

# NEWSLETTER

## OCH News

First Quarter 2023  
(January - March)

### Quarterly News

#### MORE Environmentalists To Know!

By Katarina Sielen

Amazing environmental work is being done in Orange County. At the forefront of this are individuals who are dedicated to seeing our earth prosper. In honor of Women's History Month, this article will highlight the incredible contributions of three modern day women committed to restoring and protecting Orange County's local habitats. This is a continuation of our blog, "[Orange County's Environmentalists Today](#)," by Eric Pena and "[Women in the Environmental Movement](#)" by Gina Thompson. Be sure and check out these posts before or after reading this article!



Photo Credit: Climate Action Campaign

This is Ayn Craciun, a Policy Manager based in Orange County. Craciun first worked in corporate communications, but through volunteer work she began to transition into environmental public policy issues. Ayn began publicly supporting the historic organic landscaping policy for Irvine, CA, in 2016. This policy works to keep wildlife, pets, people, and open space reserves all safe from toxic pesticides. Her work spurred her into new opportunities, and in 2018 she was an essential member in creating support for the Orange County Power Authority. Continue reading [here](#).

#### A Guide Through the Tide Pools

By Angela Velazquez

Grab your warmest layers, waterproof boots, and apply some reef-friendly sunscreen. We are going tide pooling! The intertidal zone is the area where the ocean meets the land between high and low tides. As you look down on the rocky intertidal, it looks like an impossible habitat for life to survive in. But upon further exploration, you will find many creatures living in the pools, between the crevices, hiding under rocks, and clinging onto the rocky substrate for dear life. Here in Southern California, we have the most biodiverse intertidal zone in the country!



Photo Credit: Angela Velazquez

1. Spanish Shawl (*Flabellinopsis iodinea*)

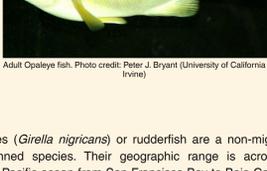
The Spanish shawl is a strikingly beautiful nudibranch, a very colorful sea slug that is almost impossible to miss. The most notable characteristic of this nudibranch is their neon-colored bodies: the body is purple, the cerata are orange, and the two rhinophores on top of their heads are scarlet. The pair of rhinophores are sensory tentacles that detect smell and taste. Whereas the fringe on their backs are a set of organs called cerata, which function as gills, are extensions of the digestive system, and harbor stinging cells. Continue reading [here](#).

### Species Spotlight

#### Opaleye (*Girella nigricans*)

By Evie Andrade

When visitors stroll down by the tidepools, they will often see a tiny brown fish (with one or two white dots on its back) snacking on algae growing around the tidepools. If visitors crouch close for a better look, these tiny fish will quickly dart into the closest crevice or rock to hide. These tiny fish are baby opaleyes, and the tidepool habitat serves as their temporary nursery. The opaleye lifecycle highlights the importance of a healthy tidepool and its contribution to different parts of the ocean, such as the kelp forest.



Adult Opaleye fish. Photo credit: Peter J. Bryant (University of California Irvine)

Opaleyes (*Girella nigricans*) or rudderfish are a non-migratory, rayed-finned species. Their geographic range is across the eastern Pacific ocean from San Francisco Bay to Baja California ([fishbase](#)). When opaleyes reach maturity in 2 to 3 years, they have the following key characteristics: colors ranging from gray-green to brown, laterally compressed oval-shaped bodies, and a body length up to 26 inches ([georgiaaquarium.com](#); [wikipedia](#)). Though the white dots are a distinct trait, they can fade when the fish reaches adulthood ([SIMON](#)). As for their habitat, they inhabit shallow waters and intertidal zones across the eastern Pacific. By extension, key areas include rocky areas, tide pools, and kelp beds ([georgiaaquarium.com](#)). However, where they are found may depend on what stage of their life cycle they are in. Continue reading [here](#).

### Education & Outreach

#### COFFEE & CONSERVATION (C&C)

OC Habitats virtually hosted its first C&C talks on March 11th for this quarter. OCH interns Eric Pena and Evie Andrade talked about coastal dune plants and beach wrack ecology, respectively. Our guest speaker Chloe Van Grootheest talked about the importance of our local wetlands, particularly those managed by Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy (HBWC). We also had an in-person C&C to celebrate Earth Day in partnership with Laguna Greenbelt, Inc. Recorded videos will be published soon! Head on to our [Learn](#) page or [OCH YouTube channel](#) to learn more about our native habitats and species!

