



THE KINO BAY CENTER NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY - 2024



KINO BAY, SONORA, MEXICO

AT THE CENTER - SEA KAYAK AND NATURAL HISTORY CLASS -
SPANISH INTENSIVE AND CULTURAL IMMERSION CLASS - TREEHOUSE
LEARNING COMMUNITY - WORLD WETLANDS DAY IN KINO BAY -
LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS - CETACEANS EVERYWHERE - POINT BLUE
CONSERVATION SCIENCE AND MSP+ IN KINO BAY

THE CENTER

JUMPING IN TO AN EXCITING WINTER/
SPRING OF ACTIVITIES INTEGRATING
SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY.

THIS JANUARY, we embarked upon
a season full of adventure, science,
and community engagement.

2024 started off big, with dynamic
Prescott College classes, new allies to
support our projects, and fascinating
discoveries from our region's amazing
ecosystems.

We invite you to join us in our
mission to protect the bio-cultural
richness of this amazing region.



AT

Sea Kayaking class led by Laura Beebe (sea kayak), Dave Gilligan (natural history), and Ryan Langston (teaching assistant) are seen practicing specialized techniques essential to assure safety and effectiveness in a sea kayak expedition such as different styles of paddling, reading the weather, edging, and rescues.




ADVENTURE AT GLANCE: THE SEA KAYAKING AND MARINE NATURAL HISTORY CLASS

THIS JANUARY, Prescott College students explored and learned from the amazing and complex ecosystems of the Gulf of California through one of the most exciting and beautiful ways to connect with aquatic landscapes... sea kayaking.



On the other hand, they also delved into the roots and values of kayak culture, developing an integral formation in leadership from partnership, resilience, and freedom.

During their stay at the Center, they visited iconic sites of Kino, getting an intimate experience with nature that can only be achieved by paddling. 

BEYOND LANGUAGE BOUNDARIES: SPANISH INTENSIVE AND CULTURAL IMMERSION CLASS

FAR BEYOND JUST GRAMMAR LESSONS, the Spanish Intensive and Cultural Immersion class took a deep dive into daily life in Kino Bay. Over three weeks, the students lived with host families who shared their perspectives and experiences of life in Kino from dawn to dusk. They also participated in specific cultural experience classes like cooking, folk dance, and even “Spanish from the streets”. Activities with the conservation community groups of Kino such as Jóvenes Delfines and Grupo Tortuguero provided a lens into the biocultural experience.



As the course ended, the students presented their final projects, demonstrating growth in their language and cultural understanding; topics included fishing methods, a profile of a bakery, local history, and even fears and dreams of the kids from Kino Bay.



In the end, it was the shared moments of connection and understanding that defined the Spanish Intensive class, making lasting and authentic bonds that get us a step closer towards a common culture of open and mutual understanding.



RE-CONNECTING THROUGH NATURE AND CULTURE: TREEHOUSE LEARNING COMMUNITY

SINCE 2015, the TreeHouse Learning Community has been bringing groups to Kino to connect or re-connect with nature, community, and oneself. Following a philosophy of reflection, development, and strength, the group explored the region's ecosystems and cultures.

They developed their trust and communication skills by participating in nature-immersion experiences in the wilderness that surrounds Kino Bay and Punta Chueca.

The AMAZING happened when they shared sensitive experiences with the communities, connecting deeply with their powerful stories that inspired and encouraged them to overcome all kinds of challenges in the search for a joyful life.





CONSERVATION MOVEMENT IN KINO BAY

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

CELEBRATED ON FEBRUARY 2ND, World Wetlands Day in Kino was an example of unity and shared responsibility for ecological conservation, as community groups from Bahía de Kino and Punta Chueca, the Kino Bay Center, authorities, and citizens joined together to clean up Laguna La Cruz estuary.

This event showcased the work of local conservation groups who designed unique, creative, and dynamic displays to communicate work they do in education, restoration and monitoring in Laguna la Cruz. The efforts of these groups, in collaboration with the Center and other institutions plays a huge role in protecting this ecologically, socially and economically important wetland.

On this successful day, more than 150 people from Mexico, the United States, and the Comcaac Nation removed more than 800 kg of garbage from the estuary, although there is still work to be done, the community recognizes great progress in the conservation efforts at the site over the past decade.



Events like this highlight a success story! The collaborative work carried out at different levels for decades has resulted in the formation of a growing conservation movement, in which a growing number of people are aware of the challenges and are committed to the protection of Laguna la Cruz and its ecological and cultural heritage.



STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION: STAFF WORKSHOP WITH ROGELIO ROSAS

AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP with the Center's staff last September, Rogelio Rosas returned to lead team-building and reconnecting activities, giving us space to reflect on and celebrate the accomplishments of the fall, to discuss challenges, and to look forward to the activities ahead. With ongoing trainings like this, we continue to prepare and be inspired to keep doing what we are most passionate about.

... And the Center's staff was only the beginning. This time, Rogelio worked with four community groups from Bahía de Kino and Punta Chueca to address specific professional development needs within each group. These included defining roles, identifying challenges, building trust, creating common identity, and prioritizing projects. In the end, these sessions instilled pride in the individual, group, social and cultural foundations that drive the efforts of each group.

In previous reports from the Marine Mammal Program, a concern was mentioned about the low presence of some whale species in the region, but also, it was established that it was premature to assume this would be a bad year for them and that there was the possibility that this would be a late arrival...

