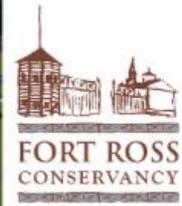


September 2018



## Fort Ross & Salt Point News

Dear friends of Fort Ross and Salt Point,

Hello, Autumn! We're saying goodbye to a busy summer at our parks where we welcomed a wonderful variety of visitors from around the nation and across the globe. But occasionally, our guests are more local and arrive with four paws and an abundance of curiosity (what a great image, Song Hunter!). Just like this clever fox, many of you know that fall on the coast is often the best time to visit. We are enjoying these warm days while we launch the start of the school season with our [outdoor education programs](#) on Marine Ecology and Environmental Living. If you have curious students in your life who might want to experience our programming, please get in touch.



Our October 13th [Harvest Festival](#) is just a few weeks away and with the skilled help from our awesome Fort Ross orchard volunteers & California State Parks, the orchard is looking fantastic. This year we are not holding the wine tasting and the event is taking place in the orchard. We hope you'll come by for sweet apple picking, song, dance, kids' crafts, and an optional luncheon. Harvest Festival is free - only State Parks entrance fees apply - but the luncheon requires advance purchase and is a fundraiser for [FRC's Education Fund](#). All details online!

We are deeply saddened to share the news that Kashia Elder Violet Parrish Chappell has passed. To quote from the [Press Democrat obituary](#), she "learned the language and traditions of her people, who have inhabited the Sonoma Coast for thousands of years, from one of the best teachers possible. Her mother was Essie Parrish, for most of the 20th century a spiritual leader of the tribe and one of Sonoma County's most accomplished and most prominent figures." Violet was well known for her warmth and kindness as an educator and advocate for Kashia, and her loss will be felt strongly throughout Metini and the wider community.

We hope your early Autumn offers the opportunity to do all those things that provide nourishment -- spending time with family, harvesting the fruits of summer from your garden, or just getting outside before the days get too short.

Until next time, take good care,

-Sarah

Sarah Sweedler  
Fort Ross Conservancy CEO  
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### HARVEST FESTIVAL - Saturday, October 13th, 10am - 3pm

Harvest is the time to enjoy autumn's fresh air with friends and family, acknowledging all that the seasons provide us. Please join us!

- Apple and pear picking in the historic orchard
- Russian group Kedry and their families in

traditional costume singing and performing seasonal games.

- Juicing the apples. Store bought apple juice will be served
- Kids games, seasonal food samples
- 11:30am - Interpretive tour of San Andreas Fault and Spyra Redwood Grove (25 minutes, easy walking)
- 12:10pm - Interpretive talk about the historic orchard highlighting the first grapes grown in Sonoma county, the Russian-era cherry trees that still survive, and the expanded orchard developed during the ranch era (15 minutes, in the orchard)
- 12:20pm - Fort Ross Choir



This is a free event. Regular CSP kiosk fees of \$8/car apply.

**Optional Family Style Lunch at Fort Ross Orchard:** We invite the local residents to join Fort Ross Conservancy and guests for an optional luncheon in the historic orchard from 12:30 – 2pm. Advanced ticket purchase required – details at <https://www.fortross.org/2018-harvest-luncheon.htm>.

## RETURN OF THE BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)



It's a bird, it's a plane, it's...oh wait I was right the first time! The end of summer is nearing round and the brown pelicans have been showing up in force along our glorious coastline at Fort Ross State and Salt Point parks. In fact, during our last Beach Watch Survey we counted nearly 600 individuals! We saw a beautiful mix of white-headed adults and brown-headed juveniles -- all, of course, with that signature long beak and big throat pouch we've come to recognize. This photo was taken by our own Director of Programs Song Hunter during our last Beach Watch Survey.

Personally, I've always held a special fondness for these splendid seabirds. Although you might think they look a little awkward on land, they resemble sleek fighter jets while in flight with those long slender bills and tight flying configurations. And when feeding they gracefully plunge-dive for fish from up to 100 feet in the air. Needless to say, they put on quite a show!

But there's another reason why we can celebrate seeing brown pelicans in such large numbers. Due to human impacts, these birds have had a difficult time in the last 150 years or so. First overhunting took its toll on brown pelican populations - they were hunted for their feathers, and sometimes hunted because they competed with commercial fisheries. Later on, the highly toxic pesticide DDT made its way from agricultural fields into our waterways and was then deposited in the ocean. The DDT runoff worked its way into the food chain, being ingested by fish who were then preyed upon by the pelicans. Scientists found that the DDT was causing the breeding pelicans' egg shells to be too thin, making many break in the nest.

