

THE BURROWING GUARDIAN

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Volunteers Swarm to Lincoln, CA Grassland Preserves - Enhance Owl Habitat

During the Fall 2010 Burrowing Owl Consortium Meeting in Sonoma, a relationship with Placer Land Trust was being forged. Within a few months of the initial meeting, the logistics of a habitat enhancement project in Lincoln, CA was in the works.

On June 8th and 15th, three organizations, Burrowing Owl Conservation Network, Placer Land Trust and Defenders of Wildlife, put boots on the ground at Swainsons Grassland Preserve and Doty Ravine Preserve to enhance and extend Burrowing Owl habitat in Placer County. Over the course of two days, volunteers successfully installed 16 artificial burrows and

made a valuable contribution to Burrowing Owl conservation efforts in Northern California. Because California appears to be the most important state for migrating Burrowing Owls during the wintertime, protecting and restoring habitat is critical to protecting populations across Western North America.



Thanks to all the volunteers who participated in this event!

Baby Photos!



MISSION

Burrowing Owl Conservation Network advocates for the protection and restoration of the Western Burrowing Owl and promotes the preservation and careful management of habitat to prevent loss, foster healthy populations, and maintain intact natural communities for an ecologically sound future.



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BOCN Launches New Website - Expanding online resources

As part of our ever expanding education program, BOCN launched a new website designed to make Burrowing Owl resources readily available for public consumption. The site, which went live on June 22nd, highlights ongoing projects and programs, provides increased organization information, and gives visitors an enhanced Burrowing Owl experience.

Visit
BurrowingOwlConservation.org
today!

"As our name suggests, we are a NETWORK of scientists, conservationists, birders and great volunteers looking to make an actual difference for wildlife and ecosystems. Our new website reflects our passion for Burrowing Owls and showcases our enthusiasm for getting people of all ages excited and involved in protecting Burrowing Owls. And the new format provides an opportunity to continually update our visitors and supporters with our latest projects and experiences." Scott Artis— Executive Director

Website features include:

- Photo slideshow
- Videos
- Sounds and Ringtones
- Burrowing Owl Citation Database



1st Grader Makes Burrowing Owl Birthday Wish



There's nothing more inspirational than receiving stories from kids about their experiences with wildlife and passions for Burrowing Owls. And knowing our efforts are reaching future leaders and decision makers is the ultimate reward. On May 19th BOCN was inspired yet again by a 1st grader's birthday wish to forgo the hottest toys adorning store shelves in favor of Burrowing Owl aid. **George G. and his friends in Arkansas raised an astounding \$140 for Burrowing Owl conservation efforts.**

Dear Fellow Owl Lovers,

My name is George. I love owls! For my birthday the zoo let two owls come to my party. Instead of presents, I asked my friends to donate to help the burrowing owls so here is the money we raised.

Your Friend,

George G.
1st grade, Arkansas

Happy Birthday George!

We hope you enjoy the Burrowing Owl photo and T-Shirt.

Cheers,
The Staff

* You can read George's and other young supporters' letters online at
<http://www.burrowingowlconservation.org/kids.html>

Do you know a conservation-minded boy or girl? If so, we'd love to hear from them and share their stories and ideas.





Hey! That's no Bowerbird, it's a Burrowing Owl! by Scott Artis, JournOwl.com



With a number of documentaries hitting theaters, NatGeo, Discovery Channel, Animal Planet and so forth over the past few years, I imagine most of us have now encountered the renowned courtship behaviors of the male Bowerbird. As seen in the photo below, they take on a fairly unique approach that may include rocks, plastics, shells, sticks and other brightly colored objects strategically arranged in an attempt to woo the fairer sex. But with a travel distance of over 8,000 miles and a hectic schedule, planning a trip down under to experience the antics of Bowerbirds first hand is a few years away. So I thought...



Photo Credit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/katieandtommy/>
Creative Commons - Bowerbird

After a prolonged date with destiny that is now approaching 3 years, my wife and I stepped into a suburban open space to rendezvous with nature as we have done so many times before. It was during a nighttime walk four months back that we crossed paths with a Burrowing Owl who returned to a patch of land sandwiched between all the fixings of suburbia. From that first sighting, we made it routine to stop by for a short visit and even celebrated the appearance of his mate.

And that's when the species line between Bowerbird and Burrowing Owl began to blur. Sure we have seen plenty of owls decorating burrows with dried frogs, trash, foil, bones, and even dog and coyote dung, but this particular male took design to a meticulous level as he created an ornate burrow entrance

complete with hardwood floors made of bark.

North America's Western Burrowing Owl may not be quite at the same level as the Bowerbird in terms of design aptitude, but they should definitely take notice that there's an up and coming contractor taking the stage in the world of birds. Here is another burrow picture for the design portfolio. Enjoy!



See more burrow pics and Burrowing Owl stories at JournOwl.com



BOCN Returns to Oregon - Joins USFWS and Global Owl Project in Conservation and Research Efforts

There's a little bit of magic taking place a stone's throw south of the Columbia River and it has nothing to do with growing watermelons. A short jaunt from the melon-infused municipality of Hermiston lies another city making its mark in Eastern Oregon. Umatilla is growing Burrowing Owls and it's making history.

