

## The California Condor

Ventura Audubon Society  
November 2021 Volume 63, Number 3  
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
[venturaaudubon.org](http://venturaaudubon.org)

### Call Notes

*by Cynthia Hartley  
VAS Executive Director*

*CA Condor photo by Chris Trent*



We have lots of news this month! Our Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is on for Saturday Dec 18th (*last month it was incorrectly listed as Dec 19th*). We have not missed a CBC in over 40 years, despite pandemics and wild fires. We hope you can join us for this important bird count. It's also possible to count from your backyard if you live in our count circle (see the map in the short article on the CBC below in the Field Trips section). We have COVID guidelines to ensure that we have a safe count for everyone.

Please contact Frank DeMartino if you would like to join. Look for more inf

The other special news this month is that we are reintroducing week day bird field trips. Field trips are our most popular activity and many of our members have asked for weekday bird walks again. So our Field Trip Coordinator Adele has added a week day trip in December which she will lead. This trip will be subject to all the same COVID safety measures as our other field trips.

Also, we are fortunate to have another installment of Dave Pereksta's "Field Notes". This month we bring you rare bird sightings in Ventura County from the 2nd quarter of this year. We will continue to dorun this column every couple months and summarize sightings by the quarter. Thank you Dave!

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### Inside this Newsletter

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#### **Other News**

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## 2022 Shorebird Calendars



We will again be offering this beautiful shorebird calendar featuring the photography of our volunteer coordinator, Alecia Smith.

All proceeds benefit our Shorebird Recovery Program, AND these images were photographed on local beaches. This is a great way to support the VAS Shorebird Recovery Program, and enjoy Ventura County shorebirds year round.

To find out more about this calendar or to

reserve your copy, please visit this [website](#).

# Birdathon

## Thank you!

Our deepest appreciation to all who have donated!



This year as a special thank you, we are sending a vinyl VAS logo sticker to everyone who contributes! If you haven't received your letter with a sticker, it is on the way! We just need your mailing address when you donate.

If you didn't get yours, please email us at [contact@venturaaudubon.org](mailto:contact@venturaaudubon.org)

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*We never share or sell your personal information.*

It's not too late to donate to our general fund and get your VAS sticker!

Donations can be made to our [PayPal link](#),

or by printing this [form](#) and mailing it to:

Ventura Audubon, P.O. Box 24198, Ventura, CA 93002

## November Guest Speaker

**"Caring for Wildlife  
at  
the California Wildlife Center"**



**Speaker: Denys Hemen, Hospital Manager**

**California Wildlife Center**

**Date: Nov 9, 2021**

**Time: 7 PM PDT**

California Wildlife Center takes responsibility for the protection of native wildlife through rehabilitation, education, and conservation. It is dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of native California species, who otherwise would be left to suffer from the effects of human encroachment, habitat destruction and environmental damage.



Our core work is the rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife, supported by state-of-the-art animal care and rehabilitation facilities, a cadre of professionally-trained staff, dedicated volunteers and an engaged community.

To join the program visit our [Monthly Speaker webpage](#)

Then click the "Watch Virtually Via Zoom" button at the top of the webpage



**Program Description** Denys will provide an overview of how the CWC focuses on avian patients. It will include how orphans are raised, the medical procedures provided, what is done when a patient comes in, how we an injured wild animal's stay at CWC is enhanced. The presentation will feature many pictures of past and present patients.

### **Speaker Biography**

**Denys Hemen** is originally from Alabama where he attended Auburn University and attained a bachelor's degree in Zoology. He started as a volunteer at California Wildlife Center in 2007 and has worked as part of the marine animal rescue team, hospital technician, facilities manager, and now the hospital manager. His passions at CWC are working with songbirds and enhancing/repairing enclosures. Outside of work he enjoys being a dad to his 3 ½ year old son.



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### **Upcoming Speaker Topics**

- Dec: Movie Night - "Condor's Shadow"; presenter Joseph Brandt
- Jan: Title TBD, wildfire and forest biodiversity; presenter Gavin Jones
- Feb, March and April TBD

If you have topic requests or would like to recommend a speaker, please email or Sabrina, our program chair [programs@venturaaudubon.org](mailto:programs@venturaaudubon.org)

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### **Diversity is Important for both Birds and Birders**

Ventura Audubon Society is committed to fostering and preserving a birding culture of diversity, equality and inclusion. Promoting birding to a diverse audience is critical to the future of birds,

benefits humans, improves our chapter and supports our mission to protect birds and their habitat. As an audience member if you ever feel we are not living up to this promise please feel free to reach out and let us know.

## Ventura Audubon Birding Field Trips

*A message from Adele Fergusson, Field Trip Coordinator*

### Beginners are always welcome on field trips!

Please do not be shy if you are learning bird ID or are just curious. We love having and encouraging beginner birders



COVID-19 safety measures:

- All participants sign up no less than 24 hours in advance for field trips - *this allows us advance time to ensure we have enough trip leaders to provide for social distancing*
- Participants sign and return a COVID release form
- All participants must be vaccinated - this includes our leaders too
- Everyone must wear a mask and social distance during the field trip

### To participate in a field trip:

1. Visit our [Field Trip webpage](#)
2. Scroll to the bottom of the field trip descriptions, and fill out; your name, email address and select the trip you want to attend
3. You will be sent an email by our Field Trip Coordinator
4. Fill out the form and email back, or bring with you to the trip

Questions or need help? Email [fieldtrips@venturaaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@venturaaudubon.org)

*Light drizzle does not necessarily cancel trips, but heavier rain will. Please wear appropriate clothing (layers are suggested), comfortable shoes, and bring snacks, water, hats, sunscreen, binoculars and field guides.*

### November Field Trips



Western Bluebird, photo: Morris



## Ojai Meadows

Saturday Nov 13, 2021  
Meeting Time: 8:30am

This beautiful preserve is a birding hotspot and includes a restored wetland and native plantings.

