

Resources

U P D A T E

Earth Day is Golden

by Kirstyn Kay

The world's first Earth Day occurred on April 22, 1970 when 20 million Americans took to the streets to demand greater environmental protections.

Protesting environmental ignorance and injustices, students, educators and world citizens shaped an environmental consciousness and gave the Earth a voice. That Earth Day is credited with launching the modern environmental movement which led to the passage of landmark environmental laws, including the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts.

This April 22 will mark 50 years of celebrating Earth Day, but the Earth still needs us. While improvements have been made along the way, there is still much more to do to protect our natural resources and create a sustainable future. For home learning resources visit: <https://www.earthday.org/environmental-education-at-home/>.

What can you do?

- **Purchase locally grown food** by finding sources in the *Fresh and Local* guide. Better yet, grow your own. Find resource for consumers, farmers, gardeners and educators at <https://rcrcd.specialdistrict.org/files/3ab208586/2019freshlocalguideweb.pdf>.
- **Learn more** in the publication sections on our website and find links throughout this newsletter. Request free student educational materials from us at <https://www.rcrcd.org/school-programs-and-educational-materials>, or find local and online programs in the *Environmental Learning Resources* guide (next page).
- **Be a citizen scientist** and collect data that helps scientists study natural resources (see page 9).

Once we are again able to get out after Covid-19:

- **Visit the LandUse Learning Center (LLC)** to get localized information that may help you manage your home or business site. The 3-acre garden demonstrates sustainable practices for the three main land uses of southern California: native habitats, urban areas, and agriculture. Pick up plant lists and conservation information: <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/cda7d2597/LLCflyer.pdf>.
- **Visit the Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center (SCIC)** to learn about native plants, animals and habitat management at the Preserve: <https://www.rcrcd.org/sycamore-creek-interpretive-center>. Find out about programs that cultivate environmental understanding and stewardship by following the SCIC Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SCICTV/>.

Follow the RCRCDD facebook page for ideas and updates: <https://www.facebook.com/RCRCDD/> and visit our website at: <https://www.rcrcd.org/>

Let us celebrate Earth Day every day by taking action to help protect our planet.



Environmental Learning Resources

The *Environmental Learning Resources* guide was developed to help people find local sites and programs about natural resources, agriculture, and environmental topics. The 32-page booklet includes a directory of environmental and agricultural learning sites and programs for San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The guide provides information about programs for all ages: from early childhood through adult, as well as professional training opportunities.

The free guide can help you plan outings and access free materials. The center pages (pages 16-19) include county maps that designate locations of the educational sites. An interactive map can be found at: <https://arcg.is/1eOzPe> . Find the guide at <https://www.enviroedcollaborative.com/ee-providers> . If you would like a printed copy of *Environmental Learning Resources*, contact Erin Snyder at snyder@rcrcd.org or (951) 683-7691, Ext. 207.

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District developed the guide for the Environmental Education Collaborative (EEC). The EEC is a grassroots network that works to elevate environmental education to a new level of importance and urgency. If you would like to get involved with this effort, please reach out to one of our volunteer board members or project leaders listed on page 31. Learn more about the EEC at www.enviroedcollaborative.com. Share and find programs and resources at www.facebook.com/groups/eecollaborative .



THANK YOU to our partner organizations that provided funding for printing: WRCOG with the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency, The Wildlands Conservancy, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, ECOS Institute, Chino Basin Water Conservation District, Action Driven Inquiry, Huerta del Valle, and Skypark at Santa's Village. Please find their ads throughout the guide.



Eager to Learn about Nature?

April is Environmental Education Week. Research demonstrates that Environmental Education (EE) helps students gain knowledge, as well as important skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.

Here are some great at-home resources:

Environmental Learning Resources Guide (above) has more than just great places to visit. Online and virtual resources are also included in each of the three sections: Environmental (p.13, 22), Agricultural (p. 27), and Professional (p. 29, 30) in addition to local environmental learning sites.

