

OCH NEWS

Second Quarter 2020 (Apr- Jun)

Quarterly News

Featured Partners

Ocean Quest

by Sheen Sidhu

OCH's Featured Partner is Discovery Cube's Ocean Quest (Ocean Quest/OQ) Citizen Science Program. Ocean Quest's Citizen Science Coordinator, Devon Ohlweiler, has been our main point of contact during our partnership and allowed us to interview her about their program.

Since 2017, OCH has partnered with Discovery Cube's Ocean Quest nonprofit. Ocean Quest's Citizen Science program gives students from local schools a chance to explore the coastal habitats, the species that live within, and the issues the habitat currently faces. During the field trips, students are able to get a hands-on learning experience and gain insight into the possible career options they can pursue such as: water quality testing, monitoring endangered and threatened species, and collecting data on microplastics in the environment.

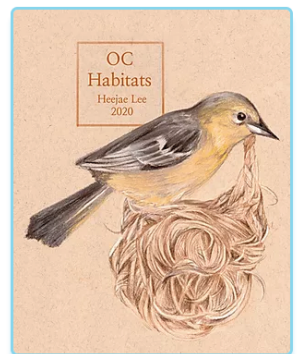
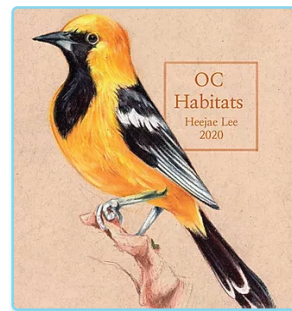


What is Ocean Quest's mission?

OQ is a campus location that is part of the Discovery Cube Science Center and the Discover Science Foundation. The Discover Science Foundation as a whole has four core initiatives that are used to prepare the generation of teachers, students and

Spotlight Species

Hooded Oriole



by Michelle Lee

Welcoming the **Hooded Orioles** back to our neighborhoods in mid-March is a beautiful sight. These brilliant yellow birds are a shy species and tend to remain in hiding during their daily activities, so spotting one within the few months of their stay with us can be rewarding.

The Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*) may be harder to encounter, but easy to identify. The male Hooded Oriole is a vibrant yellow-orange, ranging from a bright yellow to reddish orange. Strikingly contrasting against the colorful yellow-orange, the males have a black face, throat, wings, and tail feathers. Two white bars can be seen on their black wings. The female Hooded Orioles are lighter in color, with a pale yellow body and ashy brown wings. The song of the hooded oriole is a fast sequence of whistles and chatters, similar to the call of the house finch but sharper.

The Hooded Orioles visit Orange County during their breeding season. They nest in trees by weaving an intricate hanging nest with grass and plant fibers, which they stitch into large leaves through poked holes. If you're lucky, you may be able to find these grass-woven baskets stitched to the underside of wide leaves or branches, such as those of palm trees.

I was fortunate enough to be able to observe a pair of Hooded Orioles nest in my own backyard a few years past, which helped provoke my passion for ornithology. It was touching to see these magnificent creatures return to our neighborhoods again this year.

life-long learners. These four initiatives are: Early Childhood Education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Proficiency, Healthy Living and Environmental Stewardship. Discovery Cube has three campus locations; Santa Ana, Los Angeles and Newport Beach. OQ's mission is to teach children about STEM and Environmental Stewardship through exhibits and hands-on learning experiences with our various field trip programs.

What is your role within the organization and what are some significant contributions you have made?

My title at OQ is Citizen Science Coordinator. OQ hosts Citizen Science Field trips. These are special trips for 6-12th graders in which they participate in actual scientific research and collect data for various partner organizations. I work behind the scenes to create curriculum for this program, as well as teach the content to students both in the classroom and here at OQ. I make sure the process from start to finish runs smoothly, from booking with the teachers, to waving goodbye as the students leave OQ. Since this is a grant funded program, I also help write evaluation reports to send to donors. In addition to the Citizen Science program, I also manage the Marine Mammal Education Programming we do on site during the summer and on weekends. We partner with Davy's Locker Whale Watching and offer educational presentations about local marine mammals to their patrons as well as the public. I also do staff training for any new education staff here at OQ.

What are the different stations that OQ offers during field trips? Are these offered during every field trip or do they vary based on weather and group size?

OQ offers two main types of field trips. The first program is our Citizen Science Program, which is a special grant-funded program for 6th-12th grade. On this trip there are three to four learning stations depending on the size of the group. For 15-90 students we do a 90 minute boat ride through the harbor and out to see the sea lions at the buoy. We also conduct an MPA (Marine Protected Area) Watch and learn about the White Sea Bass Grow-Out pen in the harbor. The students also collect a water sample in the harbor. Once off the boat, they come into the lab to test the water they collected for bacteria, enterococcus, which is a bacteria found in fecal matter. This data gets sent to the Surfrider Foundation. Students then go to the beach to look for microplastics in the sand. We send that data in to Algalita. If the group has 90-130 students, we add a 4th rotation on the beach with OCH, in which they learn about the dune habitat and the animals there, and then do some bird monitoring. We do these activities rain or shine. However if there is a torrential downpour, we may have the students come into the exhibit area instead of going to the beach.

