Reclamation of Urban Runoff Begins At Last

After almost 20 years and through the cooperative effort of Audubon’s Starr Ranch, The State Water Resources Control Board, the Santa Margarita Water District, The Trabuco Canyon Water District, The Dove Canyon Golf Course (Sanyo Foods) and the Dove Canyon Master Homeowners Association, facilities have been completed to capture dry-season urban runoff from the upstream communities of Dove Canyon and Robinson Ranch for reuse as reclaimed water. The benefits of this project are many, but include 1) returning the downstream riparian habitat in Starr Ranch to a more natural water regime and 2) more and cheaper water available for residential use. For more details on this project, please visit our website www.starr-ranch.org. - Pete DeSimone, Manager

Starr Ranch Bird Observatory Fall 2007
Introduction to Bird Banding

On a beautiful October morning 15 participants came to Starr Ranch Bird Observatory for an intense yet pleasant workshop experience learning about the process of bird banding. The indoor sessions introduced topics ranging from bird banding history to proper handling techniques of birds in the hand. In addition, the importance of bird banding to science and bird conservation were addressed. After a picnic lunch, participants observed proper mist net setup and were introduced to the tools of bird banding. Next experienced banders extracted an Oregon Junco and Fox Sparrow from mist nets. Although the Oregon Junco was banded last year, participants observed banding of the Fox Sparrow along with data collection on both birds. If you missed this fall’s workshop, we plan to offer “Introduction to Bird Banding” again this spring. We hope you’ll join us.

- Justin Shew, Biologist-Educator for Bird Programs
Eagle Scouts Build Outdoor Kitchen Enclosure

Phillip Goehle directed fellow scouts from Troop 618 in a project to build a collapsible enclosure for our outdoor kitchen. Our riparian research interns live in the bunkhouse and cook in the outdoor kitchen. It’s very comfortable during beautiful fall and spring days, but hard to have a meal when it’s cold or windy. So Phillip’s Eagle Project was to design and help build the enclosure. Phillip and his fellow scouts did a great job and now our two interns, Dan Breen and Janet Ackerman, can cook and eat in comfort. Thank you Phillip and Troop 618!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU TO...

...Steve Bennett and Barbara Bruce for speakers for the lab and office

...Pete Bloom for his hawk talk to staff and volunteers ...Barbara Bruce for SRBO data entry

Welcome & Thank You to our New “Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary”

Edwin & Eva Aiken
Mary A. Feher
Mayam M. Mercier
Richard & Lynn Schwarz
Whittier Audubon

Lifetime Members

Bertram & Phyllis Baker        Mitzi Kafesjian
Neil Baker                     Fay Neuls
Al & Janet Baumann            Margery Nicolson
Roc & Andee Burrell           David Reynolds
Pete & Sandy DeSimone         & Felicity Kur-R CVS
Bill McKee                    Dave Skinner & Family
 & Mary Ann Desmond           John & Kimberlee Staff
Mark Frazier                Stephen Stackpole
Sylvia R. & Jim Gallagher     Joan & Ed Steiner
John Harper & Judy Curtin    Karen & George Thagard
Don & Carolyn Homer
Randy & Carole Johnson
Tom & Karen Johnson

Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary
100 Bell Canyon Road · Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679
Phone: 949-858-0309 · Events & Information Line: 949-858-0131 · Fax: 949-858-1013 · E-mail: sdesimone@audubon.org · www.starr-ranch.org

Pete DeSimone .............. Sanctuary Manager
Sandy DeSimone .............. Director, Research & Education, editor
Justin Shew ................. Biologist-Educator for Bird Programs
Dan Mitchell ............... Biologist-Educator
Erynn Maynard ............. Research & Education Assistant
Josie Weir ................... Administrative Assistant
Christy Cincotta .......... Riparian Research Assistant

Ward Provance ............. Ranch Maintenance
Barry Nerhus .............. Field Crew Leader
Shannon Busby .......... Field Assistant
Dave Decker .............. Field Assistant
Janet Ackerman .......... Intern
Dan Breen .................. Intern
Debbie Gley ............... Restoration Assistant

Starr Ranch Sanctuary is owned and operated by the National Audubon Society under the Audubon California state office. We preserve 4000 acres of some of the last remaining southern Californian mosaics of coastal sage scrub, grassland, oak woodland, riparian woodland, and chaparral. Our mission is to stimulate, coordinate, and perform scientific research on the biology and conservation of the unusual mediterranean climate ecosystems at Starr Ranch and to extend our science to the local community in the form of unique natural history education programs and conservation activism.

