



# MEADOWLARK

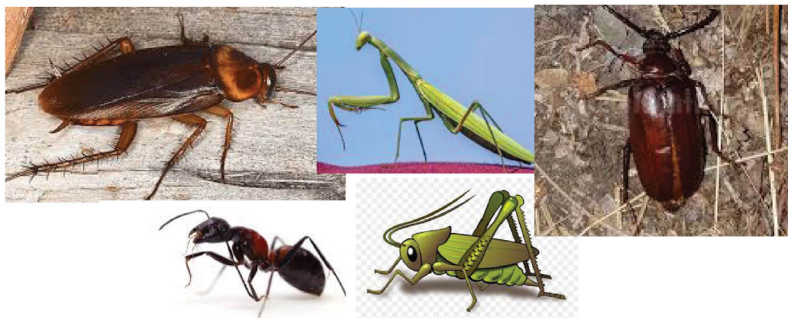
*The Fall/Winter 2025 Newsletter*

Our Mission is to inspire and educate our community through regional collections and to promote the discovery & appreciation of the natural world.



## **HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**

& grand opening of **"Small Critters: Big Impact"** exhibit



**Sunday, December 7, 2025**  
**3:00 - 5:00 PM, refreshments**  
**412 S McClelland Street**

**PLUS sneak peek at HUGE new acquisition**  
**AND new Ice Age art from Jeremy Brooks!**



**Dear Friends,** You asked, we answered! Due to visitor requests in the recent Museum survey, we have created a brand new exhibit. **"Small Critters, Big Impact"** welcomes in the 30th anniversary of NHMSM non profit beginning in 1996!

Exhibit committee, Nancy Heck, Kira Corona, Annie Lawrence, Randy Cohen and myself are eager to share the new attraction. Stop in to the Open House and take a look. You can also see what else is NEW....like the HUGE whale skeleton donated by the Dunes Center outside in the sand area AND the new lovely prints by the artist Jeremy Brooks of Mammoth and Mastodon. You may even meet the artist.

Yes, we have all been busy!....in the first two weeks in December, the NHM will host 300 Santa Maria Bonita students from 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th grades for field trips using Nature Journals. Wish us luck as this is the largest group in a two week period the Museum has ever hosted. Of course, there is no charge for this exciting programming for kids. They will be inspired by the live bugs and all the formerly living animals and birds they may never have seen before. A great two weeks for everyone!! Only with your generous donations enable this to continue strongly!! Considering including NHMSM in year end giving plans? Thank you!

As for the Museum's "1,000,000 penny project", we only need 650,000 more pennies to reach the goal! Pennies are going out of style, so hurry on in with your jars of loose change.

Also, note the change in Sunday hours in January to conform more closely with Library hours.



**Warmest holiday regards, Virginia Perry Souza, 2025 BOD President**



## Natural History Museum New Board members



**Stephanie Robb.** Stephanie is a local leader. She graduated from St. Joseph's High School and attained her Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Organizational Leadership from Chapman College. Ms. Robb is family oriented and has been part of parent groups as her children grew up in town. Professionally she has been involved in several local non profits in leadership positions. Ms Robb's employment includes long term advancement at Center for Employment Training and since November 2002 at Allan Hancock College where she is currently Director, Student Activities and Outreach Coordinator, Student Activities/ASBG Advisor.



**Jason Stilwell.** Mr Stilwell is also a local leader. He is retired as former Santa Maria City General Manager. Jason is also family oriented with grown children and currently is active in several local non-profits including Breakfast Rotary where he chairs Santa Maria's Annual Holiday Parade.

Following are photos from NHM Chamber Mixer in November which was a great success and loads of fun!

Kira Corona and Virginia Davalos at Chamber of Commerce Hispanic Business Event





## LIFE AND DEATH DRAMA IN THE GARDEN

Monarch butterflies have many natural enemies and only 5% of Monarch eggs survive to become adult butterflies. The low survival rate is due to natural predators like spiders and insects, disease, and other factors.

This year at the Museum we had a bumper crop of milkweed and, therefore, a record number of Monarch caterpillars. But their high concentrations attracted many predators and we were finding a lot of dead caterpillars. Consequently, volunteers took all the caterpillars to their homes; raised them to the chrysalis stage; and then brought them back to an exhibit inside the Museum until they could be released outside as butterflies.

Predators seen at the Museum were praying mantises and predatory stink bugs. Parasitic organisms were the Tachinid fly and the OE protozoan. (Tropical milkweed is much more likely to harbor OE than native species, so please avoid it. We only have native milkweed here but an infected female from outside the Museum grounds probably laid eggs on one of our plants, thus infecting her own offspring with the OE spores. )



California Mantis

Stagmomantis californica



Spined Soldier Bug

Predatory Stink Bug Podisus  
maculiventris



'Caterpillar Destroyer'

