

## 2017 Bloom-Hays Research Grants

**Bloom-Hays Ecological Research Grant:** Five worthy student proposals were selected for funding by the Sea and Sage Science Committee. The objective of the Bloom-Hays Ecological Research Grant is to advance ecological research, particularly research related to avian species and the natural communities upon which they depend, by providing funds or supplies to support research activities benefitting native species and habitats in Southern California.

***Neil Gilbert***, *University of Alabama, (Masters), Habitat Relationships of Grassland Birds in the Black Belt Region of Alabama and Mississippi (\$600)*: Investigating the habitat relationships of grassland birds in the Black Belt Region of Mississippi and Alabama. Neil is using avian point counts and aerial images to model habitat preferences at the landscape scale. He will use his work to inform conservation land management in the region.

***An Bui***, *University of California, Santa Barbara (PhD) Parasite Avoidance Behavior in Seabirds: Seasonal Endoparasite Load in Western Gulls (\$1,700)*: Exploring how differing seasonal foraging strategies lead to differential exposure to endoparasites in western gulls at Channel Islands National Park. Her hypothesis is that, when faced with the tradeoff between nutritious food (fish) and fewer parasites (trash), adult birds choose fewer parasites.

***David Zonana***, *University of Colorado, Boulder (PhD), Influences of Adaptation and Social Networks on Hybridization in the Quail of Southern California (\$1,700)*: Seeking to understand the mechanisms and evolutionary consequences of hybridization between the California quail and Gambel's quail in the deserts and mountains of Southern California. David collected blood samples, phenotypic, and social network data from over 400 individuals at 7 sites across the hybrid zone to answer questions related to speciation.

***Alyssa Frederick Braciszewski***, *University of California, Irvine (PhD), Abalone Disease Resistance (\$500)*: Studying a disease called withering syndrome, which threatens all species of abalone in California, and led to the listing of black abalone as Endangered. Alyssa is examining gene expression in the resistant and susceptible groups of pinto abalone at different environmental temperatures to determine which genes might contribute to resistance to withering syndrome.

***Ana Guerra***, *Univeristy of California, Santa Barbara (PhD), An Overlooked Key Player? Nitrogen Deposition by the Channel Islands Western Gull (\$500)* Studying the effects of nitrogen deposition of western gull nesting colonies in the Channel Islands. Ana is exploring the linkage between nutrients in terrestrial and marine environments to show that not only is it important to protect habitats for the birds, but also to protect birds for those habitats.