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MISSION'S SWALLOWS VOCALIZATION PROJECT UNDERWAY FOR LAST TIME

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (Feb. 9, 2015) -- Mission San Juan Capistrano's enterprising Swallows Vocalization Project is now underway for the fourth and final season, an effort to lure the popular birds onto the mission grounds.

The Swallows Vocalization Project incorporates speakers that play swallows courtship calls and songs in an effort to lure the swallows, which migrate from Argentina each March before returning to Argentina in October.

The number of swallows nesting at the mission has diminished over time because of urbanization, which has given the swallows more options to build their mud homes.

The Swallows Vocalization Project idea came from swallows expert Dr. Charles Brown, who was summoned to the mission in 2012 from the University of Tulsa, where he is a professor of biological sciences.

Dr. Brown's idea has worked. Swallows that flew overhead and might not have explored the mission and considered it a place to nest are now descending to the mission grounds, where they can build nests.

"The recording is of courtship songs that males use to attract females. And males would be attracted too because they are very social birds," Dr. Brown said. "It's a matter of attracting them in; we know they are overhead and in the area."

The project involves a systematic program of playing the courtship calls and songs a few times a day, when the weather is good and during the times the swallows would be foraging.

Dr. Brown has suggested that this be the final year of the Swallows Vocalization Project so that he can incorporate a new phase in attracting the bird. Stayed tuned for Dr. Brown's next idea.

To set up an interview with Dr. Brown, please email joe@juvecreative.com.

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); \$6 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.