#### HIKING PROGRAM

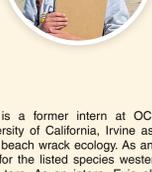


OCH has been leading at least one guided hike per month, providing safe weather conditions. One of our hikes include a 2.5-mile Marine Protected Area (MPA) hike along the tide pools at Little Corona Beach to learn about the tide pools and the species living therein. We are always developing and expanding our hiking program to include new hikes: at Laguna Canyon, Santiago Oaks Regional Park Trail, Dripping Cave Trail, San Joaquin Marsh Hike, and more, where 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!](#)

### Volunteers of the Quarter



Eric Pena is a former intern at OC Habitats. He is an undergraduate student at University of California, Irvine. Prior to his internship, Eric was a regular volunteer at our habitat restoration events. As an intern, Eric played leadership role in our habitat restoration and monitoring work. He helped train current and new OCH members in coastal dune monitoring, as well as bird monitoring at Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary. Eric also created valuable resources, such as a habitat species guide, for future OCH interns and volunteers to use in the field. Other than helping in restoration an monitoring, Eric also helped develop OCH environmental education programs, such as our Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Compost program. We are happy that Eric is continuing as an active volunteer and leader here at OCH!



Evie Andrade is a former intern at OCH. She is currently attending University of California, Irvine as a graduate student researching on beach wrack ecology. As an intern, Evie created a PSA project for the listed species western snowy plover and California least tern. As an intern, Evie also helped in habitat restoration, monitoring, and education. She led guided hikes at Laguna Canyon and the marine protected area from Little Corona to Crystal Cove, where she talked about native people and other organisms, as well as issues in the areas. 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 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. Gabby is our newest staff member here at OCH! We're very excited to see her in her new role!

### Habitat Restoration

#### ONGOING RESTORATION PROJECTS



OC Habitats has partnerships with several organizations in Orange County to restore and protect our local habitats and species. 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](mailto:volunteer@ochhabitats.org)! We love collaborating with other organizations to recruit volunteers.

**Marshland Conservation with Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy.** Help with habitat restoration of the Magnolia, Brookhurst, Talbert, and Newland Marshes along PCH in Huntington Beach. Occurs every 3rd Saturday of the month.

**Wetland Conservation with Project Grow in Newport Back Bay.** Help to restore habitat within the Upper Newport Back Bay by removing plants and invasive species and replacing them with native and desired species that will build a greater diversity for native species in this system.

**Coastal Sage Scrub Restoration with Turtle Rock Nature Center.** Help to restore habitat at Turtle Rock Nature Center in Irvine by removing plants and invasive species.

**Santiago Park Cleanup with the City of Santa Ana.** Help with the beautification of Santiago Park in Santa Ana to encourage people to spend more time outdoors and make a difference in the community!

### 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**
  - College 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](mailto: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

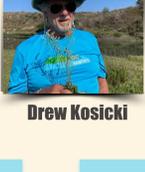
- [2021 ANNUAL REPORT](#)
- [2020 ANNUAL REPORT](#)
- [2019 ANNUAL REPORT](#)
- [2018 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

### Volunteers of the Year

2022



Ginny Gregurek



Drew Kosicki

2017



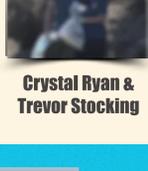
Tom Gee

2018



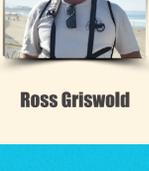
Bianca Borja

2019



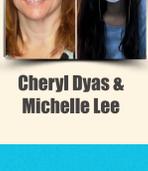
Crystal Ryan & Trevor Stocking

2020



Ross Griswold

2021



Cheryl Dyas & Michelle Lee

1505 17th Street, Suite 116  
Santa Ana, CA 92705

**Office Hours**  
Tuesday - Friday: 8am-4pm  
Saturday: 8am-1pm  
Sunday - Monday: CLOSED

Platinum Transparency 2023  
Candid.



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