



Header photo: San Diego Sunflower (*Bahiopsis laciniata*) and a honeybee

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QueenSpotting: Meet the Remarkable Queen Bee

A Book Buzz (Review)
by Joan Brosnan

I enjoyed reading *Queen Spotting* by local author Hilary Kearney. Hilary's experiences and knowledge of honeybees reveals the passion that she feels in her profession as a beekeeper.



Hilary writes, "Everything about them still surprises and fascinates me. Bees are sculptors, dancers, mathematicians and acrobats. From dance-offs to death matches, they never cease to amaze. At the center of it all is a single queen. It's no wonder she has transfixed me."

From fanciful to factual, this book renewed my admiration for the life cycle of honeybees and their queen. Hilary's personal experiences of collecting swarms, queens and honey are fascinating.

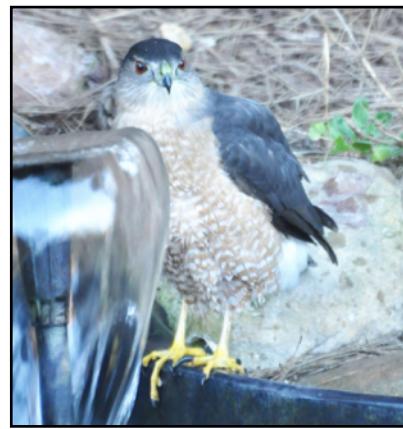
QueenSpotting includes 48 images of swarming honey bees with a hidden queen so readers can attempt the spotting experience. *QueenSpotting* is available through SD public library. Search the SDPL online catalog, place a hold, and choose a pick up location. Hilary's book is an enjoyable escape into the world of honeybees and beekeeping.

Friends of Tecolote Canyon

February 2021

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Stephen Hawk(ing)
by Jerry Jacobs



Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) at edge of garden pond by Tecolote Canyon.
Photo credit: Jerry Jacobs

Cooper's Hawks are a common sight in our area, preferring areas with trees. They are readily seen in the riparian areas of Tecolote Canyon. You can also hear their rather incessant kek-kek-kek call. Listen to the Cooper's Hawk's call.

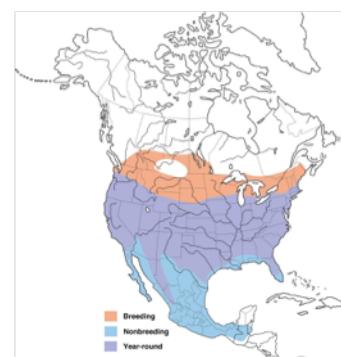
These hawks are members of the Accipiter genus, which also includes the rather similar looking Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*). The Sharp-shinned hawk is smaller and only found in our area from late September through March.

As with most hawks, the males are smaller than the females. The adult Cooper's Hawk is 15-18" tall, with a 30-35" wingspan.

Cooper's Hawks are ambush predators, surprising birds and small animals in forested or brushy areas. They often hunt around bird feeders, and prefer medium-sized birds such as Mourning Doves (*Zenaida macroura*). If you find a pile of dove feathers under your bird feeders, this hawk may be the culprit. They will also eat small rodents.

Adult California ground squirrels (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) and Cooper's Hawks seem to ignore each other. I've seen a Cooper's Hawk sitting on the top of my bird feeder, while ground squirrels collect the seeds scattered by birds, both seemingly not acknowledging the other's existence.

Cooper's Hawks build nests in trees, 25-50 feet above the ground, often about 2/3 of the way up the tree in a crotch or on a horizontal branch. The nest is built from sticks, primarily by the male, and lined with bark flakes. Nests are roughly 27 inches in diameter, and 6-17 inches high, with a depression in the middle about 8 inches in diameter and 4 inches deep. They produce a single brood per year containing 2-6 pale blue to bluish white eggs. The eggs are 1.7-2.0" long. Eggs are incubated for 30-36 days, and chicks are fed in the nest for 27-34 days. Breeding season for Cooper's Hawks in Southern California is March through July. *continued on page 3*