National Environmental Education Foundation: <https://www.neefusa.org/education/eeweek>

California State Parks Home Learning: <https://www.ports-ca.us/home>

Children and Nature Network: <https://www.findingnature.org/resources>

Cornell Bird Lab/Webcams: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/science-nature-activities-for-cooped-up-kids/>
<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>

National Geographic: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/>

Project Learning Tree: <https://www.plt.org/educator-tips/activities-to-do-with-children-at-home>

Project WET Spring 2020 Gazette: <https://www.watereducation.org/california-project-wet-gazette>

Audubon's Joy of Birds: <https://www.audubon.org/joy-of-birds>

Earth Day: <https://www.earthday.org/2020-teach-in-toolkit/>

Northside Heritage Meadows

by Diana Ruiz



The Northside Heritage Meadows project will be the first urban agriculture project in Riverside's disadvantaged Northside neighborhood, which is considered a "food desert" according to the USDA Economic Research Service. A nearly \$3M Urban Greening Grant was awarded to the City of Riverside to purchase over 7 acres of blighted farmland.

This project will be a collaboration of the Northside community, the Riverside Food Systems Alliance (RFSA), local groups, agencies and the City of Riverside.

Additional in-kind and matching funds by various partners will be leveraged to complete the multiple components. If you are interested in getting involved with the program, please contact Joyce Jong at jjong@riversideca.gov or (951) 826-5265.

The Project will provide:

- 353 trees and shrubs, species that were selected for high carbon sequestration and pollution absorption properties
- fields for training beginning farmers, plus incubation plots for small start up farms
- a community garden and carbon-sequestering demonstration orchards
- a composting area to recycle green waste which will be used to increase soil health
- a farm stand that will provide fresh produce in an area with no grocery
- two trails and a bike lane that will reduce vehicle miles traveled and the related pollutants.

The project will improve air and water quality, increase wildlife habitat, as well as provide healthy, locally grown food.

Funding to Help Northside

A second National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) grant has been awarded to RCRCD. The 2020 Urban Ag Conservation Grant will provide funding for the development of interpretive signs and publications for the conservation measures that will be installed in development of the Northside Heritage Meadows project. RCRCD will be providing planning, education and outreach assistance for the Project.

RCRCD's first NACD grant in 2017 helped us to create the award-winning *Fresh and Local* food and ag guide and to build capacity in the Riverside Food Systems Alliance (RFSA) and Riverside Garden Council. If you would like to support or get involved in the local food movement, visit RFSA's website at: <https://riversidefood.org/>

Local Ag Feeds You - Local Ag Needs You!

Seed Library

Once we are able to open our facilities again, you will be able to share or take seeds from the Riverside Garden Council's Seed Library at the LandUse Learning Center.

Community Garden Guide

Riverside currently has six community gardens. Interested in starting a community garden? Find RGC's *How to Start a Community Garden* guide at <https://riversidegardencouncil.org/> and contact them at rivcommunitygardencouncil@gmail.com or (951) 394-3793



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Monarch Conservation Challenge

by Diana Ruiz

The Western Monarch butterfly population has declined, and we desperately need pollinators like bees, beetles, bats, birds, and moths, since one in every three bites of our food is dependent on pollination. To increase pollinator populations and help save the Monarch from extinction, we are raising awareness, planting beneficial native plants, and providing tools to help residents increase habitat.

Last summer, the Riverside Neighborhood Partnership (RNP) and RCRCDC met with Riverside's mayor Rusty Bailey who undertook the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) certification program. Most of the NWF's 25 possible actions have already been accomplished. RCRCDC spearheaded the project with RNP and the Riverside Garden Council (RGC). We gathered interested community members and specialists, and together we conducted a pollinator festival, plant sale, habitat plantings, and an awareness campaign.