During the waning weeks of May, BOCN staff made the 700 mile trek to Umatilla to join forces with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Global Owl Project to assist in a restoration program that began in 2008. As you may recall from our visit in August 2010, we previously connected with personnel from a number of federal agencies and owl conservation groups in a habitat restoration project on the Umatilla Chemical Depot that resulted in the installation of 36 artificial burrows over the course of 2 days.

However, this year we received a bit of a reprieve from the labor intensive burrow installation process, and collected data for a joint research project with results specifically applicable to California's ailing Burrowing Owl population.



Additionally, the spring-timed trip provided an excellent opportunity to assist in the massive banding effort of this

year's juveniles. According to David Johnson of the Global Owl Project, there were an astounding 200 young banded on the Depot in 2011.

The number of nesting pairs has grown from 3-4 in 2008, to 9 in 2009, to 30 in 2010. The lack of available nest sites is the underlying problem, and the installation of artificial burrows has allowed the population to increase dramatically. As of May 2011, the number of artificial burrows reached 112 units and the Depot reported 61 pairs. The goal is to have the Depot serve as a source population for nearby areas of the Pacific Northwest.

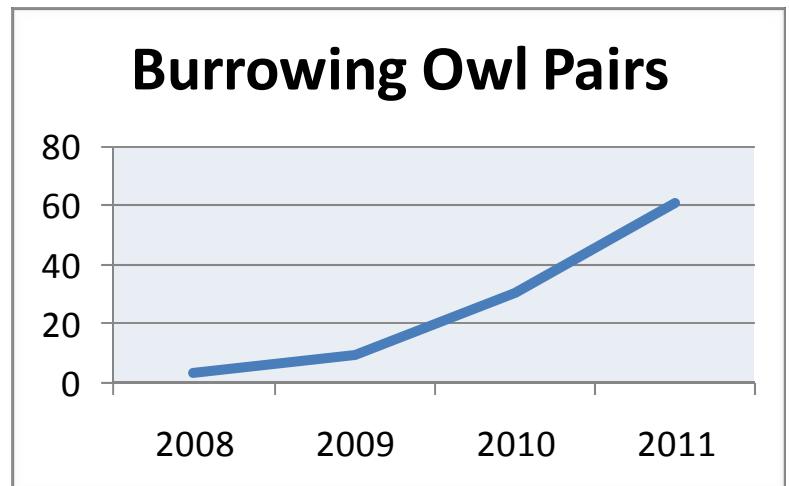


In March 2011, The U.S. Army's Umatilla Chemical Depot in Oregon received the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2010 Military Conservation Partner Award recognizing an extraordinary conservation partnership that, among other highlights, has provided numerous conservation benefits for the burrowing owl and long-billed curlew. Rowan Gould, the



Service's Acting Director, made the announcement at the 76th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, citing the Depot's exemplary partnership with the Fish and Wildlife Service, state agencies, tribal governments and non-government organizations.

"The Service is proud to honor Umatilla Chemical Depot's accomplishments in implementing key conservation actions for several species of national concern," Gould said. *"Umatilla's leadership in researching and conserving important habitat for burrowing owls and long-billed curlews is extremely important for the entire Pacific region."*





Habitat Enhancement Project Receives Help from Conservation Corps North Bay Kids

On July 14th Burrowing Owl Conservation Network partnered with Sonoma Land Trust and Sonoma Birding to expand Burrowing Owl habitat in southern Sonoma County and gave kids an opportunity to get involved in species-specific conservation efforts. The day-long event began with an onsite, interactive discussion on Burrowing Owls led by BOCN's Scott Artis and culminated with the installation of two artificial burrows on land owned and managed by Sonoma Land Trust. Kids from the Conservation Corps North Bay worked very hard with shovels, picks, and rakes to excavate the cavities required to contain burrows and tunnels built from 55 gallon plastic drums and 10 foot long corrugated pipe.

Although Sonoma's last recorded breeding pair was observed in 1986, the county does support migrating owls that arrive during the wintertime from their breeding sites. *"By increasing available burrows,"* said Scott Artis, *"we not only provide much needed winter habitat for Burrowing Owls, but we now have a*

chance to attract owls looking for suitable nest sites and new territories. Additionally, projects like these are educational treasure-troves that increase awareness, get people and kids involved in tangible, hands-on conservation efforts, and connect organizations with overlapping missions."

On a previous visit to this site, Artis discovered signs of a Burrowing Owl that had overwintered in a makeshift burrow comprised of a partially buried metal pipe and some discarded concrete slabs. This project marks the second successful installation in Sonoma County this year and is part of a multi-site program to create a corridor of suitable Burrowing Owl habitat and restore a breeding population in the county.

BOCN would like to thank Sonoma Birding, Sonoma Land Trust, and the great kids and counselors of Conservation Corps North Bay for coming together for the Bay Area's declining Burrowing Owl population.