Members of Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary receive four issues of our quarterly newsletter, monthly opportunities to visit Starr Ranch, and first notification of nature classes and special events. You also become a member of Audubon and receive Audubon magazine quarterly. Your contribution provides financial support for our research, education, and conservation programs. Your support is critical to Starr Ranch. Please join us today by filling out the membership envelope in this newsletter and mailing it to us. Change of address information can be e-mailed to sdesimone@audubon.org.

We thank John Schmitt for designing our Starr Ranch t-shirt and newsletter logo.
**Adult Wildlife Research Class**

We invite Friends of Starr Ranch to our winter wildlife class for adults. Join staff biologists for a peaceful weekend at our beautiful 4000-acre Ranch in southeast Orange County and experience nature hands-on as a wildlife researcher.

**Small Mammals of Starr Ranch**

The winter wildlife class will investigate the diversity of native mice, woodrats, and other rodents throughout the habitats of Starr Ranch. On Saturday afternoon, participants will learn about species biology and identification. Later that day, we’ll place and bait live-traps at multiple sites. At dusk, we will conduct a nocturnal wildlife survey from Bell Canyon to the highest point in the Sanctuary. Early Sunday morning, the group will return to the trap sites to identify and release the captured small mammals.

This class will prepare participants to become volunteer researchers with our ongoing study of the effects of coastal sage scrub restoration on small mammal populations.

**Dates & Times:** 1 - 6pm Saturday, Feb. 23rd & 6:30 - 10am Sunday, Feb. 24th  
**Cost:** $65/person; $70/person if tent camping (optional)  
No meals provided but kitchen and picnic facilities will be available for your use.

Space is limited  
Reservations: 949-858-0131  
Questions: 949-858-0309  
[www.starr-ranch.org](http://www.starr-ranch.org)

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**Become a Starr Ranch Sanctuary Weed Warrior!**

**Volunteer Orientation   November 17, 2007  10:30AM-12:00PM**

We invite you to join our new volunteer weed removal program. Weeds can alter habitats and sometimes have negative effects on wildlife. To protect Starr Ranch habitats and wildlife, we work to remove weeds. All of our weed control is non-chemical, and this is why we recruit volunteers to help out. In the photo below, the Orange County Conservation Corps removed periwinkle. At the orientation you will: View our beautiful nature sanctuary ~ Learn about weed removal ~ Sign up for volunteer dates ~ Meet new people with common interests ~ Bring a picnic lunch and eat outside. Our event is free! To reserve your place or if you have any questions please contact Christy Cincotta at ccincotta@audubon.org or by phone at 949-858-0309.

Josie, Erynn, and Christy invite you to become a weed warrior.
Thank you!

This may be your last newsletter unless you renew now!
Time to renew your Friends of Starr Ranch Membership?

Please check your address label—

Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary is a quarterly publication of the National Audubon Society's Starr Ranch Sanctuary.

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Trabuco Canyon Road
100 Bell Canyon Rd.
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679

Tuesday, January 22
Full Moon Walk

Observe nocturnal wildlife while illuminated by Earth's only natural satellite, the moon. Join Biologist-Educator, Dan Mitchell, at 7:00 pm at the lab for an informative 1 – 1.5 hour night nature walk. Dress appropriately for the weather. Arrive early if you wish to use our picnic area for dinner. For reservations call Dan at 949-858-3537.

2007 - 08 Restoration Season Begins

Three of our five field crew members started work in October. One of their first projects was to direct-seed native species in our newest coastal sage scrub restoration areas. From right to left: Barry Nerhus is our field crew leader for 2007-08, Dave Decker and Shannon Busby are field assistants, and Dan Breen, one of our riparian interns, is helping the crew. We are now working on coastal sage scrub restoration in 65 acres formerly infested with artichoke thistle and other weedy species. The crew is working on weed control in a total of 402 acres, 286 of those acres are in rare native needlegrass grasslands.