PHOTO COMPLIMENTS OF SIREN BROOKE ORINSON

Some visitors came in costumes, and all enjoyed four different photo booths designed to release their "inner pollinator".



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Mayor Rusty Bailey posed at the Instagram photo booth to show off his "Got Milkweed?" t-shirt, while Tom Donahue, chair of the Riverside Neighborhood Partnership gave a thumbs-up.

The Pollinator Festival was a free, fun, and educational event for families. The event included informative booths, craft activities, nature walks, demonstrations, games, and citizen science activities. Mayor Bailey spoke to kick-off the Monarch Conservation Challenge. Speakers included Christine Lampe, Amanda Plunkett, Elijah Hall and RCRCDC's 2019 SpeakOff winner, Morton Gilbert from North High. A BIG thank you goes out to our speakers and the 33 volunteers who supported this collaborative event.

In conjunction with the Pollinator Festival, the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) conducted a native plant sale. Combined attendance surpassed 400 people that day who "cross-pollinated" the adjoining events at our RCRCDC facility.

The following Saturday, a pollinator habitat planting at Ryan Bonaminio Park was coordinated by the Rivers and Lands Conservancy and RCRCDC. Thanks are due to the City's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department staff for site prep. Over 33 volunteers planted 1,240 plants donated by Xerces Society. Additional plant materials were funded by the CNPS, Friends of Riverside's Hills, City of Riverside, and RCRCDC and were later planted by even more volunteers.

In total, eighteen organizations partnered for the events. In addition to those already mentioned, we also appreciate the help from the Inland Urban Forest Council, UCR Botanic Gardens, Riverside Food Systems Alliance, Riverside Food Co-op, Environmental Education Collaborative, UCCE Master Gardeners, Bee Rooted, UCR Entomology Museum, Southwest Resource Management Association, Greater Riverside Environmental Engagement Network (GREEN), and the California Conservation Corps (CCC). Many thanks to the Mayor, staff, and City Council.

GREEN: The Greater Riverside Environmentally Engaged Network works to create connections that help inland SoCal valleys become more environmentally sustainable. GREEN is an outgrowth of prior Green Riverside Leadership Summits, the Wood Streets Green Team, and meetings with interested community members, businesses, colleges, and agencies who identified needs, assets, and ways to help our area become more sustainable. Join their Facebook page to share about environmental opportunities, efforts, and best practices: <https://www.facebook.com/GREEN-Greater-Riverside-Environmental-Engagement-Network-140007009710154/>.

Steps for Success with Milkweed and Monarchs for the Inland Southern California Valleys

The Western Monarch population is believed to have declined more than 99% since monitoring began in the 1980's.

Why are Monarchs in Decline?

1. Plants of the *Asclepias* genus (milkweeds) are the **only** food source for the Monarch caterpillar. Areas with native milkweed populations have declined due to land use changes to agriculture and urbanization.
2. Broad use of pesticides.
3. Monarch health is impacted by "OE", *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*, a microscopic parasite that is spread among milkweed and nectar-source plants by infected butterflies.

Other factors include: loss and degradation of over-wintering sites, loss of plants that provide nectar, and climate change.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STAN FRY AND DAVE STRUTHERS



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Narrow Leaf Milkweed, *Asclepias fascicularis*



PHOTO: LUCRANIE, PIXABAY

Monarch butterfly on a Narrow Leaf Milkweed.

Narrow leaf milkweed is the Monarch's native *host* plant in inland southern California. Its flowers also provide nectar for adult butterflies. It is a perennial (long-lived) plant that grows 3-4 ft. high and forms colonies. It grows best in full to part sun and is a low to moderate water user. It's dormant during winter resprouts in spring.

Milkweed is also an excellent resource for many pollinators and other beneficial insects, including native bees and syrphid flies.

TOXIC: Wear gloves while handling milkweed. After handling, immediately wash hands. Do not rub your eyes. If milkweed sap does get into your eye, seek immediate treatment. Milkweed can be toxic when ingested by people, pets and other animals. After feeding on milkweed, the Monarch itself becomes toxic to animals, which helps protect it.



