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DR. BROWN WAS RIGHT: MORE SWALLOWS SEEN AT MISSION

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CA. (May 24, 2012) – Cliff swallows expert Dr. Charles Brown has recommended that Mission San Juan Capistrano end this season's swallow vocalization experiment on May 31, as by then most cliff swallows in Southern California will have chosen where to settle for 2012. The scientific project will be implemented again next March, when the vocalization will resume through the end of May.

The swallow vocalization experiment included speakers playing cliff swallow courtship calls and were placed behind the statue of Father Junipero Serra on the Mission grounds in early April. This is Dr. Brown's first attempt working with the Mission to lure the cliff swallows back to nest, following their migration from Argentina every year.

While a special guest at the Mission for St. Joseph's Day and the Return of the Swallows celebration in March, Dr. Brown offered the idea that he felt would attract more cliff swallows. Using the strategically placed speakers, "the hope is to play calls and songs that will attract the interest and notice of passing cliff swallows," said Dr. Brown, who is a professor of biological sciences at the University of Tulsa. "Once they

see this site, there's a good chance they will be interested. It's a matter of attracting them in; we know they are overhead and in the area.

"The recording is of courtship songs that males use to attract females. And males would be attracted too because they are very social birds. A systematic program of playing it a few times a day, when the weather is good and during the times they would be foraging, I think there's a good chance they will come in."

Dr. Brown was right.

After the recordings began to be played, cliff swallows were spotted feeding overhead at the Mission several times, and a few cliff swallows flew in to investigate the recorded sounds. Earlier this month, a nesting colony of cliff swallows was found about a quarter mile south of the Mission on a building in San Juan Capistrano by Dr. Walter Piper, a biologist at Chapman University in Orange.

"I think that eventually we'll get the birds back," Dr. Brown said. "It may not be this year, it may not even be next year. But I think if we keep trying long enough, eventually, some individuals will come by, they'll see the Mission and they will realize it's a good place to nest, as they did in the past."

About Mission San Juan Capistrano:

Known as the "Jewel of the Missions," Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that boasts of quality permanent exhibits featuring original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits on a wide variety of topics.

The site itself serves as a living outdoor museum with original buildings constructed by Native Americans in the 18th century including the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church, and the original padres' quarters of the South Wing.

The Mission was founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junipero Serra as the seventh in the chain of the twenty-one California missions established by Spain, and is Orange County's only mission. Every year, over 50,000 students visit the Mission and engage in an inspirational learning experience via the Mission Matters programming, as part of their State required California history studies.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange and is supported by the Mission Preservation Foundation, which is comprised of business and community leaders committed to ensuring the long term

preservation and viability of Orange County's only Mission. The Mission receives no funding from either the Church or the State of California and charges admission funds as a means of providing public access.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Open Daily 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Good Friday afternoon. Admission is \$9 adults; \$8 seniors (60 years or over); \$5 children (ages 4 to 11); and children ages 3 and under are admitted free. Free audio guide with senior and adult admission. For more information, call (949) 234-1300 or visit www.missionsjc.com.