Cooper's Hawk Range Map
source: [AllAboutBirds.com](#)

continued on page 3

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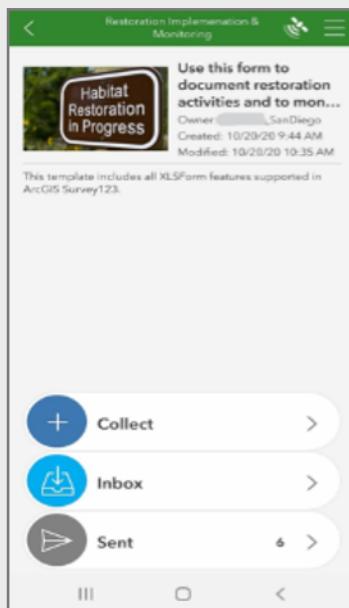
Self-guided interpretive sign along Battle Trail

If you visit the main entrance trail to Tecolote Canyon from time to time, you have likely seen the progression of restoration efforts over the past few years by staff and volunteers. Visitors often ask Park Rangers about these sites, inquiring, "What are you planting? Why are you removing plants? And how can I get involved?"

In November, Rangers were asked to create an event for "Green Friday". They used this opportunity to create a self-guided interpretive hike along the Battle trail. Signs along the path educated visitors about the history of restoration efforts and answered common questions about why restoration in the canyon is needed. The signs applaud volunteers and their dedicated workhours of planting, weeding and watering, which made the areas thrive. The signs also address the Rangers' current efforts in restoration site 6 amid COVID with no access to volunteers. The interpretive signs have received abundant praise from visitors. These signs are still up, and the Rangers are looking to create more permanent educational displays.

The restoration success of Tecolote Canyon has also received attention from city. As Rangers noticed the increase of plant diversity in restoration sites, they also observed a return of more frequent California Quail and American Kestrel sightings. A few years back, I had begun photographing the dramatic changes and shared them with city biologist. She believed the changes they were seeing in flora and fauna diversity should be documented and recorded. The biologists were super enthusiastic about the revegetation areas success and wanted to help the rangers collect data.

An app was created for the rangers to easily collect data from the revegetation site and share with city biologists. The city biologist's aim is to utilize the Tecolote Canyon restoration sites as an example for other restoration efforts in the city of what can be done on a small budget with a small group of dedicated individuals.



For their prolific accomplishment in the Tecolote Canyon restoration sites, the Rangers and staff have been nominated for the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department Award! And here the Rangers would like to add that they most humbly share this nomination with all the volunteers who have helped in the restoration process over the years! We look forward to your return!

But I think most of us would agree that the best compliment on the Tecolote Canyon restoration sites success came from Eloise Battle, founder in establishing Tecolote Canyon Open Space Park, when she said that the amount of restoration that has happened in Tecolote Canyon is more than she thought she would ever see.



Uncleared Site Six, Oct 2020



Cleared Site Six, Nov 2020



Planted Site Six, Jan 2021

See Page 3 for additional restoration site photos.

Stephen Hawk(ing) continued from page 1 by Jerry Jacobs

Cooper's Hawks are found throughout the United States, some migrating as far south as Central America. They are year-round residents in San Diego, though there is some influx of winter migrants from September to March.

Populations of Cooper's Hawks declined during the mid 1900's, when the use of the insecticide DDT and widespread shooting severely reduced populations, but have since rebounded and have increased in urban and suburban areas in the last 20 years.



Image (left) Cooper's Hawk;
(right) Sharp-shinned Hawk
source: Audubon.org



Further Reading:

- [Cooper's Hawk - All About Birds \(Cornell Bird Lab\)](#)
- Udvardy, M.D.F. (1977). The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds: Western Region. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, NY. ISBN: 978-0394414102
- Garrett, K.L., Dunn, J.L., and Small, B.E. (2012). Birds of Southern California. R.W. Morse Company, Olympia, WA. ISBN: 978-0964081086
- Chiang, S. N., P. H. Bloom, A. M. Bartuszevige, and S. E. Thomas. 2012. Home range and habitat use of Cooper's Hawks in urban and natural areas. Online (www.ucpress.edu/go/sab) in C. A. Lepczyk and P. S. Warren (editors). Urban bird ecology and conservation. Studies in Avian Biology (no. 45), University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. ([Link to PDF here](#))



Battle Trail is named after an important Battle. On page 5, learn about why Eloise Battle (pictured above) stepped up to help preserve Tecolote Canyon Natural Park open space fifty years ago.



