

NEWSLETTER

OCH News

Fourth Quarter 2022
(October - December)

Quarterly News

Orange County's Environmentalists Today

By Eric Peña

This article will spotlight the work of just a few of today's environmentalists in Orange County, and by no means encompasses all the amazing work being performed by local environmentalists. To all of those that actively push towards the preservation of local habitats, we thank you.

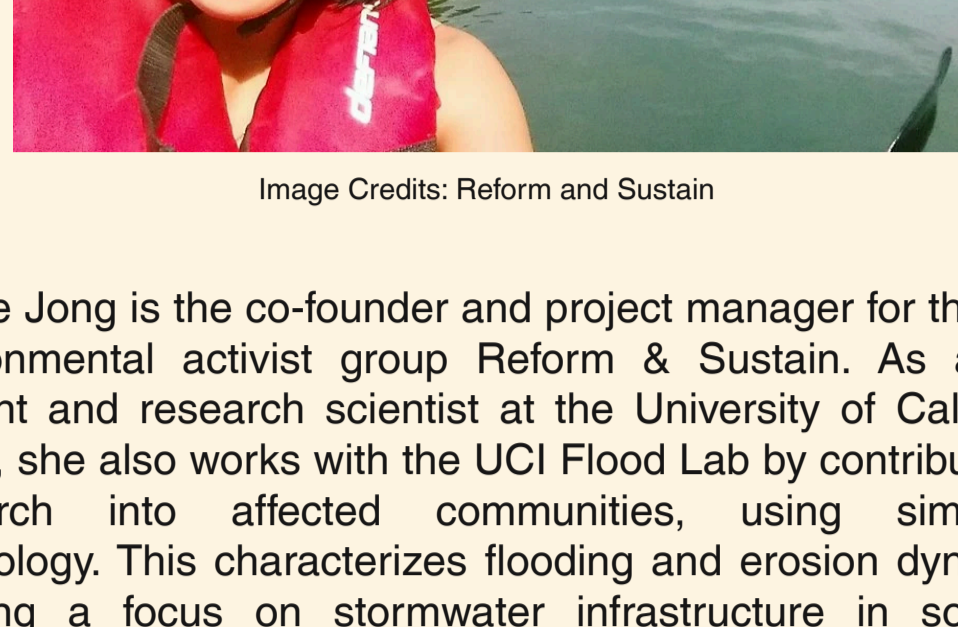


Image Credits: Reform and Sustain

Ariane Jong is the co-founder and project manager for the local environmental activist group Reform & Sustain. As a PhD student and research scientist at the University of California, Irvine, she also works with the UCI Flood Lab by contributing research into affected communities, using simulation technology. This characterizes flooding and erosion dynamics, keeping a focus on stormwater infrastructure in southern California and factors like fire cycles, precipitation, and sediment and debris that clog that infrastructure. Jong worked with regional agencies like the Riverside County Flood Control District to improve emergency planning, as well as to manage and implement water quality and volume monitoring plants. Her aim is to raise public awareness on the relationship people have with the natural environment, and she hopes to contribute to efforts in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change for the good of our community, ecosystems, and future generations. To find out more about Reform & Sustain, go to their [website](#). Read more about other local environmentalists in Orange County [here](#).

Phytoplankton and Their Role in Oceanic Ecosystems

By Cameron White

Living by the Southern California coast, you may have heard about plankton, the tiny, microscopic creatures that drift about at sea. Different species of plankton can be divided into two general groups: plant-like and animal-like plankton. Today, we will be discussing the plant-like category of plankton called phytoplankton. They get their name, "phyto" meaning "plant," due to their plant-like characteristics. We'll dive deep into their significance to oceanic ecosystems and how we can protect these microscopic organisms.



Diatoms under a microscope. Photo courtesy of Gordon T. Taylor, Stony Brook University.

Similarly to plants, phytoplankton are primary producers, meaning they create their own food through photosynthesis. However, they differ from plants in that they are afloat. They typically float along the surface of the water, soaking in as much sun as they can. They play a key role in ecosystems and are an essential food source for a variety of marine species such as zooplankton, crustaceans, and small fish. Read more about phytoplankton [here](#).

Species Spotlight

Northern Elephant Seal Migration

By Evie Andrade

With winter coming around the corner, behemoths over ten feet long gather offshore in Central to Southern California. These marine titans are known as the northern elephant seals, *Mirovanga angustirostris*. Their winter gathering in Southern California is actually part of a biannual migration, which is identified as one of the longest routes among mammal migrations globally ([NOAA](#)).

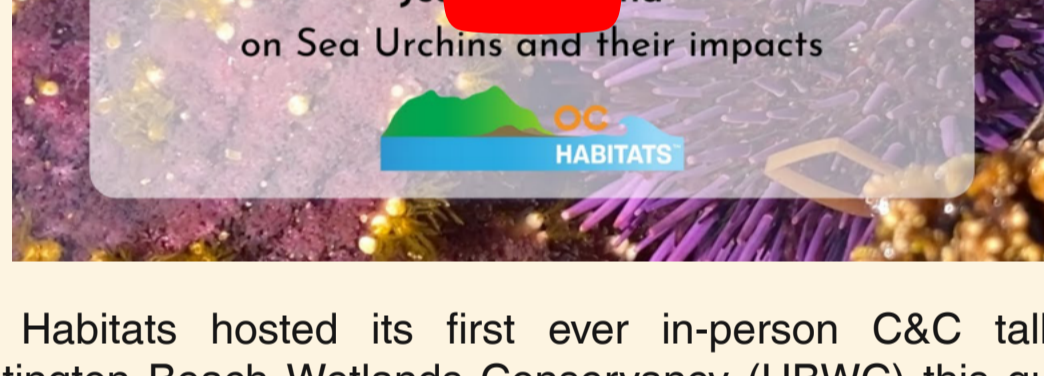


Photo courtesy of Marine Mammal Center

Northern elephant seals are pinnipeds and members of the "true seal" family. Being a true seal means they have ear flaps, have more blubber, use their rear flippers to swim, and cannot walk. They are the family's largest members in the Northern Hemisphere. Females range from 600-900 kg (1,323 lbs to 1,984 lbs) while males can weigh up to 2300 kg. Along with the size difference, males will have prominent trunk-like noses, which contrasts with the females' smaller noses ([Animal Diversity Web](#)). Read more about northern elephant seals' migration [here](#).

Education & Outreach

COFFEE & CONSERVATION (C&C)



OCH Habitats hosted its first ever in-person C&C talks at Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy (HBWC) this quarter. It was also the first time we invited guest speakers to present their talk. We invited Nancy Caruso (Get Inspired) and Sabrina Mashburn (SoCal Sea Turtles, Inc.), who talked about our local kelp forest ecosystems and sea turtles in Orange County, respectively. We are looking forward to more in-person talks in 2023 so make sure to join our email list and tune in for our next C&C events! Head on to our [Learn](#) page or [OCH YouTube channel](#) to learn more about our native habitats and species!

HIKING PROGRAM



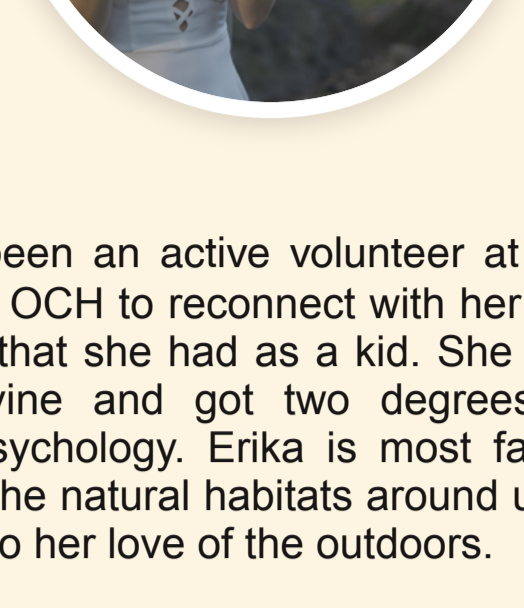
OCH has been leading at least one guided hike per month, providing safe weather conditions. One of our hikes include a 2.5-mile Marine Protected Area (MPA) hike along the tide pools at Little Corona Beach to learn about the tide pools and the species living therein. We are always developing and expanding our hiking program to include new hikes at Laguna Canyon, Santiago Oaks Regional Park, Whipple Cave Trail, San Joaquin Marsh Hike, and more. There the public can learn about the various species living in the area and how to leave no trace. If you're interested in joining us on our hikes, space is limited, so register through [EventBrite!](#)

