

**The Clear Print**  
**The San Diego Tracking Team Newsletter**



**Message from the Executive Director**

By Karen Larsen Gordon

To all of the wonderful volunteers within the San Diego Tracking Team, we send an enormous thank you for all of your time, tireless energy and thoughtful participation during this past year. I'd like to remind you that when you volunteer for an event, your mileage to and from is tax deductible at a rate of 14 cents per mile. Amazingly, this can add up! For instance, driving 23 miles each way to a transect is \$6.44. Add up the number of times you have helped at an event or walked a transect and you may have a nice amount to claim on your income tax return, assuming you don't use the standard deduction.

One other thing to remember is to check on the charitable organizations to which you send donations at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org). This free resource lists over 1.5 million IRS-recognized nonprofit organizations in a searchable database format. Should you have any questions regarding the nonprofit status and donations to the San Diego Tracking Team, please call me at (760) 715-4102.

Happy New Year!

**Tips on Journaling**

By Barry Martin

*Editor's note: The founder of the SDTT, Barry Martin, has recently begun an "Animal of the Week" series of e-mails to SDTTLIST that encourages people to further their naturalist skills by journaling. Someone wrote to him asking for advice on how to organize such a journal, and considering that this might be of interest to others as well, I'm including his reply here. For more on journaling, the LPCPTT plans to host a workshop on the subject in June.*

I have a format for journaling that I've grown comfortable with that I learned years ago from the Kamana course. I use regular 8 ½ by 11" paper in 3 ring binders, and my binders are segregated by orders. I have a text summary of each order that I've written at the beginning of each binder (or section within the binder if the binder contains more than one order). I use graph paper, but anything that is letter quality will do. Normally for each species I create a heading that contains the common name, and under that I note the Family...For example, I will put the following:

Mammal Profile - California Mole  
Family Talpidae  
California Mole- *Scapanus latimanus*

Then under the heading to the right, I will have a sketch of the animal's range map, small in the upper right quarter (or less) of the paper. In the left quarter under the heading I will sketch the

animal...this is after spending a bit of time reading, looking at photos and then spending some time watching the animal in my mind's eye. Make the animal come alive for you, then without thinking too much SKETCH. Concentrate on the prominent features; draw arrows to point out things like the shape of a nose or shape of feet. You might then write a few details under the sketch like body length, color of the coat, number of toes, etc.

Under that I will sketch the skeleton and a closer look at the skull. I'll jot down it's dental formula and total number of teeth. Then on the other side (or if there is room on the front), I will sketch the feet. The most accurate measurements I've found are in Mark Elbroch's mammals book. I will include the measurements by the sketches of the feet. Mark and others like James Halfpenny will give measurement ranges, which I like. On the back of the page I draw tracks and typical gait patterns of the animal along with other sign like scat and browse.

Then I have a text page that I use for a brief description of the animal with bullet points about diet, habitat, habits, young (gestation, when born, etc.) and whatever else you might find interesting. You can do all this in less than an hour and even as quick as 20 minutes if you are just using a couple of books.... I prefer to spend a little more time to savor the whole experience!

You can add pages later if you decide to study the animal in more detail... good reason for the binder concept. I think if you use the above outlined sequence as a format, and then expand from there, you may feel a bit more organized. Hope it helped!

## Upcoming Events

Both the **Fall Wildlife Survey** and the **Fall Deer Scat Collection** period are underway with plenty of volunteer opportunities remaining. If you are interested in helping with either of these activities or if you have any questions, please call Lani at 858-513-0359.

**Saturday, January 14:** Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning and Intermediate/Advanced levels offered.

**Sunday, January 15:** Introductory tracking walk, 8:30 to 9:30 am at the MTRP visitor center.

**Saturday, January 21:** Winter Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training, 9:45 am to 4:00 pm at the Ranch House in Peñasquitos Canyon. This kicks off the Winter Wildlife Survey season, and the transect schedule should be posted on our website (sdtt.org) by this date. If you interested in helping with the training or volunteering for a transect, please contact Lani at 858-513-0359 or noreke@sbcglobal.net.

**JUST ADDED! Save the Date! Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>:** Speaker's Series Lecture by Jim Lowery, author of The Tracker's Field Guide, on track interpretation and tracks as windows to animal's biology. Lecture from 7-8:30 pm, refreshments and book signing from 6:30 pm, MTRP visitor center theater.

**Saturday, February 4 and Sunday February 5:** Tracker Evaluations with Mark Elbroch

**Saturday, February 11:** Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning and Intermediate/Advanced levels offered.

**Sunday, February 12:** Introductory tracking walk, 8:30 to 9:30 am at the MTRP visitor center.

**Thursday, February 23 and Saturday, February 25:** Intermediate Tracker Naturalist Class, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm Thursday and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Saturday at the Peñasquitos Ranch House. Contact Rick Botta (858-672-0584, rmbotta@earthlink.net) to sign up as a student or to help out.

**Saturday, March 11:** Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning and Intermediate/Advanced levels offered.

**Sunday, March 12:** Introductory tracking walk, 8:30 to 9:30 am at the MTRP visitor center.

**Friday, March 24 and Saturday, March 25:** Advanced Tracker Naturalist Class, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm Friday and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Saturday at the Peñasquitos Ranch House. Contact Rick Botta (858-672-0584, rmbotta@earthlink.net) to sign up as a student or to help out.

Don't forget, you can help support SDTT in two important ways—volunteer your time and/or contribute financially by becoming a donor member. Call our new number 760-715-4102 to volunteer and go to [www.sdtt.org](http://www.sdtt.org) for a membership form.

Please send submissions to the Clear Print to Lani Noreke at [noreke@sbcglobal.net](mailto:noreke@sbcglobal.net).