WILDLIFE

THEY'RE HERE, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE AND THEY'RE ESSENTIAL: CETACEAN SIGHTINGS REBOUND IN THE MIDRIFF ISLAND REGION

THIS JANUARY, the Marine Mammal Program had a surprising number of 47 cetacean sightings from 6 different species - More than triple the number recorded in November-December 2023! Among the amazing animals spotted were groups of common and bottlenose dolphins, and lots of mysticetes including fin, humpback, and blue whales.



Although it is not clear what factors are driving the rebound in sightings of these species, Program Coordinator Hector Perez shares that it may be related to the hypothesis that the region represents a refuge for cetaceans during El Nino years.

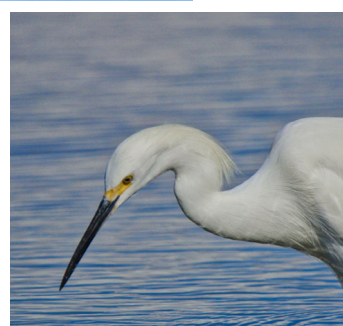
47 cetacean sightings from 6 different species - more than triple the number of sightings from last period



As if reaching a new record of outings and time in the field wasn't enough, the Marine Mammal Program also spent time inspiring and sharing knowledge with several groups of students, including groups from Punta Chueca, Rocky Mountain School, and Prescott College.

SPECIAL

EVENTS



LINKING WETLAND AND SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION: POINT BLUE CONSERVATION SCIENCE AND MSP + IN KINO BAY

THIS MONTH we were visited by Catherine Hickey, Diana Eusse and Liz Chamberlin of Point Blue Conservation Science and MSP+ to share perspectives on shorebird conservation and community work.

Point Blue's Migratory Shorebird Project is a multinational collaboration that works with international partners to conserve wetlands through science, partnership, and outreach along the Pacific Flyway, a bird migration highway that stretches along the West coast of the Americas from Alaska to Chile.

We were invited to submit a proposal for a project contributing to large-scale coordinated international shorebird habitat conservation.

We received funding for our project mapping and protecting critical habitat for shorebirds in Laguna la Cruz and the Canal del Infiernillo.

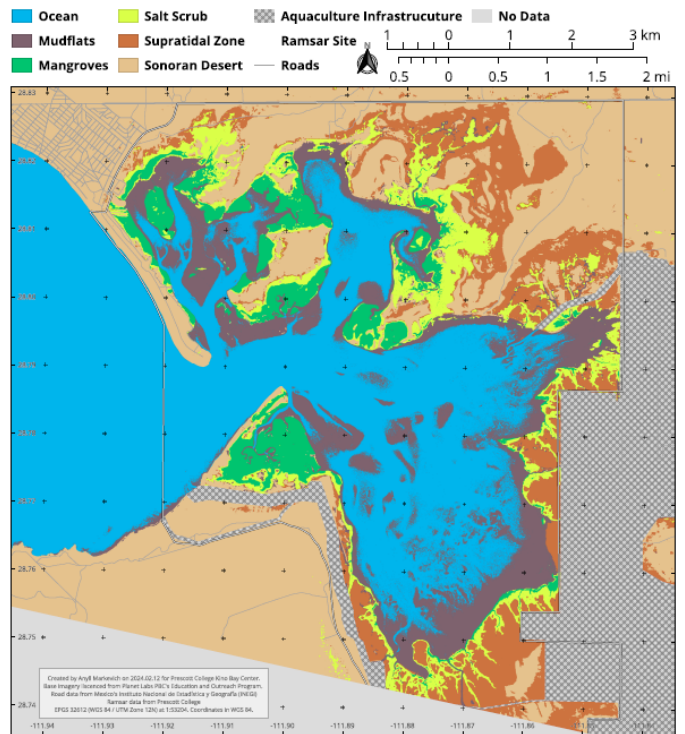
This work is conducted by the Center's Waterbird Monitoring Program (WMP) and Prescott College student Anyll Markevich (and builds upon work done previously by the WMP and PC student Alex George). The critical habitat maps are a tool for community groups to use in the development of future conservation projects.

As a way to close their visit, the Point Blue team joined members of the WMP, Indigenous Community Partnership Program and community members on an exciting outing to Sargento estuary within the Infiernillo Canal. During this outing the group carried out the Northwest Wintering Shorebird and Waterfowl Survey, a survey that is conducted once a year, in January, to track the migratory waterfowl in wetlands of northwest Mexico.



Habitat Types of the Laguna La Cruz Estuary

This map shows the extent of various types of ecosystems in the Laguna La Cruz estuary, located in Sonora, Mexico, including critical habitat for migratory and resident waterbird species. The map was created by combining multiple "supervised classification" algorithms that color areas based on comparison to zones of a known ecological category in a multi-spectral satellite image of the estuary.



THANK YOU

FOR SUPPORTING

THE KINO BAY CENTER'S LEADERSHIP IN
COMMUNITY-BASED CONNECTION OF EDUCATION,
CONSERVATION, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to

MARK THORKELSON

Prescott College Alumni and esteemed member of the Board of Directors at Prescott College, for his generous donation of a truck to the Center.

This invaluable contribution will greatly enhance our operations, enabling us to advance our mission of conserving the ecosystem and culture of the Midriff Islands Region. Thank you!

The Center has been a leader in positive change in the region for decades. Your donation to the Prescott College Kino Bay Center helps us train and support current and future agents of change.

EVERY DONATION
COUNTS AND HELPS.