Ways to Help Monarchs

1. The simplest approach is to grow a lot of native milkweed: the *host* plant for Monarch eggs and caterpillars. Our native Narrow leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) goes dormant during winter here, so **don't weed it out if it appears dead**. It should re-emerge around Valentine's Day.

Keep newly-planted milkweed watered until it goes dormant.

2. If you are growing non-native milkweed, it's important that it be cut back around Halloween to mimic the dormancy pattern of native milkweed. If you happen to have eggs/caterpillars at that time, wait to cut off leaves until butterflies emerge and leave. Cut back non-native, tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) every month throughout the winter. Cut tropical milkweed to no larger than 6 inches. Remove leaves and regrowth until February.

You can tell if you need to cut back non-native milkweed by the color of the flower. Remember this:

Yellow or red, disease is spread – pink or white, Monarchs are all right.



© 2016 Jee & Rani Nature Photography

Tropical Milkweed

Keep non-native milkweed cut back from November through February.



© Dave Struthers

Native Milkweed will go dormant during fall and return around Valentine's day.

Don't weed me out!

3. Grow a variety of plants (particularly natives) that provide nectar year-round, especially in early Spring and Fall. For butterflies, include those plants with flower clusters (like yarrow and *Eriogonum*) and flowers with composite heads that butterflies can rest on (like sunflower, daisy and aster). Larger pollinators like hummingbirds get nectar from tubular-shaped flowers. Nectar sources do not have to be from native plants only.

Find a list of nectar plants for Monarchs at: <https://xerces.org/monarchs/monarch-nectar-plant-guides> . It's also important to select "waterwise" plants for conserving water in southern California.

Visit the LandUse Learning Center (4500 Glenwood Dr., Riverside) to see a demonstration garden of pollinator plants and native milkweed. Pick up a design and plant checklist for planning your yard and to take to your nursery.





4. Eliminate pesticide use. Pesticides also kill the beneficial insects that help control pests. Use the least-toxic alternative including diluted soaps, oils, and ant traps.

For milkweed, start by removing pests by hand or spraying with a jet of water. Be careful when watering and spraying pests to not accidentally blow off eggs and caterpillars. Before spraying, check for caterpillars, eggs, and beneficial insects. If present, place your hand behind the part of the plant that you are spraying. That way the eggs and caterpillars will hit your hand and drop down near the plant, rather than blow too far away. Caterpillars may climb back up, or you can very gently place them back on the milkweed. Spray may break off the sap-sucking pests and leave their mouthparts.

If there are a lot of pests, spray three days in a row. It's fine if some remain as food for the beneficial insects. The beneficials, like ladybugs and green lacewings, usually need a week or two to lay eggs and build up their numbers. They will then provide a more thorough control of an infestation.

Milkweed Pests

Common milkweed pests include aphids, white flies, milkweed bugs, scale insects, spider mites, thrips, and leaf miners.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREG HUME

Milkweed Bug (*Berberis nevinii*)



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUIS PARRA RUBIO

Oleander Aphids (*Aphis nerii*)



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEATRIZ MOISSET

Damage from Leaf Miners



PHOTO: F. LOKI, SHUTTERSTOCK

Spider Mites (*Tetranychidae*)

For more information about Monarchs and other pollinators:

Pollinator Partnership - <https://www.pollinator.org/pollinators>

Xerces Society - <https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation>

Monarch Joint Venture - <https://monarchjointventure.org/>

Monarch Watch - <https://monarchwatch.org>

Bee City USA - <https://www.beecityusa.org/>

Calflora - <https://www.calflora.org/>

Lifecycle of a Monarch Butterfly

There are four stages in the metamorphosis of butterflies: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. The Western Monarch lives a very short time, with a generation lasting between one-two months.



