



PAW PRINTS

Volume 42, Number 3 Newsletter of the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates March 2024

PUBLIC CALENDAR

Park Hours:

March 1 - October 31, 2024

Gate Hours: 8 am - 7:30 pm

Nature Center Hours: 10:30 am-7 pm

(Saturdays: 9 am - 7 pm)

Gate & Nature Center are closed on

Monday

Contact: ECNC 626.398.5420

Docent-Led Family Nature Walk

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

Nature Tails 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

Conservation Group Work Day

Second Saturdays from 9 am-12 pm
Sign-up to receive notifications:
<https://tinyurl.com/eatoncanyonconservation>

Audubon Bird Walks

1st Sat. of the month - 8 am-10 am
Next one: March 2, 2024
Meet at the Outdoor Classroom

CNPS Plant Walks at Eaton - 3rd
Sunday of the month 10-11:30 am

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.

<https://www.pasadenaaudubon.org>

California Native Plant Society

Meetings are held in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium, the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. <https://www.cnps-sgm.org>

Pasadena Group Sierra Club

Program meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month in the Nature Center Auditorium.

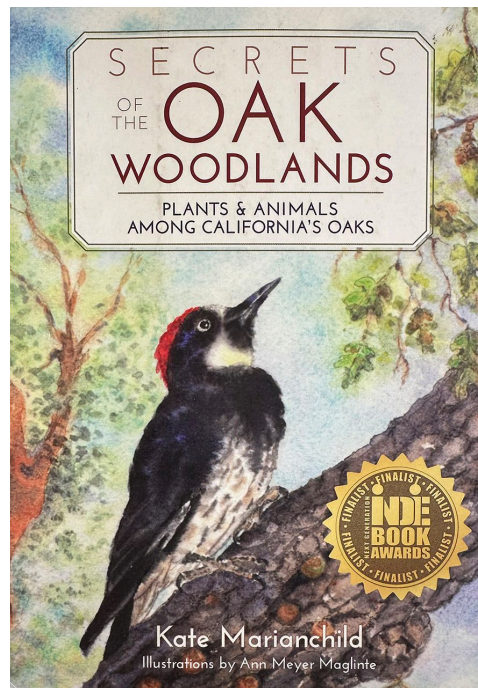
<https://www.sierraclub.org/angeles/pasadena>

Book Review by Brenda Hurst:

Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants & Animals Among California's Oaks

By Kate Marianchild

Illustrations by Ann Meyer Maglinte



Now that our 2024 Eaton Canyon Docent-Naturalist Training Class is starting, I was inspired to finally read the book, "Secrets of the Oak Woodlands," which has been given to our students at the beginning of the class for the past few years. Like many of you reading this, I spend a lot of time wandering around our Eaton Canyon Oak Woodlands and was amazed that this book contains so many interesting facts about the critters and plants that live here. Each chapter is on a specific plant, mammal, reptile, insect, bird, fungi, etc. There's even a chapter on woodrats and "Miraculous Mycorrhizas"!

There is so much fascinating information packed into this little book that it was hard to choose what highlights to share with you! However, I decided on the following excerpts. I

hope you decide to indulge yourself with this read and I think you'll see our Oak Woodlands in a whole new light. Also... The book is available to view in our ECNCA library. Check to see if the book is in stock for purchase at our Eaton Canyon Nature Center Gift Shop!

The Amazing Woodpecker Tongue: The long tongues of woodpeckers vary from species to species according to diet. A long woodpecker tongue however, poses a storage problem: when it is fully retracted, it simply cannot fit inside its owner's beak. The solution? The collection of bones and muscles that make up this lengthy organ splits into two just in front of the trachea and wraps up the back of the skull, becoming one muscle again on top of the head. It then runs over the head and, in most woodpeckers, anchors at a spot just about the right eye socket. The extra-long flicker tongue has to go even farther, so it winds around the eye socket and through the right nasal cavity to anchor in the upper mandible!

California Ground Squirrel: When rattlesnakes emerge from their long winter hibernations and are ready to shop for food, the most convenient supermarket may be a nearby ground squirrel colony. But if the inhabitants happen to be California ground squirrels, the snakes have to contend with the effects of a long and venomous relationship. Thanks to a one-million-year back-and-forth process that scientists refer to as a coevolutionary arms race, adult squirrels have developed resistance to rattlesnake venom, and rattle-

Oak Woodlands 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 April 2024 issue is March 15, 2024. Send submissions to Brenda Hurst eatonmember@gmail.com.

Contributors: Pam Edwards, Brenda Hurst, Karen Mateer

Paw Prints Production

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

DOCENT AND MEMBER CALENDAR Bag Lunch-Mini-Inservice -

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at Noon in Classroom 1. **Roberto Morales** will present the topic "**Outdoors For All-Transit to Trails in the San Gabriel Mountains.**" The presentation will touch on the San Gabriel Monument Expansion and the transit to trails project which aims to remove barriers for low income communities in Los Angeles.

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.

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.



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snakes have developed increasingly potent venom in response. Some adult California ground squirrels can survive a bite that would kill a human!