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT VIDEO SERIES



In Fall 2022, OCH started the Species Spotlight Video Series that highlight the native animals found here in Orange County. Former intern Tiffany Chao's video featuring the elegant tern (*Thalasseus elegans*) is the first video in this series. Our goal for this series is to spotlight the amazing native animals found in OC, their importance in their ecosystems, and factors (e.g., natural and anthropogenic) that threaten these native species. Stay tuned for more videos coming soon!

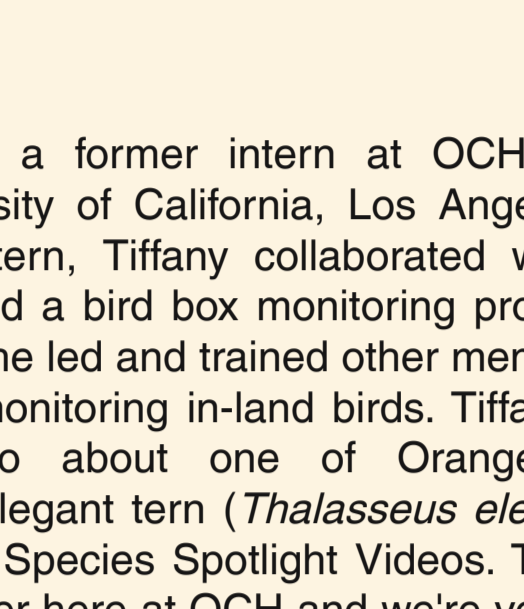
Volunteers of the Quarter



Erika Moe has been an active volunteer at OCH Habitats since 2022. She joined OCH to reconnect with her love for nature and the environment that she had as a kid. She attended University of California, Irvine and got two degrees in Public Health Sciences and Psychology. Erika is most fascinated about the animals living in the natural habitats around us, which she thinks contributed a lot to her love of the outdoors.

As an OCH volunteer, Erika loves getting dirty while ripping plants out, and doing habitat and animal monitoring. Both activities remind her that it is still okay to play in the dirt even as an adult.

Erika is in the process of building my own freelancing and business partnership with one of her best friends from college, as well as working as a social media manager for two small business companies. She hopes that her future career eventually incorporates her loves of branding, business strategy, art, creativity, and most of all helping others in some way.

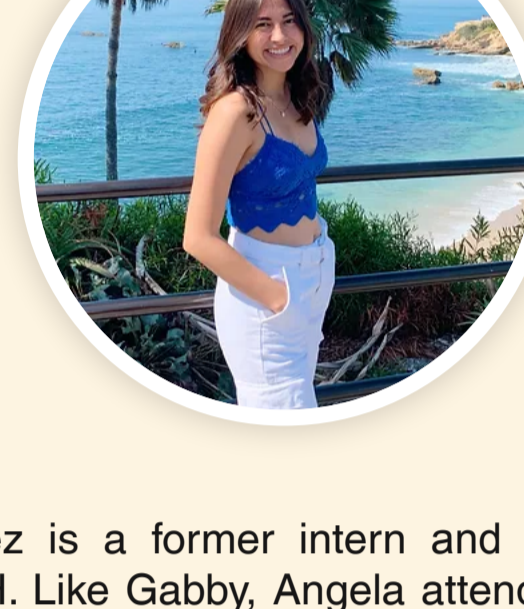


Tiffany Chao is a former intern at OCH. She is currently attending University of California, Los Angeles as an ecology major. As an intern, Tiffany collaborated with Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary to build a bird box monitoring program in the nature reserve, where she led and trained other members of our crew in identifying and monitoring in-land birds. Tiffany also created an informative video about one of Orange County's native shorebirds, the elegant tern (*Thalasseus elegans*), which is the first video in our Species Spotlight Videos. Tiffany continues as an active volunteer here at OCH and we're very happy about her continued work with us!



