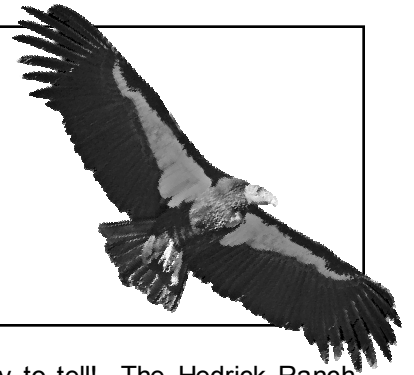


The CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Ventura Audubon Society **OCTOBER 2009** Volume 30 Number 2
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubonSociety.org



CALL NOTES *...Bruce Schoppe, President*

Reaching Out

The Board of Directors has set a goal of participating in two outreach programs during the next year. The two chosen are the **Earth Day** in Oxnard and the **Ventura Street Fair** in July. These are opportunities to interact with large numbers of people to spread the word regarding protection and restoration of habitat for birds and other wildlife. They are also one or two day events that should make it easier to organize and staff with volunteers. We already have a canopy and booth; so, design and construction of a large exhibit are unnecessary.

The first step is to find a volunteer or volunteers to organize one or both of these events on behalf of Ventura Audubon. Included would be making arrangements with the sponsoring agency and recruiting volunteers to staff the booth. We have had willing hands in the past but, after 20 or 30 years, they are ready to welcome new talent! Among our 600+ members, there must be a few who would be willing to lend their time and talent to this worthwhile venture. **If you are that person (or persons), please contact me or any Board member.**

And, we have a good story to tell! The Hedrick Ranch Nature Area has undergone significant restoration with help from VAS. At least 11 pairs of Least Bell's Vireo are nesting where, previously, there were but one or two pairs. VAS volunteers put up fences to secure snowy plover and least tern nesting areas on the beach each year and patrol to help educate people who fail to keep their dogs on a leash. We closely follow plans for Ormond Beach and the needed wetland restoration. We monitor actions likely to affect the estuaries of the Santa Clara and Ventura Rivers. On a broader scale, Audubon takes a leadership role in efforts to stem global warming and other "big" issues. VAS is strong supporter of Audubon Adventures which supplies teachers with materials for one of the most popular environmental education programs in K-12 schools. But, more teachers willing to use the program are needed.

Let's get out in the community to spread the word – and, invite folks to our outstanding programs and field trips!

Christmas Bird Count

Mark your calendars! **The Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Saturday, January 2, 2010.** We'll spend a day birding the seven sectors and, then, gather to hear the results and enjoy a potluck dinner. Birders of any level are welcome to participate. Look for more on the CBC soon.

OCTOBER PROGRAM ...Janice Susha, Program Chair *Tuesday October 13th, 7:30 p.m., Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd, Ventura* *Kris Mashburn~ Ranger, Naturalist, Bat Rehabilitator*



Ranger Kris Mashburn is a naturalist for California State Parks at McGrath State Beach and a rehabilitator of bats. She helps injured bats and releases them back into the wild. Her work and the effort of other bat rehabilitators are important as bat populations are continuing to decrease.

Bats are shy, gentle, and intelligent. They are among the slowest reproducing animals on earth. Most bat species have only one live young per year. The average life-span of a bat is 25 to 40 years. Half the population of bats in the U.S. are listed as rare, threatened or endangered.

Bats have been maligned throughout history and Kris will set the record straight on these very important and fascinating mammals. What you thought you knew is probably wrong. Come! Learn the truth about bats, and **see a live one ...up close and personal!** *Bring the children!*

BIRD OF THE MONTH – OCTOBER 2009

Article and Photo by DAVID PEREKSTA

Buller's Shearwater (Puffinus bulleri)



October is a great month to get offshore to search for seabirds on a pelagic trip. At this time of year we are visited by several species that breed in the Southern Hemisphere, one of which is the Buller's Shearwater.

The Buller's Shearwater is a strikingly patterned large shearwater. The upperparts are pale gray with a sharply contrasting dark cap and a bold, blackish M mark over the upperwing surface. The underparts and wing linings are a very clean looking pure white with the underwings neatly outlined in black. The bill is long, thin, and dark; the tail is dark gray; and the uppertail coverts are pale gray. It has a buoyant and graceful soaring flight with slow and easy wingbeats, and often arcs up in flight making tight, slow, near vertical turns. Compared with other West Coast shearwaters, Buller's is broad-winged and wedge-tailed. Buller's can be mistaken for some of the *Pterodroma* petrels due to the M pattern on the wings and high arcing flight.

Buller's Shearwaters nest in burrows and choose islands with soil suitable for burrows or with crevices among rocky cliffs. Colonies on some islands were nearly wiped out by feral pigs, but the species recolonized after pigs were eradicated in 1936. They feed over the open ocean in areas of strong upwellings where cool and warm water currents meet and bring food to the surface. They feed mostly on euphausiid shrimp and other crustaceans near their breeding grounds while they eat mostly fish and squid off California during the nonbreeding season.

The species breeds only on Poor Knights Islands off North Island, New Zealand and disperses to the North Pacific during the nonbreeding season starting in May. It is uncommon to fairly common off the West Coast from British Columbia to California during June to November, with peak numbers in September and October.

Buller's Shearwaters can be seen on southern California pelagic trips during the late summer and fall, although they are rare south of Point Conception. The best bet locally is to get on a scheduled trip out of Santa Barbara or Ventura in September or October (check socalbirding.com for lists of trips) that goes south or west of the northern Channel Islands. To find this species in Ventura County, you will have to be nearer to Anacapa Island or San Nicolas Island than to any of the other islands. The leaders will know what county you are in. Buller's Shearwaters are rarely seen from the mainland, but there is at least one record off of Point Mugu.



OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS ...Judy Dugan

Beginners are welcome on all field trips. Light drizzle does not necessarily cancel trips, but heavier rain will. If in doubt, please call the trip leader.

Saturday, Oct. 3, 9:00-12:00 a.m. Restoration Work Day, Santa Paula. Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Restoration Program. Sandy Hedrick: (340-0478). Arrive at **8:00 for birding** which usually yields some interesting birds. Our efforts include weed abatement, planting of native plants, and establishing trails. **Long pants and boots or closed shoes are required.** Bring water, gloves & sun protection. Take Hwy 126 to Santa Paula, 10th St. Exit. Go under freeway, rt. on Harvard, rt. on 12th and cross the S.C. River Bridge. Go 3.7 miles to 20395 S. Mountain Rd. Turn left onto the dirt road & follow it to the end (approx. ½ mile).

Saturday, Oct. 17, 8:30 a.m. Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Leader: Peg Stevens (648-2495). To car pool, meet at the Pacific View Mall at 8:00 a.m. Take the Coastal View Dr entrance off Mills & park in the lot directly across from the parking garage entrance or meet at the marsh entrance at 8:30. In addition to shorebirds, there may be kingfishers, kites and perhaps a shrike. Take Hwy. 101 north to Carpinteria, exit Casitas Pass Rd., left on Casitas Pass Rd., right on Carpinteria Ave., left on Linden, right on 3rd St. to the marsh.

Saturday, Oct. 24, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Beginners' Bird Walk, Camino Real Park, Ventura. Leader: Allen Bertke (640-9037). Many good birds in this park with its barranca and eucalyptus trees. We should see Red-shouldered Hawks and maybe the start of the season for White-crowned & Golden-crowned Sparrows. In Ventura take Dean Dr. off Mills Rd across from the Pacific View Mall. Follow Dean Dr. to the right & the park entrance. Meet by the tennis courts. Bring binoculars and a field guide.

Saturday, Oct. 31, 8:00 a.m. Lake Casitas. Leader: John Pavelko (640-9040). A haunting walk in the

shadow of the Topa Topa Mtns should show us ducks & grebes, egrets & sapsuckers, raptors & perhaps a White-breasted Nuthatch. Suggest car pooling – there may be limited free parking. To car pool from Ventura, meet at the Pacific View Mall at 7:30 a.m. Take the Coastal View Dr. entrance off Mills & park in the lot directly across from the parking garage entrance. Take Hwy 33 to Hwy 150, turn left and follow signs to the lake or take Hwy 33, exit Casitas Vista Rd. Turn right and go under freeway past Foster Park to 1st right, Santa Anna Rd. Follow to the lake. Check at the gate to see if we can park free in the Water Park lot. Otherwise, meet outside the gate. P.S. Costumes optional!

Friday, Nov. 13, 7:50-12:00 a.m. Pt Mugu Naval Base, Leader: Mugu Staff. Reservations and a \$10 deposit are required. Limit 25 – VAS members only unless there is space available after the deadline. Call Judy (642-0842) to reserve. Then send a \$10 refundable check made out to Ventura Audubon to hold your place to Judy Dugan, 262 Teloma Dr., Ventura, CA 93003. If you do not attend, deposit is forfeited. Also include with the check your full actual name, phone #, & citizenship of each person. **Checks must be received by Oct. 28** to hold a spot. Meet at main entrance at Navalair Rd. & Mugu Rd.

Mark Your Calendar:

Sunday, Nov. 1 – Hedrick Ranch

Save Water!

HEDRICK RANCH NATURE AREA WORKDAY SCHEDULE

It's here - it's here!!! The new schedule for our fun days at the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area!!! I hope you will join us for one or many of our work days. Come see how *fabulous* our restoration areas look - thanks to your hard work!!

Please notice the new requirement for all visitors to HRNA: long pants and closed shoes (boots or sneakers) are MANDATORY. This is for your own safety, since there are rattlesnakes, ticks, black widows, and stinging nettles on the ranch.

The 2009-2010 Workdays

- October 3rd, Saturday
- November 1st, Sunday
- December 5th, Saturday
- January 10th, Sunday
- February 6th, Saturday
- March 7th, Sunday
- April 3rd, Saturday

Directions (from Ventura)

- East on Hwy 126.
- Exit 10th Street (Santa Paula).
- Left at the end of the off ramp.
- Right on Harvard (first light).
- Right on 12th street (first intersection). 12th Street turns into South Mountain Road after crossing the Santa Clara River & going around a curve to the left.
- Go 3.7 miles to #20395 South Mountain Road on the left.
- Turn left onto the dirt road and follow to the end (~ 1/2 mile).

OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

The Tuesday, October 6th Board of Directors meeting will be held at the home of Art Marshall, 4499 Whittier St, Ventura, at 7:15 pm. Any VAS member is welcome. Call (805)642-1585 for information.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES



Again, as VAS has for many years, our chapter is sponsoring "Audubon Adventures" for our local elementary schools. "Audubon Adventures," for those not familiar with it, is an environmental, educational program for students grades 3rd to 5th (although appropriate classes and groups outside this parameter are welcome.) The program is delivered to the school as a boxed kit that includes 4 different issues of handouts per student, teacher's resource guide, posters and other materials.

Each year the program examines and explains environmental issues in age appropriate language. This year the title is "Action for Planet Earth," an exploration of earth science topics from a conservation perspective. Water, energy, habitat and personal involvement in community environmental projects are the subjects of the four student handouts. The kids will learn the science behind the challenges we face regarding our need for and use of energy, water and habitat, and how citizens (including them) have vital role to play in understanding and protecting these resources.

VAS would welcome new additions to our current "Audubon Adventures" enrollment and membership support for this project that introduces kids to stewardship of the environment. National Audubon is holding their price per kit to \$45.00 per classroom. Please send your contribution to VAS, P. O. Box 24198 Ventura, CA 93002. For more information, please contact me, Susan Bee, at scbee1415@yahoo.com or phone 640 0779.

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VAS OFFICERS AND CHAIRS

President	Bruce Schoppe	658-2396
Vice-President		
Secretary	Joyce Schoppe	658-2396
Treasurer	Jan Lewison	643-3353
Conservation	Sandy Hedrick	643-2408
Newsletter	Dee Press	484-8415
Membership	Art Marshall	642-1585
Field Trips	Judy Dugan	642-0842
Publicity/Education	Susan Bee	640-0779
Science/Webmaster	Reed Smith	652-0706
Programs	Janice Sussha	983-3929
At Large	Jim Sussha	983-3929
	Jack Gillooly	646-3867
	Jeff Goldberg	649-1132
	Marianne Slaughter	484-8415
	Nancy Schorsch	643-5825



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

October is the best month to find numbers of migrant shorebirds, landbirds, and seabirds passing through Ventura County. Local migrant traps can turn up "eastern vagrants" on any day during October so keep an eye on those tamarisk rows, riparian areas, sod fields, and other habitat patches for a variety of interesting migrants.

The Santa Clara River estuary did not breach until 12 Sep, but in the absence of shorebird habitat there the Oxnard Plain hosted a number of interesting species. An adult **Pacific Golden-Plover** was found along Arnold Road on 23 Aug (DP). Possibly the same bird was behind the Verizon substation on Hueneme Road on 29 Aug (RM), with both an adult and juvenile there on 30 Aug (DP). Two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** continued in the Hueneme Road/Arnold Road vicinity through 7 Sep. A juvenile **Solitary Sandpiper** was in Revelon Slough at Wood Road, a traditional spot for the species, on 30 Aug (OJ). Two **Baird's Sandpipers** were behind the Verizon substation on Hueneme Road 29 Aug–7 Sep (RM). A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was on the sod along Arnold Road 6-7 Sep (N&MF).

Point Mugu had Three **Reddish Egrets** 30 Aug–9 Sep (DP) and 31 **Black Skimmers** on 30 Aug (DP). A **Stilt Sandpiper** and a **Ruff** were in wetlands adjacent to Point Mugu on 10 Sep (LS).

A pair of **California Gnatcatchers** was found near CSUCI on 16 Aug (DP). This is the farthest west this threatened species has been found in Ventura County with the nearest known location to that being on the north end of Thousand Oaks.

Our local migrant traps have not yet produced any unusual migrant passerines, but let's hope that some will show up soon. Unusual for their location was a migrant **Blue Grosbeak** along Arnold Road on 30 Aug (DP) and a **Rock Wren** there on 7 Sep (DP & EW).

Thank you to those who reported sightings during the last month. If you have any questions about local birds or have a good one to report, e-mail or call David Pereksta at pereksta@pacbell.net or 659-5740.

Observers:

Nick and Mary Freeman, Oscar Johnson, Robert McMoran, David Pereksta, Larry Sansone, and Eric Waian.

INTRODUCTION TO ORNITHOLOGY

A course offered by the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology

The course is 8 weeks long, from the first week of October to the last week of November, and will cover bird anatomy, breeding, conservation, evolution, identification, physiology, and taxonomy. Classes meet for 3 hours twice per week at the Western Foundation and various local field locations, for a total of at least 60 hours of instruction. Classes will include lectures, labs using the Foundation's bird specimens, and identification of birds in the field using binoculars and field guides.

The cost of the course is \$200 for currently enrolled college students and WFVZ Volunteers; \$300 for WFVZ Members; and \$400 for non-Members. Class size is limited to 20 people.

The times of the course will be determined depending on the needs of the class.

Phone: 805/388-9944; E-mail: bookkeeper@wfvz.org

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

It's party time again! The 13th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium will be held Nov.19-22 in Stockton, CA, at the Hilton Stockton.

Attend workshops with raptor expert Bill Clark, birding pros Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan, as well as other informative folks. Our evening programs include Murrelet Halterman on Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Stephen Shunk on "The Magic of Birding".

We have drawing and digiscoping workshops, our always popular and informative ID Panel with guest experts, programs for beginning birders, and more. The many Field Trips frequently turn up chasable goodies. The Birder's Market is full of artists and vendors with a wonderful selection of bird and nature related items.

For more info, check the website at www.cvbs.org, or contact Frances Oliver at hummer52@sbcglobal.net or (209) 369-2010. See you there!

VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 24198
Ventura, CA 93002

Non-profit Organization
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Happy Halloween!

FINANCIAL REPORT

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, VAS had income of \$8,272 and expenses of \$10,545 resulting in a deficit of \$2,273.

Income		Expenses	
National Audubon	\$1,862	Newsletter	\$4,728
Donations	881	Programs	1,602
Audubon Adventures	1,030	Audubon Adventures	959
Birdathon	3,227	Donations	1,400
Other	1,272	Insurance	641
		Other	1,215
Total	\$8,272		\$10,545

The Birdathon produces most of our income. The amount from National Audubon is our share of the dues paid by members of National Audubon in our area. The largest expense is the printing and mailing of the newsletter, typical of many Audubon chapters. That's why we encourage members to request electronic delivery. Recipients of donations from VAS included the Tree Swallow Nesting Project, Friends of the Santa Clara River, Environmental Defense Center, Ojai Raptor Center, California Condor Recovery Fund and the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area. We had \$11,450.61 in the bank on June 30.

In addition to these general funds, VAS received a \$6,000 grant from a non-profit organization for the Santa Clara River Least Tern and Snowy Plover protection/restoration project and \$545 earmarked for the Terry O'Neill Memorial. We have \$4,843.86 in the bank dedicated to specific uses, mainly the protection/restoration of Least Terns and Snowy Plovers.

While we are in good financial shape, the operating deficit is cause for concern. A decline in "general" donations in recent years, likely, results from the recession and, hopefully, donations will rebound in the near future. VAS appreciates your continued support.