In 1970 brown pelican populations were at a critical low, and the species was listed as federally endangered under the Endangerment Species Act (ESA). In 1971, they were listed as endangered by California as well. Thankfully, in 1972 DDT was banned and the brown pelican populations have been able to rebound. By 2009, they recovered enough to be delisted under the ESA.

In more recent years, however, people have continued to be concerned about the survival of these birds. In particular the subspecies California brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) has been facing starvation due to the decline in their available prey such as Pacific sardines. So, for now I must leave you on a bittersweet note as it isn't smooth sailing for these birds just yet. Right now we are glad to be seeing so many young pelicans amongst the great number visiting our coastline this year. The brown pelicans that make their home in the Pacific migrate north to British Columbia and then return south to Southern California and Mexico each winter. Join in the fun and come see the return of the brown pelicans before they begin their southern migration to warmer waters. We sure wish them well on their journey!

[Learn more about California Brown Pelicans from the National Park Service](#)

[Learn more about federally endangered species from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#)

[California's threatened and endangered bird species list](#)

[A great article on brown pelicans as an indicator species](#)

[Read more about DDT](#)

## FORT ROSS CHAPEL



Following is an excerpt from the "**The Chapel at Fort Ross - 150 Years of Russian and California History**" booklet authored by historian Maria Sakovich and soon to be published by Fort Ross Conservancy. The photo shows the float constructed by the Native Sons of the Golden West (Santa Rosa) for the 1925 celebration in San Francisco of California's 75th anniversary of admission to the United States. The Russian Orthodox chapel was misnamed as the "Greek Chapel," but there is no mistaking that it is the chapel of Fort Ross.

"Constructed of redwood in the 1820s by the Russian American Company (RAC), the chapel at Settlement Ross served the religious needs of its multicultural population, most of whom had been baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church. Well into the twentieth century the chapel, along with St. Michael's Cathedral in Sitka, Alaska represented the only surviving religious structures from the colonial period. (The numerous extant churches and chapels in today's Alaska represent third- and fourth-generation iterations.) Fires in 1966, in Sitka, and in 1970, at Fort Ross, destroyed both original buildings. Even in its reconstructed state, the chapel at Ross represents a remarkable tale of transformation and survival from a humble, unadorned Russian Orthodox *khramik* to a widely photographed structure symbolic of California's nineteenth-century Russian episode. Over the years the grayed redwood chapel with its belfry and cupola, the first built in the "lower 48," has

also been claimed as an emblem of a pre-revolutionary Russia ("the past Glory of Great Russia") and as a monument to Russian Orthodox traditions in North America."

## NAKED LADIES (*Amaryllis belladonna*)



Those of you traveling along the Sonoma Coast this time of year may notice the swaths of gorgeous pink flowers growing on solitary bare stems, often near old ranches and along our coastal roads. At Fort Ross we have many visitors come in this time of year asking about these beautiful flowers. I thought it was the perfect time for an article about them.

These dancing beauties are a type of *Amaryllis* 'lily' (*Amaryllis belladonna*). In fact, they are not a true lily *Lilium* but a distant relative. If the *Amaryllis* name sounds familiar, picture the large, round

bulbs that are often given as gifts around the holidays. They do remarkably well grown indoors, often planted in nothing more than a vase of water, later producing massive white or red blooms.

They are so ubiquitous in Sonoma County this time of year, that one might think they are native, but in fact they are native to the Western Cape of South Africa. Sailors introduced them to California in the late 1800s.

One of the most common names for this flower is the Naked Lady. This fanciful name comes from the fact that the bulb produces its spear-like leaves in early spring and by the time they bloom in August the leaves have long since dried up, leaving the flower stocks bare or 'naked.'

After they bloom, their flower stock produces large seeds that when shaken loose by strong winds, drop and immediately start to germinate, encouraged by the first winter rains. Each bulb can produce for up to 75 years!

For more information read this interesting article by the [Golden Gate Gardener](#).

[Amaryllis](#) by Kathie Carter Cooperative Extension/Botany Plant Sciences Dept. University California

Riverside.

Article & Photograph by [Song Hunter](#), Director of Programs

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Visit our website at [WWW.FORTROSS.ORG](http://WWW.FORTROSS.ORG) for details

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