Our second program offers a general field trip for kinder-12th grades. This is a three hour trip where they tour the harbor on our boat for one hour, spend time in the exhibit for an hour, and then go to the pier to go crab fishing. The content only changes based on age

How does OQ's location enhance the learning experience?

OQ is located in Newport Beach, California on the Balboa Peninsula. This puts us within walking distance of both the harbor and the beach, and we utilize both on each field trip. Some of the students we work with have never been on a boat before. This

Volunteers of the Month

June 2020



Olivia Richardson joined our team in December 2019 as an Art Intern. We met her at an event with LUSH Cosmetics. She was an employee and we had a chance to talk and found that she and OCH had common interests and goals. She came on with such enthusiasm that she actually started working while OCH was "closed" for winter break. So her first day she came prepared with work in hand! This was just the beginning of the many positive attributes, talents, and skills that Olivia would bring to our team. First and foremost, she has a passion that just doesn't quit. This passion flows into all of her life – professional, academic, and personal. Next is her artistic talent. She has such talent and can create such creative, realistic, and inspirational art so quickly and with such ease. Her work has already had a major impact in our organization as she has designed several stickers, our Earth Day shirt, and event flyers. As well as her work in progress of creating a coloring book for all ages of our local habitats and assisting in the refinement our branding across our organization. On top of her creative skills she is proving herself to be an excellent leader who is organized, responsible, and respected by her peers. She has shown great leadership in our Spotlight Project. Olivia graduated with her bachelor's from California State University, Fullerton in May 2020 and is planning on doing some exploring in the Northwest come fall. She will leave our team as an intern and become a remote volunteer as she ventures away from Orange County. Olivia has been a fantastic addition to our team and will do great things with her talent and passion in the years to come.

May 2020

location is perfect because it allows students to experience the natural environment, and they are able to see first hand the different habitats where animals live. This not only makes for a fun and unique experience, but by seeing animals in their natural habitat, it is our hope that students will gain greater love and respect for the animals and the environment, and will then strive to protect them both by becoming environmental stewards.

What groups/schools does OQ serve? (ex: Title I schools, public, private, or charter schools)

For the grant funded Citizen Science program, we sponsor Title 1 schools to participate. Both of our programs are available to public, private and charter schools as a paid program. In the summer, we also offer the K-12 field trips to summer camps, church groups, and other community groups such as the YMCA and The Boys and Girls Club.

By the end of an OQ field trip, what do you expect students to have learned?

At the end of the Citizen Science field trip, our goal is to have students walk away knowing that they can be scientists, and can make a difference. Whether it is by collecting and submitting data on their smartphone, simply picking up trash on the beach, or recycling cans and bottles, we want them to understand that small everyday choices can make a big impact on the environment.

How does OC Habitats contribute to OQ?

OC Habitats (OCH) has been a partner of Ocean Quest's Citizen Science program since it began 2 years ago. For each field trip that is larger than 90 students, OCH sends educators to teach students about the local dune habitat and conservation efforts. OCH Educators walk the students through the habitat and help them identify various species of plants and animals.

OC Habitats wants to give thanks to Wendy Marshall and Jill Lemon for their efforts in facilitating OC Habitat's partnership with Ocean Quest at the beginning of this partnership. A special thank you to Devon Ohlwiler for her efforts and collaboration with OCH over the last two years and agreeing to do this interview.



Abby Foster has been with us for almost 10 months and has been one of the most enthusiastic and inspirational interns OC Habitats has seen. She came to us last summer and has been a big part of many of our OCH projects such as our Habitat Video Project, Education Programming, Social Media Outreach, and our Spotlight Project. In addition to all her projects, she has also attended many of our habitat restorations and cleanups, recruiting friends and family to assist. She has been working her way through her senior year in parallel with working with OCH, which is a busy and demanding schedule. In addition to these two big commitments, she had the opportunity to present an Environmental TedX talk at her school and play a role in her school's musical, which she did wonderfully in both. She, like many other seniors, are now finishing their high school years at home and she is managing it like a rock star! Her attitude has been nothing but positive, uplifting, and open minded, which makes her a pleasure to work with. Her bubbly personality and her natural ability to speak to the public draw people to her and her passion for a better world is contagious and uplifting. Abby's work ethic, moral compass, and compassion are as true as they come and will be driving force in her college and professional career. Abby intends to pursue a degree in an environmental field starting in the Fall. I believe you will be seeing Abby in the future as a major steward of the environment, mark my words.

Environmental News

The Migratory Bird Act 2020

by Abby Foster

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) was first passed by United States congress in 1918, making it illegal to "pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any

April 2020



means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention . . . for the protection of migratory birds . . . or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird." (16 U.S.C. 703) according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. Over the years, the act has compiled a list of over 1,000 species of migratory birds that are to be protected from these threats. This act has brought great success in the recovery of many different migratory bird populations including the Snowy Egret, Wood duck, and many more. In the late 1800s, the Snowy Egret was hunted for their feathers to near extinction until their protection was enforced by this act. The wood duck suffered drastic population loss in the 1800s due to habitat destruction and hunting but recovered through protections by around 1940.