Blue Eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*)

What makes this native canyon plant a favorite of Eloise Battle?

Find out on page 5.

(More) Acres of Applause! by Erika Weikel, Park Ranger *Continued from page 2*



Site Four, Nov 2018 cleared of non-natives and planted
Photo credit: Erika Weikel



Site Four, Nov 2020 all grown-up!
Photo credit: Erika Weikel



California Quail (left); American Kestrel (right)
Photo credits: [allaboutbirds.org](#)

Battle for Tecolote Canyon: An Interview with M. Eloise Battle, Environmental Activist and A Founder of Tecolote Canyon Natural Park



Eloise Battle holding Zola, skunk
wildlife ambassador

Fifty years ago, Tecolote Canyon Open Space Natural Park wasn't an established natural park. Instead, it was a battleground for developers and residents. While canyon rim and community residents wanted to preserve Tecolote Canyon's biodiversity, developers wanted

to fill it with housing and roadways.

A battle for the canyon, by the name of M. Eloise Battle, her nextdoor neighbor Sherlie Miller, and fellow concerned citizens ensued and activated.

We sat down, virtually, with nonagenarian Eloise Battle to talk about her ongoing involvement with Tecolote Canyon.

When did you move to the Tecolote Canyon rim?

Eloise Battle: We first moved to a Tecolote finger canyon in Linda Vista in 1958, and I have been in my current home, across the canyon in Clairemont, since New Year's Eve, 1961. We're original owners, we walked up and down the lots when they were just graded until we found the view we liked the best, and said, *This is the one.* And I still think we've got the best view on the canyon.

Can you discuss your background, before your involvement with Tecolote Canyon?

EB: I have a dusty old degree in Biology from a little college in East Tennessee called Tusculum which was named after Cicero's villa in Rome. My particular interest was entomology and the student body was all of about 300. Veterans made up a large part of the student body. It was a neat little college, with a one-man biology department, best teacher I ever had, a pretty well-known entomologist. I taught labs for him for three years, he was a fabulous teacher. Let's go back farther. When I was a kid, on my way home from school in fourth grade, there was a pile of gravel by the road with a bright yellow beetle crawling up it. Somehow I got it home. My dad had a lot of books, but he couldn't identify it. So we went up the street to the taxidermist and nature writer neighbors, and they identified it as a Goldsmith Beetle. So I started hanging out up there. I learned to mount butterflies there, I was fascinated.

My father made me a butterfly net, my mother made the bag, and my great uncle—a master carpenter—made cases for me. When I left home, I donated my collection to the local university.

My parents had built our house in eight acres of virgin oak forest in upstate New York. There was a brook, spring, wildflowers, all kinds of little critters, and we were sitting at the dining room table one spring day when we saw this movement out the window, and it was garter snakes emerging from their hibernation hole to begin their mating ritual. And it happened every spring. It was a great place for me to grow up.

What made you get involved with Tecolote Canyon and its preservation?

EB: We had lived here for ten years. I was used to the big trees and totally different habitat and well, this was a canyon. Then in 1970, I took a class on native plants at the Museum of Natural History from a teacher named Helen Witham who introduced me to the wonders of the canyon. One evening while chatting, she told me about a campaign to preserve Tecolote Canyon and asked, "Wouldn't you like to get involved?" And I made my first talk at the City Council in January 1971, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Sherlie moved next door in 1972, and she didn't even finish unpacking before she joined forces. Sherlie is a great organizer. She wrote and organized the petition drive, found the volunteers, contacted 2,400 property owners, and that gave us a lot of ammunition for the City Council. Seven years later, they gave in.

What is uniquely special about Tecolote Canyon?

EB: According to the Park and Rec Biologist, Tecolote is the last coastal canyon that is more or less in tact in the city. There are four endangered or threatened species here, and it is a fascinating habitat. The ecology is so interesting, it's a precious chunk of land.