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A female adult Monarch lays an egg on milkweed. The egg hatches after 3-5 days and becomes a caterpillar.



PHOTO: SKEEZE, PIVABAY

The caterpillar (larva) eats milkweed and grows for 9-14 days. It molts (sheds its skin) five times, finally “pupating” into a green chrysalis.



PHOTO: DIANA RUIZ

A new chrysalis (pupa) is bright green and opaque. It will gradually become transparent.



© D.D. TOMORE

The caterpillar spends 8-13 days inside the chrysalis transforming into a butterfly.



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This butterfly has just emerged from its chrysalis. The adult will live 20-32 days eating nectar.



PHOTO: YELFMAN, SHUTTERSTOCK

A cluster of overwintering Monarchs on a Eucalyptus tree near the California coast.

Several generations occur between late February and October. Then migration begins back to the coast.

The returning generation overwinters along the mild climate of the Pacific coast from California to Baja CA, Mexico. For this reason, it's critical that overwintering sites be protected. Monarchs need tall trees (at least 60 feet high) like Eucalyptus, Monterey pine, and Monterey cypress. The forest must be dense enough to provide wind protection, yet the tree canopy needs to be open enough so that the roosting Monarchs get filtered sunlight that helps keep their bodies warm.

Inland Empire Naturalists

Congratulations to the fourteen students who recently completed 40 hours of classes, three field trips, and a capstone project to become certified California Naturalists. RCRCD's course was focused on the diverse Santa Ana River Watershed and was taught by Erika Presley and Erin Snyder.



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Pictured left to right: Denis Charbonneau, Daryl Williams, Carol Kinzel, Kirsten Sandoval, Johan Faulstich, Ed Harrison, Bonnie Werner, Margie Sivert, Ashleigh Roberts, Mr. VonStetten, Krista VonStetten, Biologist Bob Packard, Kathryn Syme, Kirstyn Kay, Judy Gill

Many thanks to our local experts who generously served as trainers:
Forest, Woodland and Range: Bonnie Corcoran, US Forest Service
Wildlife: Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker, RCRCD
Soil: Peter Fahnstock, Natural Resource Conservation Service
Water and Watersheds: Erick Burres, Water Quality Control Board
Bioregions: Dr. Tonya Huff, Riverside City College

A special thanks also to the wonderful people of the facilities who shared treasures of the watershed:

Mt. Baldy Visitor's Center	Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
Mill Creek Wetlands/Prado Basin	Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary
Environmental Nature Center	Bolsa Chica Interpretive Center

Watch for announcements about the 2021 Cal Nat class at <http://calnat.ucanr.edu>. Learn more about our local Cal Nat on the Inland Empire Naturalist Facebook page. Contact Snyder@RCRCD.org for more information about our local training. Cal Nat is coordinated through the University of California's Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) and Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Divisions.



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From left to right: Kirsten Sandoval, Bonnie Werner and Kirstyn Kay presented their project: *Phenology* Walk* for RCRCD's two educational sites. Visitors will be able to learn about 15 local native species and participate in a citizen science project called Nature's Notebook. Visitors can record seasonal changes, and the records become data in the National Phenology Database that is used for research and land-management.

*Phenology is the study of the recurring life cycle events of plants and animals, their timing, and relationship to the environment. For more info visit the National Phenology Network: <https://www.usanpn.org/home>

Community Science at Home

April is Citizen Science Month and there are many ways to participate from home.

Start by checking out the **Citizen Science Association:** <https://www.citizenscience.org/events/citizen-science-month/> and **SciStarter:** <https://scistarter.org/citizensciencemonth> .

The **National Science Foundation (NSF)** and **Discover Magazine** published articles that feature citizen science and related resources to aid people who are looking for ways to "science from home". Check out NSF supported **STEM resources:** <https://beta.nsf.gov/science-matters/seven-nsf-supported-stem-resources-are-perfect-home-learning> and **Discover Magazine:** <https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/cooped-up-at-home-here-are-7-ways-to-take-part-in-online-science-projects> .