Tachinid fly Lespesia arch-  
hippivora

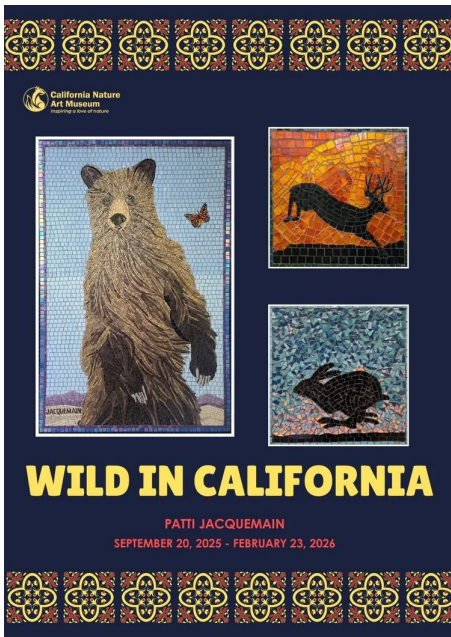


Butterfly with deformed wings

due to OE Ophryocystis elektroscirrha



Nancy Heck  
Garden Committee  
Chairperson  
Garden Committee  
meets third Thursday  
of each month  
at 10AM for work in  
Native Garden.  
Please stop by to  
"see what is happening  
and  
consider applying".



### "Monarch: A Mosaic Tribute to California's Last Grizzly"

Show ongoing at California Museum of Nature Art, Solvang, part of a Patti Jacquemaine show ongoing to February 2026

"**Monarch** symbolizes both the grandeur and the tragedy of California's lost wilderness. This mosaic aims to honor **Monarch's** legacy, reflecting on the impact of human actions on wildlife and the importance of conservation efforts." Monarch was one of the very last surviving grizzly bears in California, and was the model for the California State Flag. First captured in 1889 in the San Gabriel Mountains by order of American newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst, he was named after the Hearst newspaper tagline, "**Monarch** of the Dailies."

In his lifetime, **Monarch** weighed over 1,000 pounds, was viewed by tens of thousands of visitors in locations such as the Woodward Gardens and the Golden Gate Park Zoo, and sired at least two cubs.

**Monarch** spent the final twenty-two years of his life in captivity, from 1889-1911. By the time that **Monarch** was caught, California's grizzly bear population was already very close to being hunted to extinction.

After his death, his remains were taxidermied and donated to California Academy of the Sciences. **Monarch** is currently on display in the CalAcademy exhibition, California: State of Nature. Beyond his lasting image on the California state flag, **Monarch's** legacy is a heart-wrenching reminder of the precious value of our state's wildlands and the invaluable, vanishing species that make them wild.



Los Angeles documentary film makers visited NHMSM Native Garden filming Central Coast milkweed restoration efforts on November 24, 2025



NHM latest chrysalis, like a jewel in the native garden. More on the way!



412 South McClelland  
P O Box 5254  
Santa Maria, CA 93456  
(across from Santa Maria Library)  
**PHONE:** (805) 614-0806  
**EMAIL:**  
naturalhistory412.santamaria@gmail.com  
**WEBSITE:**  
www.smnaturalhistory.org  
**FACEBOOK:**  
The Natural History Museum of Santa Maria  
Please Like Us  
**INSTAGRAM:**  
santamarianaturalhistorymuseum  
OR santamarianhm  
**OPEN:**  
Regular hours:  
Wed-Sat • 11am to 4pm  
also Sunday noon -2pm  
January '26 1-3pm

**Free Admission**

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Virginia Souza  
David Kisner  
Dawn Jackson  
Yvette Andrade  
Esmeralda Mendoza  
Stephanie Robb  
Scott Christian  
Jason Stilwell  
Tamara Vodehnal

#### ADVISORY BOARD

Ed Carcarey  
Cathy Glenn  
Judy Garrett  
Laura Henderson  
Annie Lawrence  
Jonathan Malindine  
Eric Snelling  
Conrad Stevens  
Laurie Tamura  
Heather Weare



## WINTER NHMSM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**December 1,5,12,18:** 4 days of field trips for grades 1,2,3 and 6 from S.M. Bonita Schools. 300 students to visit.

**December 7, 3-5 PM: Sunday** Holiday Open House: Grand Opening New Exhibit: Small Critters . . . Big Impact. PLUS sneak peek at HUGH new acquisition AND new Ice Age art from Jeremy Brooks!

**January 2026 first week:** Closed for cleaning and painting.

**January 12, 5:30 -7PM.** NHMSM Annual Meeting with guest speaker. Free to members. Location: Lawn Bowling Club-house

**March date TBA: Nature Talk: 7pm. Santa Maria Public Library, Sheperd Hall:** Alex Harman, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Learn from SBMNH's newest director of Invertebrate Zoology. "BUGS". Free to members, Public invited.

**April 26, 2026:** Earth Day/Dia de los Ninos

#### Membership Donor Form

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City, State, zip\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

e-mail\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Hummingbird. . . . . \$25  
\_\_\_ California Quail. . . . . \$50 \*  
\_\_\_ Meadowlark. . . . . \$100  
\_\_\_ Great Horned Owl. . . . . \$250  
\_\_\_ Golden Eagle. . . . . \$500  
\_\_\_ Red-Tailed Hawk. . . . . \$1,000  
\_\_\_ California Condor. . . . . \$2,000

Please make checks payable to:  
The Natural History Museum SM  
P.O. Box 5254, Santa Maria, CA 93456

OR

sign up on our website  
smnaturalhistory.org

\*one time special price for "family membership"  
to all Mixer attendees for one year