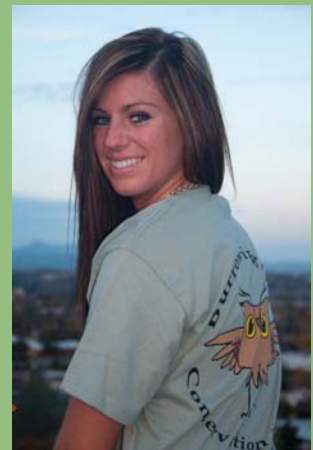
BENEFITS OF JOINING

Besides the benefits of supporting our hands-on conservation efforts, advocacy, outreach and research activities, we have a few gifts that we are happy to offer with your tax-deductible donation.

Receive a free one-year subscription to the award winning Earth Island Journal with your \$40 or more donation.



Or with your \$100 or more contribution you can choose a Burrowing Owl Conservation Network T-Shirt.





Photos from the field

Send us your owl photos! We love to hear your stories and get pictures from our supporters and owl lovers.



Thanks for the great photos!

Top Left: Patty Castro

Bottom Left: Darrell Burrell

Top Right: Angela Calderaro

Middle Right: Amy Neymeyr

Bottom Right: Gary Donnell



Juvenile's death a grim reminder of automobile dangers

If you haven't noticed, 'tis the season for juvenile Burrowing Owls and unfortunately it can also be a forbidding reminder that we need to keep an eye open for our wildlife neighbors. Not surprising, our predilection for developing grassland environments means shopping centers, houses and all the fixings of suburban and urban lifestyles often puts Burrowing Owls in precarious situations. And this is especially true when young begin exploring their above ground world.

Three days after BOCN staff logged the results of a site visit in Brentwood, CA, a dead juvenile owl was discovered by Scott Artis as he was traveling to another nearby site under observation. *"I just happened to be passing by The Streets of Brentwood in route to another location being monitored when I noticed a tractor and a cloud of dust on fields supporting nesting owls,"* said Artis. *"The original intent was to ensure the immediate safety of the owls and talk with property management, but as I approached the site I saw a juvenile owl motionless on the road."*

After a discussion with property management concerning the owls and a proposal by BOCN to post caution signs reminding drivers to slow down, The Streets of Brentwood has decided to produce and post their own caution sign. We are pushing for immediate action to help prevent the injury or death of additional owls at this location and we look forward to reporting to our supporters on the installation of signage and their cooperation.

BOCN is committed to working with individuals and property owners to ensure the short- and long-term safety of Burrowing Owls throughout communities in North America. If you know of a location that may benefit from posting reminders to drivers about the presence of Burrowing Owls, please contact us for details.

We need everyone's help to protect this unique species.



DID YOU KNOW?

- MORE THAN 1,200 PEOPLE TOOK TIME TO SIGN A PETITION REQUESTING DEVELOPMENT OF A VIABLE CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR BURROWING OWLS IN CALIFORNIA.
- BOCN HAS MORE THAN 15 NOTABLE COLLABORATIONS WITH CITIES, AGENCIES AND OTHER NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



Put a Spotlight on Conservation





LEARN MORE & CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

Learn about our conservation projects, research, advocacy efforts and community outreach

BurrowingOwlConservation.org

Keep up with the latest information and check out our blogs:

<http://journowl.com>

<http://thebirdersreport.com>



[Facebook.com/journowl](https://www.facebook.com/journowl)



[Twitter.com/journowl](https://twitter.com/journowl)



[Youtube.com/journowl](https://www.youtube.com/journowl)



causes.com/causes/529014

Burrowing Owl Conservation Network is a project of Earth Island Institute, a 501(c)3 non-profit, public interest, membership organization.

Conversations

OH HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED!

“Probably one of the most common birds in California, and known to almost everybody...”

Geological Survey of California, Ornithology Volume 1, Land Birds (1870)

SIMPLY INSPIRATIONAL

“All social change comes from the passions of individuals.”

Paul Watson, The Cove

Getting Involved

Report a sighting

Have you seen a burrowing owl or two or more?

If so, then the Burrowing Owl Conservation Network is looking forward to hearing from you. The information you provide not only aids in our conservation, research and tracking efforts, but it offers burrowing owls a chance for survival in an ever dynamic world full of urbanization. Additionally, it allows us to direct conservation activities to areas or communities that require assistance.

Send your observations to: sightings@burrowing-owl.org

GET THE WORD OUT

Tell your friends about the Burrowing Owl Conservation Network and join our conservation efforts TODAY!



Burrowing Owl Conservation Network's Volunteer Staff

Scott Artis – Executive Director

Larry Jordan – Habitat Manager

Dee Vieira – East County Program Manager

Heather Artis – Conservation Manager

Karen Lively - Education Outreach Manager

Advisory Board

Pamela Flick - Defenders of Wildlife

Lynne Trulio, Ph.D. - San Jose State University

Bob & Samantha Fox - Wild At Heart

Greg Clark - Wild At Heart & the Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative