



Dear Friends,

We are now starting our 12th year of conducting classroom visits and field trips for some of San Francisco's most underserved elementary schools.

Participating classes will visit two of three locations in San Francisco: Heron's Head Park, on the Bay, and the SF Botanical Garden or Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park.

If you know teachers who might be interested in enrolling their students please forward this link to our program information: <http://www.sfnature.org/programs/k-5.html>.

This month we are accepting applications from SF high school students for winter internships at Heron's Head Park. Please see page 3 for information and an intern's report about his time in the program. Heron's Head interns will learn about local plants and birds, practice conservation, write field reports, learn communication skills, and lead tours of the park.

We will resume our Saturday birding walks with *Birding for Everyone* and *Birding for Kids and their Families* at the SF Botanical Garden on September 1st.

This fall we will initiate a new series of nature walks: *Birding the Chain of Lakes*, *Crissy Field*, and others. Please stay tuned for dates in future newsletters and on our Web site.

This month's newsletter features the amazing photography of Sandi Wong and her son Trevor Lee. We appreciate their wonderful photos and their willingness to share them with you.

We need your support to reach our goal of reaching 1,000 students during the upcoming school year. Help support our school programs, internships, and Saturday field trips. Membership is only \$30 for one year. A gift of \$500 sponsors a full year of four classroom visits and field trips. Your generosity is appreciated.

Best regards,

Nancy DeStefanis

Please donate now,
or mail a check to:



SF Nature Education, 3450 Geary, Ste. 208,
San Francisco, CA 94118

Time to Go Outside and Connect

Anastasia Marin, School Program Coordinator

For those of us living in the Bay Area enjoying the outdoors is a lifestyle. Starting your Saturday morning with a hike at Land's End or jogging in Golden Gate Park after work is just like having milk with your cereal—it's a part of our weekly routine. We might not be aware of it, but some of us take for granted the abundance of nature around us. After all, it's right there in our backyard.



Photo: SFNE

School program coordinator Anastasia Marin with a group of kindergartners from Bret Harte Elementary last April.

However, it's not like that for everyone. On one of SF Nature's field trips this spring, a little girl asked a naturalist: "How do I walk on the grass?"

According to recent research, children ages three to twelve spend 1% of their time outdoors, and 27% of their time watching TV. Hard to believe, but some Bay Area children have never been to Golden Gate Park or Ocean Beach, and that number keeps growing.

Organizations connecting young people to the outdoors have become a nationwide movement over the last decade. The Children and Nature Network is one. Helping to cure "nature deficit disorder" is a priority for most environmental organizations. Many schools now

have nature classes and field trips in their curricula.

In today's world of PlayStations and iPads children have an opportunity for a better and worldlier education. An outing to an Apple store or mall is for some families a typical weekend activity. Time once spent on activities like swimming, hiking, and being outdoors has severely diminished, putting American children's health at risk. It's important to create a balance; we won't be able to shield our children from the technology all around them, but we can replace their joysticks with flowers or binoculars for a few hours a week.

I remember spending summers as a kid at my parents' cottage in the Russian countryside. I would wake up to birds chirping outside my window and go to look at birds' nests with my cousins in the afternoon. I grew up with a sense that nature is a part of me and is a friend, and cherishing friendships is one of the most important human habits. If our kids are taught about nature at an early age, then as adults they may think twice before littering, spitting their gum on the grass, or ripping leaves off trees. They might take care of nature like a friend. Isn't that the best way to ensure that our planet stays green for a while?

As fall rolls into the Bay Area, take advantage of the upcoming Indian summer. Take that hike in Tennessee Valley to discover the black sand beach. Go to Golden Gate Park and experience the different scents in the Rose Garden. Bring your binoculars with you, because you never know when you might spot a Great-horned Owl or a Red-tailed Hawk cruising by.

Getting children out into nature on guided field trips is our priority at San Francisco Nature Education. We resume activities this month at underserved schools in San Francisco. Don't forget to support our school program. Every dollar makes a difference. Happy fall!

