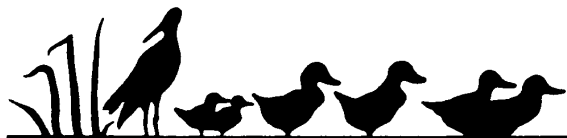


FRIENDS of FAMOSA SLOUGH



A California Non-Profit Corporation



Box 87280, San Diego, CA 92138-7280

SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

Avian Notes—Birdwatchers Enjoy Slough

They come singly or in groups. Some are local and can be seen almost any day visiting the Slough. Others stay only briefly and have traveled from far away. We could be talking about the birds of Famosa Slough, but in this case we mean the people who come to see them. The Slough is a popular place for local birders to visit who often see and report unusual bird sightings. But there are also groups who come from near and far to observe and learn.

In the past year, visits have been made by school groups from elementary to university level. Classes from **St. Charles Borromeo, Sunset View and Ocean Beach Elementary Schools, Correia Middle School, High Tech High, and Point Loma Nazarene University** have been brought by their teachers to learn about habitat restoration and water quality, to observe birds, or to participate in work parties.

The Slough has been the destination for an ecotourism group from Great Britain prior to the start of a boat trip into Mexican waters to observe birds and mammals. This group has made Famosa Slough a part of their March visit for the past four years. Members of FFS help them identify bird species that for most guests are being seen for the first time.

For the past two years, Famosa Slough has also been a stop on a birding trip that is part of the San Diego Bird Festival. This trip is focused on native habitat restoration, and the Slough also provides them a great place for bird observation.



Pair of Juvenile Hooded Mergansers, March 2009

2009 Science Fair Winner

The Friends attended the **2009 Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair** on April 1 and selected an outstanding young scientist for an award. **Matt Friedman**, an 8th grade student at **The Rhoades School**, measured the effect of bioremediation on urban runoff at Cottonwood Creek Park in Encinitas. He found that the level of chemicals (metals, phosphates and nitrates) was reduced after water flowed through a dedicated bioremediation riparian habitat.

Getting Children Outdoors

A local author, **Richard Louv**, has started a national movement with his book "**Last Child in the Woods.**" He points out that over the decades people have lost contact with nature. The natural world has moved from being a major feature of their lives to be either unnoticed or even feared. He provides substantial evidence that this loss has a negative impact on mental health. His national movement has hit San Diego, his home town, in a big way recently. A large group of organizations and individuals are trying to find ways to reconnect children with nature. The emphasis is on "hands-on" activities. See web site, www.sdchildrenandnature.org.



Ocean Beach Elementary Class Field Trip, May 2008

We have found that third or fourth grade seems to be an ideal age for children to learn about the Slough and our local environment. If you know of a group, club, or class that would like a field trip to Famosa Slough, please let us know. We will accommodate as many as we can. It is best to have groups with 15 children or less with several adults as escorts, but we can do two subgroups at a time to provide events for 30 or so children. Please let us know if you have experience that would benefit our field trips with young people.

Birds at the Slough

The species and number counts of birds at the Slough remain reasonably stable. The excitement this past year was a pair of young Hooded Mergansers that over-wintered in the Slough. The treatment ponds, just north of Valeta Street have hosted Black-throated Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Yellow Warblers, Chats, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Song Sparrows, Wilson's Warblers, etc.

Last year the Black-necked Stilts reared nine youngsters to adulthood on the island on the north end of the Slough. The Avocets are already nesting on the island this year. Egrets and Forster's Terns still hang out in large numbers. Around the trails, Black Phoebes, Song Sparrows, Lincoln Sparrows, and Bushtits are active. What a bird paradise!

Special Friends—PLNU

For the past several years, **Professor Mike Mooring of Point Loma Nazarene University** has brought his ecology science students to Famosa Slough to observe birds, learn about native habitat restoration and to participate in general maintenance. The students have universally been hard workers, helping us by planting native species, clearing exotic plants, and removing sediment from the treatment ponds.

Several students had come on their own to perform community service or to conduct scientific projects. Last year, two students made soil mixtures of highly saline soil and top soil to test the germination of seeds. This work was useful to us in developing a strategy for revegetation of the berms created from marsh soils. Thank you, Professor Mooring and your students!



Peregrine Falcon, by Jim Pea

The Friends of Famosa Slough (FFS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established to protect and restore the Slough as a natural wetland preserve and to promote public awareness of the importance of wetlands. The Slough was purchased by the City of San Diego in September 1990 and is managed by the City's Park and Recreation Department.

For more information about the Friends, see **the FFS web site, www.famosaslough.org**, or call **619/224-4591**.

Mission Bay Park Rangers, 858/581-7602, Developed Regional Parks Division, supervise the Slough for the City.

Coming Events
WORK PARTIES
2nd Saturday of odd-numbered months
May 9, July 11, Sept. 12, Nov. 14, etc.
Meet at 9:00 AM at the intersection of West Point Loma and Famosa Boulevards - **Volunteers needed!**
BIRD WALKS
3rd Saturday of every month
May 16, June 20, July 18, Aug. 15, Sept. 19, Oct. 17, etc.
Meet at **1:00 PM near the kiosk at West Point Loma and Famosa Boulevards** - **Beginners welcome!**

Good Year for Plants at Famosa Slough means we need your help!

The native plants we have planted this year are doing very well. Many seeds planted over three years ago by the contractor in the uplands of the West Point Loma Blvd. Restoration that we had given up on have sprouted as well. The rains came at just the right time. But those rains were also good for many of the worst invasives, with seeds (often in the ground for many years) sprouting in abundance in many areas of Famosa Slough. Areas like the West Point Loma Blvd. Restoration uplands, where we had managed to eradicate invasives before they went to seed, are now beyond our resources to control.

If any of our readers can possibly put in an hour or more of weeding at any time, please **call Chet Nelson on his cell phone at 619-884-0684 or call his land line at 619-222-7006 to leave a message.** We will supply tools, containers, and expertise as appropriate for a time that suits your schedule. Even just a little bit of help could go a long way. We would appreciate any help you can give, as would the many birds that flock to Famosa Slough for its abundance of natural food.

MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF FAMOSA SLOUGH

_____ FULL MEMBERSHIP. Yes! I/We support the goals of FFS and submit \$10.00 annual dues. \$ _____
_____ ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP. Yes! I/We support the goals of FFS and wish to be counted. \$ _____
(Contributions are tax deductible to a 501(c)(3) organization.) ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION: \$ _____
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

NAME(S) _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ E-MAIL _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

I/We volunteer to: _____ assist with administrative tasks, _____ clean up around Slough, _____ help with educational activities, _____ distribute flyers, _____ assist in park planning, _____ collect environmental data/do research, _____ assist in special events, _____ anything.
Other pertinent skills: