

UK "Twitcher"

To The Editor,

On Sept. 20, I arrived at my daughter's home for my first visit to Long Beach. I was here to celebrate the birth of my new 14-day-old granddaughter Jenna and also to indulge in my hobby, which is birding (known as "twitching" in the UK).

My grandson Lawrence has spoken to me on many occasions about his local birding patch, the "lagoon." We walked from his home on Roycroft Avenue to visit the lagoon.

On first impression I was a little disappointed. I could not see how a beach, picnic area and families swimming could support wildlife of any significance, but I was proved to be wrong.

I was able to observe 12 species that I have never come across before in the wild, as the birds do not occur in the UK. My favorite, of course, must be the brown Pelicans, who were fishing within yards of me. As we made our way home a flock of Parakeets flew over, a lovely bonus to round off a wonderful period of birding.

We returned to participate in the Friends of Colorado Lagoon nature walk on Oct. 13. I was encouraged to receive a fridge magnet stating, "Storm Drains are for Rainwater only." The good people of Long Beach must be doing their part, as the waters are full of fish fry, marine crustaceans, etc. After all, this is why the Pelicans are here.

It would be great to remove the beach, picnic tables and plant trees and water margin plants, but this would limit enjoyment to only a small percentage of the population. What you have, although on a knife-edge environmentally speaking,

is perhaps the best scenario — you have your picnics, enjoy your swimming and watch the birds.

Next time you pass the Colorado Lagoon, give a little thought to this area. Support the Friends of Colorado Lagoon. From a UK Twitcher now home in the cold and rain, thanks for the kindness shown to me.

R.H. Milsom, England