On the pages ahead:

- 2 More pictures from our school program, spring 2012
- 3 A Heron's Head Internship; Applying for Internships at Heron's Head; Upcoming Events
- 4 Around and About Golden Gate Park: A Photo Essay



Photo: Jeanne Crawford

Ms. Hackett, teacher, at Stow Lake with third-graders displaying bird journals, gifts from SFNE.



Photo: SFNE

Touching a plant on Strawberry Island.



Photo: Connie Armitage

First graders hike up Strawberry Hill near the waterfall.



Photo: SFNE

Our School Program in the Field, Spring 2012

Naturalist Kris Kifer, left, and teacher Amber Cooper with bilingual kindergartners.

A Heron's Head Park Internship

Logan K., Intern



My internship at Heron's Head Park this past winter was a great experience. I learned many new skills about communicating and record-keeping that I have started to use outside the program. I know they will continue to be useful in the future.

The skills I learned from my training and from leading public tours included how to accurately relate what I was seeing; to explain facts in simple, easy-to-understand phrases; to help visitors locate a bird in the field; and to answer questions, making a satisfying experience for both leader and group.

Other work included repeated demonstrations of how to hold and use the spotting scope, and how to accommodate people's different heights at the scopes. It's vital that everyone get a great view.

During the program my field observation skills increased significantly. As a result of field sketching and note-taking during the training and tours I am able to sketch more accurately. I learned how to better summarize my observations when communicating in order to help people get engaged with birds and birding.

I encourage other high school students with an interest in nature to try a Heron's Head Park internship. Programs like this are few and far between, and offer a unique way for young people to share their passion for nature and wildlife in San Francisco. The profound effect this program has had on me is unlike any other program I have attended.

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Interns Logan, Mina, and Eddy rest between Heron's Head tours.

Applying for Internships at Heron's Head

High school students may apply for internships at Heron's Head Park by completing our online application: http://www.sfnature.org/get_involved/intern.html

Applications are due by Friday, September 21, 2012. Applicants will be interviewed by September 28, and notified by Monday, October 1.

Training will begin October 13, and end December 15. Interns will lead public tours at Heron's Head Park on the following Saturdays: January 12, February 9, and March 9, 2013. Credit given for community service.

For more information please contact San Francisco Nature Education at info@sfnature.org, or telephone 415-387-9160.



Logan, center, lines up the scope for the group to use.



For directions to Heron's Head Park search for Jennings St & Cargo Way, SF at maps.google.com.

Upcoming Events*

Birding for Everyone: Saturday, Sep. 1 with naturalist Megan Prelinger, 10 am-noon; also Saturday, Oct. 6. Meet in front of San Francisco Botanical Garden bookstore. SF Nature fees: Adults \$10. Also see SF Botanical Garden fees below.

Birding for Kids ages 6-12: Last trip: Saturday, Sep. 1, 10-11:30 am. All students must be accompanied by an adult. \$10 per family. All walks led by San Francisco Nature Education naturalists.

SF Botanical Garden Admission Fees: FREE for children ages 4 and under; FREE for all San Francisco residents with proof of residency \$7 for adults; \$5 for youth 12-17, seniors 65 & over, and college students with ID \$2 for children 5-11; \$15 for families (2 adults and one or more children)

Leave from SF Botanical Garden bookstore. Take a leisurely walk through the microhabitats of the Botanical Garden. Free field journal provided to children. Please bring binoculars, if you have them, and a pencil for recording bird sightings.

*Please see our new online [events calendar](#).

Volunteers Needed for 2012-2013 School Program!

Please visit www.sfnature.org/get_involved for information.



Photo: © 2012 Trevor Lee

A juvenile American Robin looks fierce when wet



Photo: © 2012 Trevor Lee

A juvenile American Robin finds a worm.



Photos: © 2012 Sandi Wong unless otherwise noted

Cedar Waxwings at Stow Lake.



Allen's Hummingbird feeds a chick.



Allen's Hummingbird at Stow Lake.

Around and About Golden Gate Park

A photo essay by Sandi Wong and Trevor Lee



Anna's Hummingbird bathes at Stow Lake.



Female coyote on Kennedy Drive near 41st Avenue.



Yellow Warbler at San Francisco Botanical Garden.



Cedar Waxwings bathe at Stow Lake waterfall.