To make nature observations in your own yard, join **iNaturalist** and contribute to ongoing science research at <https://www.inaturalist.org/> .

Superstar Volunteers -- Thank you for going owl out!

Ed Harrison

by Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) would like to give thanks and recognition to docent Ed Harrison. Ed's background made him the perfect fit for helping the RCRCD continue its mission of educating the public about natural resources and stewardship. His work in conservation began over 40 years ago when he joined the Conservation Corps. From there he went on to serve as a supervisor for the forestry crews in the Cleveland National Forest, was a Park Ranger and ran the Interpretive Services Unit for Orange County. Before retiring, Ed managed maintenance and volunteers of a fire lookout tower.



Even in retirement, Ed continues his environmental stewardship by advocating for gardening with native plants and volunteering for various organizations, including the California Native Plant Society and RCRCD's Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center (SCIC). Over the past year Ed has devoted many hours to constructing a microscope table and refurbishing old signs. Ed's efforts have added to the SCIC's educational capabilities, and inspired curious minds.

Karen Fleisher

by Erin Snyder

We at RCRCD are so appreciative of volunteer Karen Fleisher, who serves as a coordinating docent at our LandUse Learning Center (LLC). Karen's enthusiasm for our LLC demonstration garden, and her expertise and experience make her a very valuable resource that we've come to depend on. For example, Karen established our monthly "Ask a Master Gardener" program on the first Saturday of each month.

Karen and her volunteer efforts are not new to Riverside. She has been involved in a variety of community projects for many years. In 2010 she was trained and certified in the Riverside County Master Gardener (MG) program of the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE). "After completing the MG program, I found that there were so many interesting opportunities out there that I decided to retire a year early. And, that began my journey into meeting and volunteering with like-minded people - those who love sharing information about sustainable gardening with others".



In the MG program Karen found a passion for sustainable landscaping and volunteered for demonstration gardens at Jurupa Mountains Discovery Center, Western Municipal Water District, and Eastern Municipal Water District. Karen has been volunteering at the UCR Botanic Gardens for almost 15 years as a docent.

"I tell people that if there is a garden nearby, that is where you will find me most of the time. But, if I am not there, I may be at Evergreen Memorial Historic Cemetery, helping with tours and events, or maybe at an event for the Old Riverside Foundation, an historic preservation group. I truly enjoy meeting people and sharing information about gardens, historic buildings, and Riverside's history."

Thank you, Ed and Karen for supporting conservation education!

Tom Spellman, Southwestern Sales Manager of Dave Wilson Nursery, is assisting with a new garden design and homeowner-style orchard in the Urban Area of the LandUse Learning Center. We thank him for sharing his expertise and for the donation of climatically appropriate fruit trees and blueberry shrubs. We can't wait to host tours and talks again soon!

Belted Kingfisher

by Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker

The belted kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) is an impressive looking bird for its size. It touts a large crested head, thick spear-like bill, and a metallic rattling call. It is only about the size of a standard 12-inch ruler, but it is not afraid to confront whatever is causing the slightest disturbance in its environment. If you are looking to encounter this fierce sentinel, seek out its favorite hangout spot: waterways.

Habitat and Feeding

No matter the season, the belted kingfisher will make its home near the water. It prefers clear and calm water, with no overgrowth of vegetation that could block the view of potential prey. The kingfisher will choose a perch near the bank and watch the surface for small fish, crustaceans, amphibians or insects. Once prey is spotted, the bird will take to the sky then dive head first into the water. In a quick, pincher-like motion, the kingfisher snaps its bill around the “special of the day”. While the diet of these birds is primarily composed of aquatic species, they have been found to also eat small mammals, lizards and berries.



