cup/).

Marilynn Hildebrandt



Photo: Carole Scurlock

ECNCA BOARD MEMBERS

President: Brenda Hurst
Vice-President: Diane Marcussen
Recording Secretary: Marge Mayotte-Hirn
Corresponding Secretary: Mary Veselich
Treasurer: Terry Ginsberg

Bag Lunch Chair: Mary Foltyn
Bus Grants Co-Chairs: Mary Foltyn, Judy Jenkins
Conservation Group Chair: Max Yasuda
Gardening Group Chair: Marilyn Hildebrandt
Gift Shop Co-Chairs: Pam Edwards, Karen Mateer

Membership Chair: Brenda Hurst
Moonlight Hike Co-Chairs: Ramie Case, Teresa Kirkland
School Trip Docent Chair: David Kristoff
Twilight Program Chair: Mike Regan
Weekend Docent Chair: Ramie Case
Members-at-Large: Judy Jenkins, Rose Haig, Susan Hopkins

Nature Center Director: Lorraine Lazarus
NCA President: Laura Nicholson
NCA Representative: Terry Ginsberg

Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates (ECNCA) is a chapter of the Nature Center Associates (NCA), a non-profit support group of the natural area park system of Los Angeles County. Founded for educational and scientific purposes, its primary mission is to develop in children and adults an appreciation of the natural world and to preserve Eaton Canyon as a natural area for future generations.

The Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Natural Area Park are located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County in the Supervisorial district of Kathryn Barger. The Natural Area and Nature Center are operated by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates.

Become A Member of the ECNCA (Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates)

Membership benefits include the ECNCA newsletter, program announcements and a 10% discount at the gift shop. To join the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates, fill out the form below and mail with your check, payable to the ECNCA, 1750 North Altadena Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Please check appropriate box and mark return envelope "Membership"

- Individual \$30 Family \$45 Senior \$15 Senior Family \$30 Student \$15
- Friend of the Canyon \$75 Sage Saver \$100 Chaparral Contributor \$250 Riparian Guardian \$500
- Oak Woodlands Protector \$750 Wildlands Angel \$1000 NEW RENEWAL

Enclosed is my MEMBERSHIP in the amount of \$_____ Enclosed is my additional DONATION of \$_____

Please make checks payable to the ECNCA. All contributions are tax deductible.

You may also join and/or donate online at www.ecnca.org.