Why should the community protect Tecolote Canyon?

EB: Breathing space. And in the words of George Hemingway, the open space serves to filter the urban air and replenish our supply of oxygen.

What is your favorite plant in TC? And creature here?

EB: I think the Blue Eyed Grass is my favorite plant because that's the harbinger of spring.

And my favorite creature is a toss up between a Black Phoebe and a King Snake. And the big black cat [likely a mountain lion] on the canyon slope from the sixties.

What is or has been your favorite way to spend time in Tecolote Canyon?

EB: Oh to just observe and find new things. I just like to see what I can find, or sit and watch.

What should canyon stewards focus on now and in years to come?

EB: Restoration and preservation. Don't let concrete in. People don't realize what damage that will do. In our original Master Plan, we banned all concrete. Our current staff has done wonderful things with habitat restoration.

What has kept you involved in Tecolote Canyon?

EB: We have to keep watching the canyon forever. Interest in roads through the canyon and housing on canyon slopes is ongoing.

What is your favorite thing to teach others about Tecolote Canyon?

EB: The fascinating ecology of the native plants and animals, the fragility of the canyon, the threats being nonnative plants, overuse, and too much construction.

You've traveled around the world. Where in the world is nearest and dearest to your heart?

EB: I have been to many fascinating places. I've walked on the Great Wall in China, ridden a bullet train in Japan, been to Ayres Rock in Australia, among others, but my favorite place is coming home. And Uffington White Horse in England. And Yosemite National Park is the most beautiful place I've ever been.

As a reader, what are you currently reading? What do you enjoy reading?

EB: I will usually read non-fiction or a heavy novel, and do a fast read. I do not read romantics. I'm reading *The Scouring of the White Horse*, *The Salt Path*, and *The Feather Thief*, recommended by a nature friend.

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Kids Corner

A Quiet Pause

When you spend time outside, take some moments to pause. Just be still. Maybe even close your eyes.

Which of your senses make observations? Do you first feel the air? Or smell sage?

Find a spot that interests you. Observe this spot for a while. What do you notice? What do you wonder?

Wet your paws for A Muddy Pause too!
 mud art anyone?

About Friends of Tecolote Canyon



Friends of Tecolote Canyon is a non-profit community organization committed to sponsoring nature education and restoration activities in Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. Our education program, supported by SDGE's "Environmental Champions Initiative", is dedicated to bringing children into Tecolote Canyon and fostering connection through enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful experiences in our unique and precious local habitat.

Like us on Facebook/Friends of Tecolote Canyon
www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org

Your donations are always appreciated and make our programs possible. You can donate to Friends of Tecolote Canyon at Tecolote Nature Center, or at our website:
www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org/donate

I Found A Wildlife Baby! What Should I Do?

by Marla Gilmore, Tecolote Nature Center Director



Images this page: Baby birds (top), Barn Owl (middle), Opossum (lower), photo credits: Project Wildlife

Here are some tips from Project Wildlife to help you decide what to do if you find a wildlife baby that may be injured or abandoned.



BIRDS

Little to no feathers:

Create a makeshift nest using a basket and place securely in a tree with the baby inside. Birds can't smell, so the parents won't reject it just because you handled it. Watch to see if the parents return. If parents don't return within an hour, bring to Project Wildlife.

Mostly feathered:

This bird is a fledgling learning to fly and it's normal for it to be on the ground for a few days. If left alone and there are no predators, the parents will continue to feed the bird on the ground, and it will graduate to flying within days.

Injured or in danger:

If the bird is visibly injured or in danger from a predator, bring it to Project Wildlife. If the bird is injured, or has no feathers, it is very important to keep it warm. Do not feed the baby.



MAMMALS

Watch and wait:

The absence of a parent does not necessarily mean a baby has been abandoned. To deter predators, some mammals will only visit their young every 12 hours for feedings. If you've found a nest, place an X of sticks over the entrance and check back later to see if the sticks were disturbed (this means the parents returned, so no need to get involved).

Warmth and isolation:

If the baby is confirmed abandoned or orphaned, or is injured, place inside a box with air holes in a dark and quiet place away from pets and children and bring to Project Wildlife for treatment. Keep the baby warm and do not feed the baby.

