

UC Santa Barbara

Newsletters

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NCOS News - December 2019

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UC SANTA BARBARA

North Campus Open Space Restoration Project

NCOS NEWS

December 2019



Recent rains have filled up the Slough at NCOS. Photo taken on December 2nd.

UPDATES & EVENTS

NCOS Tour - Sunday December 15

Curious to learn about the details of the NCOS restoration project and how you can participate? Join CCBER's Director of Ecosystem Management, Lisa Stratton for a guided tour on Sunday, December 15th, beginning at 9:00am. Meet at the parking lot off of Whittier Drive (6969 Whittier Drive).

Volunteer Planting Day - Saturday December 14

Can't make the tour but still want to learn about and be apart of the restoration story? Come join us for this month's volunteer planting Saturday on December 14th, 9:30 to 12:30. Meet at the parking lot at 6969 Whittier Drive, and please RSVP to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.

Tracking Workshop finds a lot of Wildlife Activity at NCOS

On November 17, biologist Jonah Evans conducted a tracking workshop at NCOS for staff of the Wilderness Youth Project. Among the tracks they discovered were burrowing owl, barn owl, red fox, bobcat, striped skunk, and many more. Information on the tracking workshop and photos of tracks seen at NCOS are available on [Jonah's website](#).



Wilderness Youth Project staff deciphering animal tracks.



Bobcat tracks.



Red Fox tracks.



Striped Skunk tracks.



Barn Owl tracks.

FEATURE STORY

Predators and Prey at NCOS



American Kestrel - Photo by Mark Bright

Interactions between predators and prey at NCOS are being studied and are in turn informing management decisions. [Read on \(feature story continued on page 9\)](#) to learn about how you can help keep predator-prey interactions healthy.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



"Second Saturdays" at NCOS

This month: December 14, 9:30-12:30

Please RSVP to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu

Help us restore and create NCOS with plants and more!
Meet at 6969 Whittier Drive at 9:30 am. Bring water, sunscreen, and wear a hat, clothes, and shoes suitable for garden work.



Saturday Tree Plantings

You can help Your Children's Trees plant and care for oaks and other saplings at NCOS! Please contact [Your Children's Trees](#) for more information and to RSVP.



Thursdays - CCBER Greenhouse Associates

Come help transplant seedlings of native plants with the CCBER team from 9:00 - 12:00. To join, please send an email to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.



Group Volunteer Opportunities

We gladly welcome local business, non-profit, school and other community groups to come out to NCOS to help with planting and other activities. For more information, please send an email to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.

COMMUNITY FORUM & PHOTOS

We are interested in any observations of wildlife activity on NCOS. Please send your observations, with or without photos, to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu. Thanks!



Cooper's Hawk. Photo by Karen Lunsford.



Pied-billed Grebe with a non-native Crayfish in Whittier Pond. Photo by Adrian O'Loghlen.



Marsh Wren at Whittier Pond. Photo by Mark Bright.

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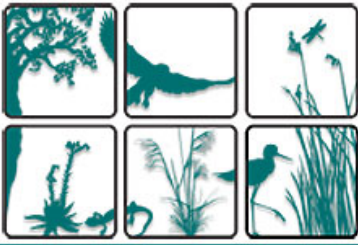
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PREDATORS AND PREY AT NCOS

Over the past year and with the help of the local community, we've seen signs of more and more wildlife foraging and making a home at NCOS. This means that ecological interactions and functionality are becoming more complex and diverse. An important ecological interaction that is becoming increasingly noticeable is the relationship between predators and prey.

Recent monitoring efforts have revealed the presence of at least two species of small mammals - the Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) and Western Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*). These tiny inhabitants are an important food source for raptors such as the Cooper's Hawk, White-tailed Kite, and American Kestrel. The presence of deer mice at NCOS was corroborated by tracks found during a [tracking workshop led by biologist Jonah Evans](#) for staff of the Wilderness Youth Project. In addition to deer mice, Jonah's workshop group discovered tracks from striped skunk, red fox, barn owl, bobcat, burrowing owl, and more. The location of tracks suggest how and where predators and prey are utilizing the restored habitat, such as burrowing owl tracks that indicate hunting in the salt marsh edges.



Deer Mouse



Western Harvest Mouse



The small tracks of these mice are clearly visible in the salt marsh at NCOS.



The small mammals detected at NCOS are important prey for raptors like this White-tailed Kite. Photograph by Mark Bright.

While the growth of NCOS as a fully functioning ecosystem and the increasing abundance and diversity of wildlife are exciting, they also present challenges given the site's location within a largely urban environment. For example, there have been recent sightings of bobcats at NCOS that may have notoedric mange, a skin disease caused by the mite *Notoedres cati*. Although this disease is typically non-fatal, [National Park Service researchers in Southern California](#) have found that exposure to anticoagulant rodenticide can increase bobcat's susceptibility to mange. Homeowners in the vicinity of NCOS can help to protect bobcats against this threat by choosing to [control rodents without the use of anticoagulant rodenticide](#).

This involves taking actions such as reducing food sources and hiding places for rodents and investing in snap/electric traps that don't involve the use of poison.



The facial hair loss and lethargic behavior of this bobcat seen at NCOS suggests that it could have mange.

Another common challenge for wildlife living within or close to urban areas is the potential for predation by household pets such as [domestic cats](#). Cats are not only a threat to birds, reptiles, and small mammals but are also competitors that could reduce the availability of prey for local wild predators. The best option for pet owners to help minimize potential impacts is to keep cats indoors as much as possible. If and when cats are allowed outdoors, taking actions such as preventing them from leaving the yard, or using items such as [Birdsbesafe Collars](#) could help reduce predation impacts. By making small changes such as these, homeowners near NCOS and other open space areas can help protect local wildlife and maintain healthy ecosystems.



Date:
Tuesday, December 3, 2019 - 11:30

[Contact Us](#)

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