



FEBRUARY, 2016

THE WAVE *At Crystal Cove*



Crystal Cove Alliance is the non-profit, cooperating association dedicated to education, restoration, and conservation within Crystal Cove State Park



Spotlight

EL NINO ARRIVES AT CRYSTAL COVE

In early January, the Cove got its first taste of the storms that may be coming when a series of heavy rain battered the Cove for almost a week. Though there was no serious damage caused by this early glimpse of El Niño, the rains provided for dramatic video footage as they flooded the tunnel beneath Pacific Coast Highway that normally provides a pathway to the Historic District.

Crystal Cove regulars have been noticing signs of the upcoming El Niño for nearly a year, as warm-water aquatic animals, such as pelagic red crabs, started washing up on the Cove's sandy beaches late last spring. Still, NASA's [Jet Propulsion Laboratory] warns that we might not have seen the peak of this current El Niño, which may strengthen in late March or early April.

With the possibility of increased rains and flooding in the months to come, Crystal Cove State Park staff have been working diligently to prepare for the anticipated storms, clearing foliage, cutting back trees, and taking precautions against mudslides.

While we still don't know for certain when El Niño will hit its stride, Park visitors are advised to take precaution and plan ahead before coming to Crystal Cove. "We haven't seen the down pour we have anticipated," says Caesar Romo, State Park Maintenance Worker II. "Still, visitors can check the State Park website to check for closures or call the El Moro headquarters for further information before setting out into the backcountry."

Keep an eye on Crystal Cove Alliance's Facebook page for more updates on the possible rain coming to the Cove!



Making A Difference

MARINE PROTECTED AREA CITIZEN SCIENCE CRUISES TAKE TO THE SEA

If you visit Crystal Cove this month, keep an eye out on the ocean. Crystal Cove Alliance's flagship education program, the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Citizen Science Cruise, is taking to the water in earnest this month, inviting hundreds of junior high and high school students to help scientists and resource managers monitor Crystal Cove's underwater park.

The MPA Citizen Science Cruise program is run in partnership with Newport Landing Sportfishing in Newport Harbor. Since its inception in 2012, the program has grown quickly and is now serving more students than ever before, with 60 programs already booked for the 2015-2016 school year.

Many of the participating students come from Title 1 schools, whose participation is underwritten by generous donors who contributed to CCA's new Sustain Our Students scholarship program at last year's Moonlight Gala.



Making A Difference – cont.

Dolores Dang-Wright, an AP Environmental Science teacher at Dana Hills High School, is joining CCA on the water for her fourth year. She believes that the MPA Citizen Science Cruise inspires many of her students to get involved in local conservation.

“Some of them [students] get interested in not only the topics on board, but in science and learning how else they can help. Some of them have gone on to volunteer with Crystal Cove Alliance after going on the cruises,” she says. “It opens up their minds to more things that are going on out there, and more awareness of what’s protected and what’s not in their local area.”

Some CCA members will get a chance to see the MPA Citizen Science Cruise for themselves when they join us for the third annual Members’ Cruise on February 20th. The Members’ Cruise is open to all members at the Cove Steward level and above.

Visit the [Sustain Our Students] scholarship program homepage to learn more about becoming an S.O.S. supporter! For more information on the Members’ Cruise, contact Laura Morgan at lmorgan@crystalcovealliance.org

From the Field

SO YOU WANT TO BE A BIRDER?

This month, Crystal Cove Alliance kicks off its first gallery exhibit of 2016 with the *Birds of Crystal Cove*, which invites visitors to grab a field guide and a pair of binoculars to start their own birding adventure.

The exhibit, which is hosted in Cottage #46, celebrates some of the unique birds who call Crystal Cove home. It features photos of local birds, interviews with featured birders and naturalists, and helpful tips on how to start birding yourself.

“People will gain a new appreciation for this beautiful place by seeing that there’s much more to it than the beach and the waves,” says CCA Education Coordinator and exhibit curator Hailey Laskey. “By engaging in birding, you gain a deeper understanding of how the entire ecosystem coexists.” Ready to go birding? Hailey recommends starting off with a friend at first. “It’s so much more fun to bird with a partner,” she says. “Whoever you’re going with, whether it’s a novice or an experienced birder, bring a Sibley guide book and book and binoculars and just start walking around.”

Throughout February, if you snap a picture of any birds around the Park, tag your photos with #covebirds and share them on social media! CCA’s expert birders will help identify birds posted to Facebook and Instagram, and select photos will be added to the exhibit.

On Saturday, February 13th, you can also join CCA for Field Science Saturday, our community Citizen Science program that immerses participants in the science of natural resource management. As a special treat for birders, the Citizen Science projects this month will include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s [Great Backyard Bird Count]. The event is free with a \$15 day use fee required per vehicle. [RSVPs] are requested.



Then and Now

COTTAGE #23 – LA CASITA DEL MAR

Perched amongst seaside cliffs along the north beach is Cottage #23, often referred to as *La Casita del Mar*. Christine Shirley, who purchased the cottage back in 1967, was the last resident to stay in this cottage and was among a group of passionate Coveites instrumental in getting Crystal Cove listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1932, Cottage #23’s total lack of insulation sometimes made for a challenging seaside living experience. Warm days hovered around the 80s and 90s, and on chilly nights, the living room’s fireplace made it the place to be.

Today, Cottage #23 is one of a handful of cottages waiting to be restored. Crystal Cove Alliance and California State Parks are currently working on restoration plans and permitting for the final 17 cottages along the north beach. The projected \$26 million dollar project will mark the culminating achievement that CCA has been striving towards for the past 16 years. As with all major endeavors at Crystal Cove, the timing of the project will be driven by the success of CCA’s fundraising initiatives.

If you’re interested in becoming a part of a special community devoted to preserving the historical and cultural assets of Crystal Cove, we invite you to make a [donation] today or sign up to become a CCA member. Donations can be made in any amount and are completely tax-deductible.



Membership

BECOME A MEMBER OF CRYSTAL COVE ALLIANCE!

Our partners are all in this together! For as little as \$50, you can become a member of Crystal Cove Alliance. Our new program includes benefits such as discounts at the Park Interpretive Store, invitations to special events, a one-day parking pass, up to four shuttle passes, the CCA monthly newsletter and lots more. Don’t miss out – [sign up](#) today as a new member to be entered into a drawing for a two-night stay for two in a Crystal Cove Cottage.