Wear gloves or use a towel when picking up a mammal.

NOTE: Wildlife life needs to be kept warm, dark, and quiet until it arrives at Project Wildlife.

Project Wildlife
5433 Gaines Street
San Diego, CA. 92110
619-299-7012
www.projectwildlife.org

If you've found an injured animal and need emergency assistance or information on where to take it, please call: 619-299-7012 (press 1).

Tecolote Canyon Resources

Available at our website: www.friendsoftecotecanyon.org/tecolote-canyon-natural-park
and www.friendsoftecotecanyon.org

CHRONOLOGY OF TECOLOTE CANYON NATURAL PARK



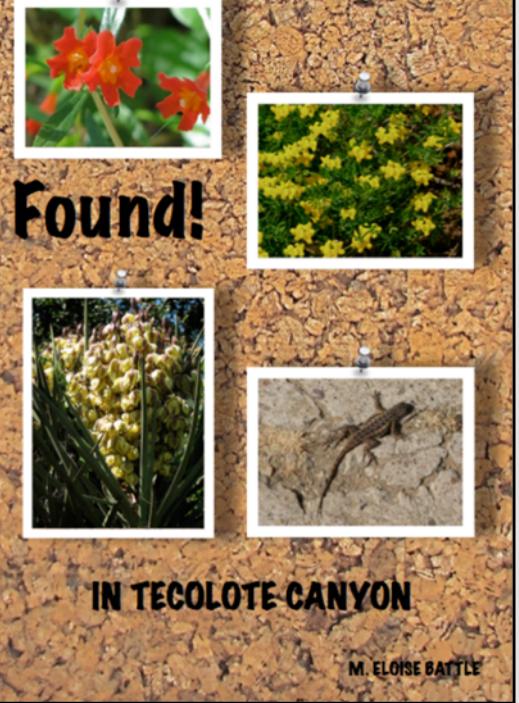
This is the official logo of Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. It was created in 1981 by Lisa Manley and is on the cover of the Adopted Master Plan. Note: It is protected by copyright.

Learn more about the chronology of Tecolote Canyon Natural Park here.

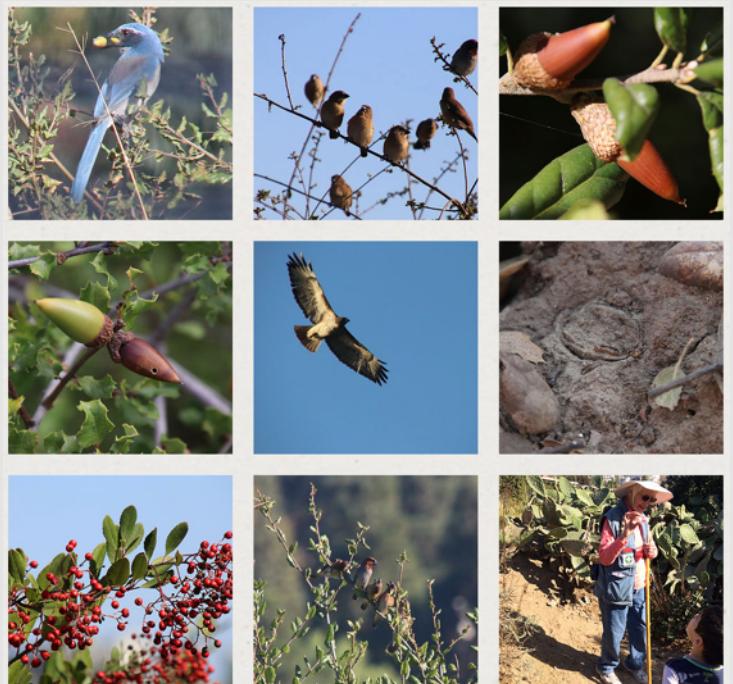
Tecolote Canyon Natural Park



Tecolote Canyon Natural Park map



Learn about what has been Found! in Tecolote Canyon,
by M. Eloise Battle



Read past newsletter archives at our Friends of Tecolote Canyon website

*In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.
—Margaret Atwood*