Pups are not resistant, however, and are extremely vulnerable to rattlesnakes, who can slither right into their burrows. But adult California ground squirrels have several techniques for rattling the snakes' cages. Females with pups roll on shed rattlesnake skins to make themselves smell like rattlesnakes, or they might chew the skins, lick their paws, and wipe "eau d'rattler" all over themselves. Pups also anoint themselves with rattlesnake perfume. Studies show that the odor makes squirrels less attractive to the snakes—and undoubtedly to other predators as well.

California Newt: Regrowing hearts and other organs: Newts not only can perform the well-known salamander trick of regrowing amputated limbs, they can also regrow their hearts, livers, spinal cords, brain parts, lung parts, and the lenses of their eyes.

California Bay Laurel: California bay's thin greenish bark—especially apparent on young trees—is a sign of this species' capacity for stem photosynthesis—the ability to photosynthesize sugars in its trunks and branches as well as its leaves. The green color comes from chloroplasts—organs of photosynthesis—that are found in the tissues beneath the bark. Stem photosynthesis contributes to the growth of leaves, buds, and woody tissue and helps plants recover when they lose their leaves to natural events such as insect infestations or fire.

Oak Mistletoe: Oak mistletoe can be a big clump of surprises, and not just the kissing kind. Formerly maligned and attacked as a parasitic killer of trees, it is now recognized as an ecologically important native plant that has been around for thousands or millions of years. It is, in fact, a keystone player in the oak woodlands—a species that is disproportionately important to other species relative to its abundance. When mistletoe is removed from ecosystems one-third of the animals, including birds, mammals, and insects, disappear. A biologist who spent his fifty-year career trying to eradicate mistletoe ended up loving it so much he introduced it into his own yard!

Western Fence Lizard: Western fence lizards, who are small and widespread, are the preferred prey of baby rattlesnakes, a fact that may explain the differences in the venom of adult and baby rattlesnakes: the venom of baby snakes is higher in neurotoxins and lower in hemotoxins. Neurotoxins paralyze nerves and hemotoxins lower blood pressure and induce clotting. Because lizards can lower their metabolic rates and thus survive lowered blood pressure, neurotoxins are more effective against them than hemotoxins. But mammals and other endotherms are vulnerable to low blood pressure, so as baby rattlesnakes grow big enough to hunt warm-blooded prey, hemotoxins eventually become the dominant poison in their venom. ■



"Make Tracks" t-shirts for sale in the gift shop.



Eda Pinkston with her 2023 Eaton Canyon Nature Center Partners in Nature Award!



Debbie Baird receives her 15 Year Eaton Canyon Docent Naturalist badge!



Mark Westerdale receives his 5 Year Eaton Canyon Volunteer badge!

Gift Shop and Info Desk

By Pam Edwards and Karen Mateer

After a successful last quarter, we are refreshing stock with a selection of beautiful hand puppets and Audubon plush birds with sound. We have increased the selection of our ever popular "re-cycled cereal box" earrings and added a new line of hand-painted porcelain earrings. For fun, we have a variety of nature-themed socks and cozy crocheted and knit scarves and hats. We're very excited to have added several Spanish titles to our expanded kid's section which highlight children's nature books, games, and puzzles.

If you don't have your EC "Make Tracks" t-shirt, we have a wide selection of colors in a lighter weight material. In support of ECNCA's summertime Moonlight Walks, we carry "Moonlight" t-shirts, and black-light UV flashlights as well as red-filter flashlights for night walks on the trail—black UV to see those fluorescent critters like scorpions, and red-filter to see the trail without dilatating your eyes!

If you haven't stopped by the nature center recently and visited the museum and the gift shop, you're in for a treat. Browse the book shelves and gift items, pick up a good read, and explore the museum!

Karen and I would like to thank our team of volunteers who continue to support the Gift Shop and Info Desk by being a presence for the public and a support for the staff. ■



The Arroyos Foothill Conservancy Board visits Eaton Canyon Nature Center for a Meet and Greet on January 25th. A museum tour was conducted so that the AFC could view the many new additions to our Eaton Canyon Nature Center Museum courtesy of a collaboration between the AFC and the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates.



Eaton Canyon - Kenia Estrella's promotion to Recreation Services Supervisor Celebration on January 31. (Kenia seated in center)



Art Corner Upcoming Artists

March 5th - April 15th

Edith Tyebkhan- Photographer

April 16th - May 28

Ricky Wong - Watercolor paintings

May 29 - July 8

Robert Lang - World Renowned Origami

July 9 - August 19

Nina Raj - Photography & Videography



To apply please email
lmartinez@parks.lacounty.gov



Photo: Carole Scurlock

ECNCA BOARD MEMBERS

President: Brenda Hurst
Vice-President: Diane Marcussen
Recording Secretary: Sarah Richart
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
Docent Training Chair: Diane Lang
Gardening Group Chair: Marilyn Hildebrandt
Gift Shop Chairs: Pam Edwards, Karen Mateer

Membership Chair: Brenda Hurst
Moonlight Hike Co-Chairs: Ramie Case, Teresa Kirkland
Museum Committee Chair: Melanie Symonds
Nature-in-a-Box Chair: Laura Nicholson
Park Stewards Chair: Susan Hopkins
School Tour Docent Chair: David Kristoff
Weekend Docent Chair: Ramie Case
Members-at-Large: Judy Jenkins, Rose Haig

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.