Gabriela Lopez is a former intern and currently an active volunteer at OCH. She attended California State University, Long Beach and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Science and Policy, with a minor in GIS. Gabby first found out about OCH through an internship fair hosted by CSULB.

When it comes to the environment, Gabby is most passionate about the fascinating species throughout California and even just in Orange County. As a member of OCH, she is very grateful for being able to attend hikes, restoration projects, and educational events with OCH that has allowed her to expand her knowledge on the habitats within Orange County and the many amazing plants and animals that occupy the land. From her time in OCH, she has grown to enjoy our guided hikes the most because of the energy she gains from being outdoors but also the opportunity to learn and teach about OC native species. Her future goals include expanding her environmental skills by gaining more certificates in botany and GIS. She also hopes to include more hikes in her free time this year and to generally spend more time outdoors. She is grateful that her time with OCH has taught her the importance of simply being outdoors and enjoying nature.



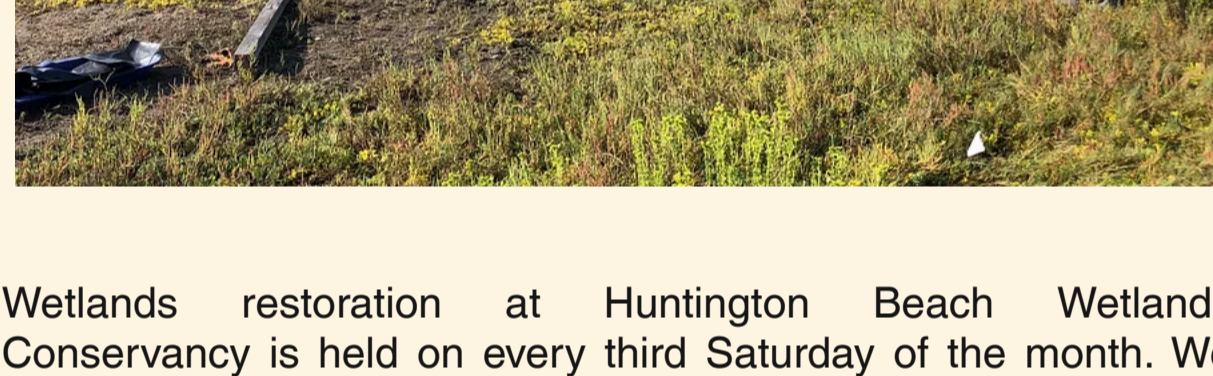
Angela Velazquez is a former intern and currently an active volunteer at OCH. Like Gabby, Angela attended California State University, Long Beach. As an OCH intern, Angela's main project was the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch program that helped train OCH Crew member in observing and collecting data on human activities along our coast and how these might affect our coastal and marine resources. Angela completed her internship in December 2022, but she will continue as an active volunteer and a great resource for OCH.



Jessica Brogna is a former intern here at OCH. She attended CSUL and got her degree in Environmental Science and Policy. She interned with OCH during her last semester of college. As an intern, Jess collaborated with Get Inspired to build our Sea Urchin Monitoring program. Habitat restoration is her favorite part of OCH's work because for Jess, restoring habitats is such a gratifying experience to know that she is making a difference in the area. Her environmental passions center around the ocean, but she's also recently been interested in sustainable agriculture and urban agriculture since doing a research project on those topics for a class. Finally, Jess is the newest staff member here at OCH! As a staff member, she will provide mentorship and leadership to our interns and volunteers. We're very excited to work with her!