Accountability

The MBTA has held individuals and large corporations accountable for practices that cause harm to wildlife and has incentivised companies to invest in technology that prevents harm to migratory birds. From the 1970s to 2017, this law included penalties to companies responsible for incidental deaths of migratory birds through disasters such as oil spills, oil pits, unsafe power lines, and destruction of habitat.

New Laws

However in 2017, a new interpretation of the law was introduced which eliminates fines and penalties when the deaths caused were considered incidental. When the administration first announced this change, the Audubon Society analyzed that oil companies "were responsible for 90 percent of incidental takes prosecuted under the act, resulting in fines of \$6,500 per violation" and the US Fish and Wildlife Services stated that "Each year, 500,000 to 1 million birds [were] lost to pits that oil companies leave uncovered." Those individuals and corporations who harass or harm listed migratory bird species through incidental acts will now only be fined if injuries or deaths caused were due to direct and intentional acts. This removes incentives for companies to invest in preventative practices like covering oil pits and allows them to alter habitat and flight pathways, so long as the purpose of the project is not to intentionally cause harm. Companies are no longer required to report fatalities, even in the event of a large

Matt Franklin has been an intern with OCH since last summer (2019). He came to us as a student of one of our partners, Matt Yurko at Project Grow and Saddleback College, during a coastal dune habitat lesson in Fall of 2018. Matt has always been an adventurer, getting his Eagle Scout recognition in his teen years and now pursuing degrees (AA and BS) in Environmental/Ecological Restoration as well as specific certifications in this field. Matt is enthusiastic about restoration but also many other environmental issues and jumped right into OCH's many programs of education, restoration, monitoring and more in his time with us. Early on and especially since January 2020, Matt has taken a leadership role with OCH and our intern team by helping to lead, coordinate, organize and plan for OCH events. Matt also has a restoration internship through Saddleback College, helping to restore some of the campus back to its native origins. Not only is he working with OCH and Saddleback, but also is working on a native garden in his own backyard and is already seeing success and native species returning to his backyard where they had not been before. Matt's enthusiasm and verve for the environment is contagious and has provided a great example for our intern team. Matt has taken on so many tasks with our organization but he has especially thrived in working with technology, creating a series of maps for our Coastal Dune Habitat surveys; public speaking, doing excellent research, adding a pinch of humor, and using his smooth baritone voice to reach his audiences; and writing, producing excellent current environmental event articles to share in our quarterly newsletters. Matt hopes to finish his bachelor's at Humboldt State University and enter the environmental field in something related to ecological restoration or native landscaping. Matt will finish his internship with us this summer, but we hope to hold on to him as a volunteer as long as we can as he has been such an asset to our crew and there is much to do!

What's New

OCH Spotlight Interviews

During quarantine, OCH interns Abby, Olivia, and Ariel interviewed the lovely volunteers of OC Habitats!



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDk9Gzb87LJ->

oil spill or a similar incident which would result in no fines to those responsible, regardless of the number of birds affected.

Fighting Back

In response to this change, New York, California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico and Oregon joined with many organizations such as the National Audubon Society and National Wildlife Federation and filed a lawsuit against the Interior Department standing against the new interpretation. California continues to abide by the previous interpretation and has enforced "a prohibition on incidental take of migratory birds, notwithstanding the recent reinterpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act." Although legal protections waiver over time, organizations pushing for progress and preservation of our native species and their habitats still stand strong and continue to advocate them without a fight.

2019 Annual Report

Check out our 2019 Annual Report to see what OCH has been up to the past year.



<https://www.ochabitats.org/annual-reports>

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

July 2020

OC Coastkeepers Interview with OCH Founder, Stacey- July 14th, 11:30am

OCH Happy Hour: BLM and Environmental Justice- July 18th, time TBD

August 2020

Tern Preserve Monitoring Ends with State Parks

Beach Clean-up (Tentative) TBD

September 2020

Coastal Clean-Up - September 26, 2020 (Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy) 8:30am-12:00pm

Restoration - TBD

For new and upcoming events, join our mailing list.

OCH is continually updating its events and opportunities. For a

Join Our Crew



Volunteer:

- Become a Habitat Monitor
- Join our Habitat Education Team
- Help with Administrative Tasks
- Help with Outreach and Marketing

Earth Day Shirt

Donate \$25 or more and receive our Earth Day t-shirt. Shirt is locally printed and made with 100% organic cotton/



- Become a Tide Pool Docent
- Work on OCH's Social Media Outreach
- Help with ongoing Restoration Projects
- Work with our Grant Writing Team to secure funding for our organization, programs, and projects.

Click Volunteer above for application.

Internships:

- College Level Students earn credit through CSUF and UCI

-Gain experience in the conservation field, a grassroots nonprofit, business administration, public speaking, education, and more.

- Become a film or art intern for OCH.

Click Internships above for application.

Join our Board:

We will soon have two board positions available and are looking for people who are passionate about the environment, specifically local habitats.

Submit your resume, references and cover letter to och@ochabitats.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

Volunteers of the Year

2019



**Crystal Ryan and
Trevor Stocking**

2018



Bianca Borja