Spring, 2003

Cal State, Long Beach “field methods in ecology” class

Mary Sadler’s Loop Trail walk at Family Nature Workshops

Jeff Eickwort, Jon O’Brien, Thad Miller, and Jeff Rau get ready to plant CA Sagebrush seedlings in restoration sites in the rain.

Small mammal trap and release with Chris Farmer at Family Nature Workshops

Dave Bontrager’s bird class starts out on a walk.

Starr Ranch Junior Biologists, School Days on their way to study insects, small mammals, and herps in different habitats.
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 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.

Welcome & Thank You to our New “Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary”  
Bill & Kathy Ambrosius  
Cynthia Coccia  
Barbara Cole  
K.T. Forbush  
Susan Heinz  
Peter and Susan Horvath  
Eileen and Garth Kliger  
Robin Leenhouts  
Donald & Rosemary Liegler  
Bill and Carolyn Meronek  
Barbara Metzger  
Stanley & Marianne Miller  
Margit & Charles Mills Family  
John Moore  
Margery Nicolison  
Cheryl Ann Quigley  
Sandra and Donald Romoser  
Diane Schaller  
Don and Sheila Segien  
Adair Small  
The Kinoshita Family  
The Weber Family  

Welcome & Thank You to our New “Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary”  
W e’re once again ready for volunteer help with weed control and restoration. Spring-summer work includes seed collection and artichoke thistle hoeing and bud cutting. We also need help with data entry (good indoor work on hot summer days). This winter we’ve had enough rain for a great seed crop. If you’re interested in coastal sage scrub seed collection, artichoke thistle hoeing and bud cutting, and/or data entry please contact Sandy at 949-858-0309 or sdesimone@audubon.org.

We thank John Schmitt for designing our Starr Ranch t-shirt and newsletter logo.

Thanks to ...  
...Dominic DeWitt for designing our beautiful new Starr Ranch Field Ecology Programs exhibit  
...Mary Harding for finding Dominic for us!  
...Al and Janet Baumann for sending our field assistants to the Sea and Sage annual dinner  
...Jerry Belzer’s former company, Bently Nevada, for truckloads of office furniture  
...Christiane Shannon for an aquarium with accessories for Dave’s stream class.
O’Connell Landscaping Crew

O’Connell Landscaping is nearing the completion of a second year of work on artichoke thistle control at Starr Ranch. With the help of leader Francisco Carrillo and his crew and our own Starr Ranch field assistants, we are now working in 300 acres of invaded grassland. This year the crew also helped us prepare the Ranch grounds for our April Family Nature Workshops. Thanks to Tom Baker, Francisco, and the crew for all their hard work. Next time you’re at the Ranch take a look at the sloped site across from the main house. The O’Connell crew worked on the site last year and this year we’ve begun restoration to coastal sage scrub.

Starr Ranch Junior Biologists

Spring, 2003

We have expanded our popular “Starr Ranch Junior Biologists” summer program into the school year. This spring, we offered kids 8-12 years old the opportunity to study Starr Ranch wildlife over the course of five Saturdays or Wednesdays. Our research project couldn’t be more fun — we are comparing the reptile & amphibian, small mammal, and invertebrate communities living in grassland, woodland, and coastal sage scrub habitats. So far we have completed our invertebrate sampling in all three habitats. The junior biologists used three different techniques to collect their invertebrates — pit-fall traps, sweep nets, and beating sheets. They caught the most invertebrates in the grassland, including pallid band-winged grasshoppers, wolf spiders, cabbage looper larvae (a pretty green caterpillar), ladybird beetles, and a cranefly. Next we’ll conduct our small mammal sampling in each habitat using live-capture Sherman traps, followed by reptile and amphibian sampling using pit-fall traps with drift-fences.

On the last day, the junior biologists will summarize their findings by making a poster, writing a report, or giving an oral presentation recorded on video tape. As you can see, our research project is intense and we are likely to learn a lot; but I think the junior biologists and I would agree that we are out here first and foremost because we are having fun!

Many thanks to our great volunteer assistants, Sue & Drew Bruns, Gwen Demetria, Mary Harding, & Stacee Lockard.

Gail Hall, Biologist-Educator
Friends: Visit Starr Ranch This Spring-Summer

**To be arranged**  
**Weed Control and Restoration Volunteers**  
*Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary*

Become a part of our effort to control weeds and restore native habitat. Once again, we're ready for volunteer help with our weed control and restoration projects. For more details see article inside or call Sandy at 949-858-0309.

**Wednesday, June 11**  
**Nature Walk with Dave Bontrager**  
*Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary*

We like to give our Friends special opportunities to come enjoy the peace and beauty of Starr Ranch. Biologist Dave Bontrager will lead a nature walk that focuses on insect-plant relationships. Meet at the lab at 8 am and bring a picnic lunch if you wish. For reservations, call 949-858-0131.

**Wednesday, July 16**  
**Nature Walk with Dave Bontrager**  
*Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary*

Mid summer is the “brown” season at Starr Ranch, with many plants dying back or losing leaves during the summer drought. Dave will lead a summer walk that focuses on plant/drought relationships. Meet at the lab at 8 am and bring a picnic lunch if you wish. For reservations call 949-858-0131.