Habitat Restoration

ONGOING RESTORATION PROJECTS



Wetlands restoration at Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy is held on every third Saturday of the month. We continue to do great work at restoration and mitigation projects in the salt marsh habitat. OCH also partners with Turtle Rock Nature Center and the City of Santa Ana for restoration work. We continue to look for volunteers who are committed to restoring and maintaining our native habitats and species here in Orange County. If you are interested in collaborating with us, please contact volunteer@ochhabitats.org! We love collaborating with other organizations to recruit volunteers.

Join Our Crew!



OCH is looking for people who want to share their talents and time to improve their local environment and habitats. We have many opportunities to get involved and some are listed below.

- Volunteer**
 - Become a Habitat Monitor
 - Join our Habitat Education Team
 - Help with Administrative Tasks
 - Help with Outreach and Marketing
 - Become a Nature Hike Guide
 - 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.
- Internships**
 - Cadette students earn credit through CSUF, CSULB, Saddleback, UCI, and more
 - 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 are always looking for people to help us reach our goals and mission. Submit your resume, references and cover letter to och@ochhabitats.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

[Join Our Crew](#)

Quarterly News & Annual Reports

Current & Archived

[OCH NEWS 4TH QUARTER 2022](#)

[OCH NEWS 3RD QUARTER 2022](#)

[OCH NEWS 2ND QUARTER 2022](#)

[OCH NEWS 1ST QUARTER 2022](#)

[OCH NEWS 4TH QUARTER 2021](#)

[OCH NEWS 3RD QUARTER 2021](#)

[OCH NEWS 2ND QUARTER 2021](#)

[OCH NEWS 1ST QUARTER 2021](#)

[OCH NEWS 4TH QUARTER 2020](#)

[OCH NEWS 3RD QUARTER 2020](#)

[OCH NEWS 2ND QUARTER 2020](#)

[OCH NEWS 1ST QUARTER 2020](#)

[OCH NEWS 4TH QUARTER 2019](#)

2022 Annual Report

[2021 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

[2020 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

[2019 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

[2018 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

Volunteers of the Year

2022



Ginny Gregurek



Drew Kosicki

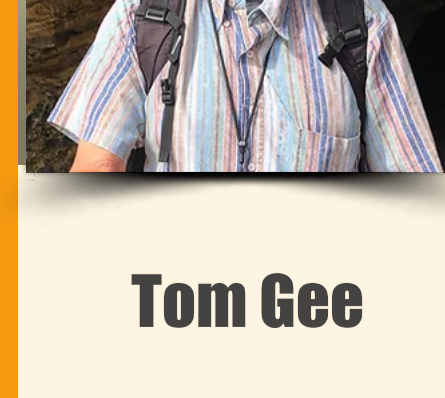
2017

2018

2019

2020

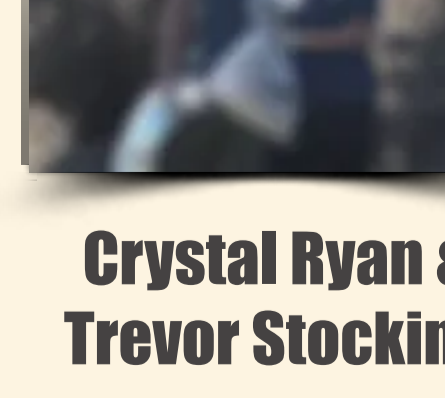
2021



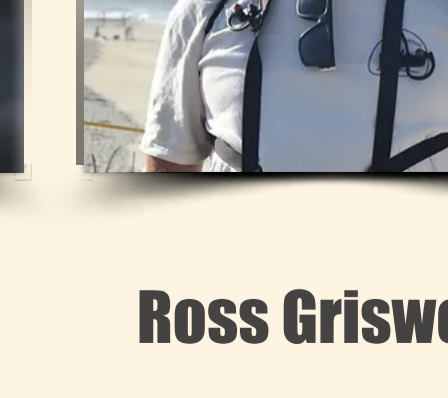
Tom Gee



Bianca Borja



Crystal Ryan & Trevor Stocking



Ross Griswold



Cheryl Dyas & Michelle Lee

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Platinum Transparency 2023
Candid.

2023 PWI PARTNER OF EXCELLENCE

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