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Breeding

Belted kingfisher breeding is associated with water. While solitary most of the year, monogamous pairs will form with each new breeding season. The male will court the female by feeding her fish. Once bonded, the pair will nest in a vertical, vegetated bank. They probe and dig a tunnel up to 6ft. long, ending with a chamber. The female will lay 5-8 white, glossy eggs in the unlined chamber. Both sexes will incubate the eggs and feed the young. Interestingly, chicks have the ability to digest things like bones and scales, but they lose this capability by the time they leave the nest. As adults, indigestible prey items are regurgitated as pellets. These pellets can serve as valuable tools for researchers.

Identification

Sometimes these birds are heard before they are seen. Both males and females will fiercely defend their territories from the slightest disturbance. When threatened they will do some combination of raising their crest, call, scream, fly back and forth over water, raise eye patch feathers, or spread wings. If you find yourself along a waterway and cause a bird to flush and begin these behaviors, you probably just disturbed

a belted kingfisher. In addition to identifying behaviors, these birds can be recognized by their large heads, crest, pointed bill, blue gray and white feathers and a breast band. Females have an additional rust colored band on the belly. Juveniles will also have the rust coloring in the breast band.

Threats

Belted kingfishers are still considered common, but are in decline. From 1966 to 2014 there was a cumulative population decline of 53%, according to a North American Breeding Bird Survey. This is probably due to a combination of habitat loss and previous hunting of the species. Belted kingfishers were once considered pests at fish hatcheries and trout streams. However, thanks to migratory bird laws, the species is now protected. As the loss of earthen banks for nesting increases, belted kingfishers may move into human made sand and gravel pits. This is not a stable solution for the species. If areas are continually disturbed, the birds are known to abandon nesting efforts. Non-human predators include birds of prey, snakes and some mammals.



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nesting increases, belted kingfishers may move into human made sand and gravel pits. This is not a stable solution for the species. If areas are continually disturbed, the birds are known to abandon nesting efforts. Non-human predators include birds of prey, snakes and some mammals.



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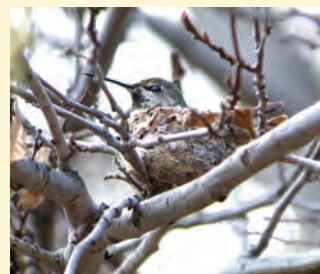
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District Conservationist

All RCRCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, national origin, religion, age, gender, or orientation.

What's GROWING ON?

To find out what some Riverside neighbors are doing to share and produce food, watch the short vlog (video blog) "What's Growing on in Your Neighborhood?". Also learn about a variety of resources that can help you learn to "grow your own" and become more food secure.

A huge thanks goes out to the vlog creator Sarah Ayala, a volunteer neighborhood leader and vice chair of the Riverside Neighborhood Partnership (www.rnpinfo.com/). Find the video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuxXQAcgwk&feature=youtu.be> .



Welcome Spring! The birds are nesting, so now is NOT the time to prune trees. If you must, hire a certified arborist that has "Wildlife Aware" training. Find a licensed arborist in your region: <https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist> . Be especially watchful for nests between February and August, and keep away from them. To learn more, see: <http://treecareforbirds.com> and www.cavityconservation.com .

A Classy Way to Support our Work

RCRCD is addressing important issues that affect everyone, and our educational programs strive to empower all ages to be stewards (caretakers) of our natural resources: soil, water, air, native plants and wildlife. We are excited to announce a new opportunity to get involved and contribute to our educational programs through an online fundraising platform called "Classy". Your involvement is critical to the success of our environmental programs and in creating a more sustainable future. Please visit this link to make a much appreciated, tax-deductible donation*. <https://give.classy.org/RCRCDEdProgramSupport>. To first learn more about our various educational programs and see how your contribution will be making a positive impact, please see <https://www.rcrcd.org/educational-programs> .

*With the current uncertain circumstances, the new stimulus package contains a provision allowing for a \$300 deduction for charitable contributions. Check with your tax professionals.

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