**Target birds:** Western Bluebirds, Sora, White tailed Kites, Western Meadowlark, Merlin, Lark Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrows.

[more info on Ojai Valley Land Conservancy website](#)

**Directions:** Take Hwy 33 toward Ojai and turn left at the Y. The preserve is on the left side. Parking is available in front of the entrance and at Nordoff High School. We will meet at the entrance.

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

## Cañada Larga Road

Sunday Nov 21st, 2021  
Meeting Time: 8:30am

We will drive and walk as we bird this beautiful canyon road and one of our best birding hotspots.

**Target birds:** Lark sparrows Red-shouldered Hawk, Loggerhead Shrike, Nuttall's Woodpecker and Roadrunner.

**Directions:** From 101 N, take the 33 and exit Canada Larga Rd. Meet at the beginning of the road there is a small parking lot on the right.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *This is a fairly busy county road, so please use good birding etiquette. Do not stop your car in the middle of the road and always bird from the shoulder.*

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

## December Field Trips



Bald Eagle; photo by Bob Massey

### Lake Casitas

Wednesday Dec 1st, 2021  
Meeting Time: 8:30am

Join us for a walk by the lake!  
**Target Species:** hummingbirds, grosbeaks, gnatcatchers as well as ducks, geese and waterfowl. Hopefully we will see the Lewis's woodpecker and the Bald Eagle. Plans are to enter Lake Casitas by car so walking will be



Snowy plover ; photo by Alecia Smith

### Santa Clara River Estuary/ Surfers Knoll

Saturday Dec 4th, 2021  
Meeting Time: 8:30am

We will walk along the beach from Surfers Knoll parking lot to the estuary.

**Target Species:** A variety of shorebirds including Snowy Plovers, Ruddy and Black Turnstones and hopefully Surfbirds which are always an exciting treat. We will also tackle some gull and tern

less than usual  
**Directions:** Take Hwy 33 towards Ojai; exit Casitas Vista Rd. Turn right twice and go under freeway past Foster Park to first right, Santa Ana Rd. Follow to park, on left. Or take Hwy 33 to Hwy 150, turn left and follow signs to the lake. Park out front and we will drive into the park or walk.

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

identification, so bring your field guides! Please bring scopes if you have them. We will be walking a good distance on sand, so please wear appropriate footwear and plan on dressing in layers.

**Directions:** Take Harbor Blvd to Spinnaker and enter Ventura Harbor. Follow Spinnaker as it curves around to the right. Park in Surfers' Knoll parking lot, on the left.

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

Visit our [Field Trip webpage](#) for detailed parking directions and to sign up!

## Ventura Christmas Bird Count!



**Saturday Dec 18th, 2021**

**Most sectors start at ~ 7am**

**Check in with your sector leader!**

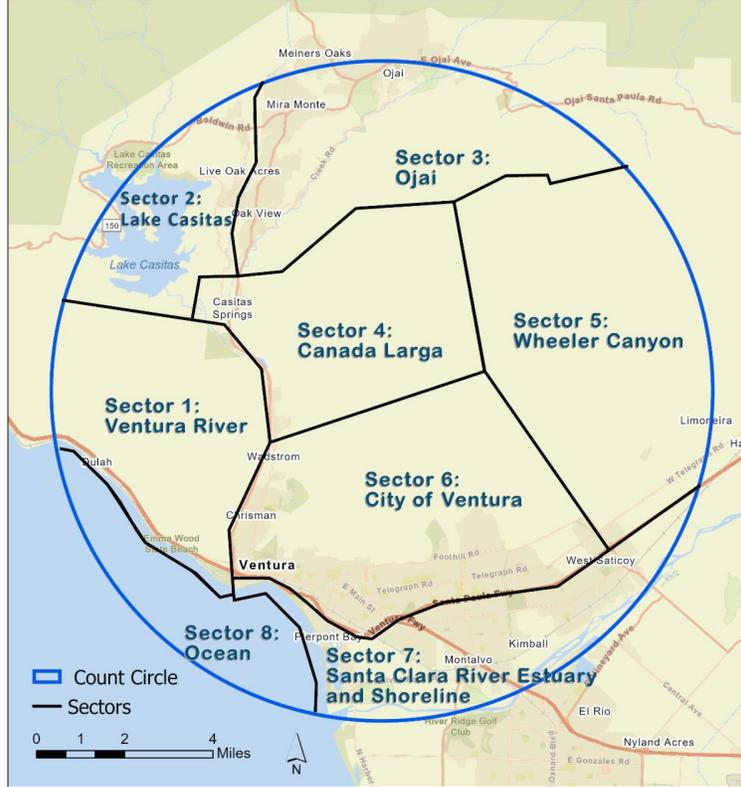
If you would like to participate this year, please contact Frank at [frank@colynx.com](mailto:frank@colynx.com)

Ventura Audubon has conducted a CBC count since 1980, since our chapter began. The Ventura count circle is divided into 8 sectors (see below). Each sector has a leader who organizes teams within their sector, and the entire circle is organized by our CBC compiler, Frank DeMartino.

Frank will report the data after the count is completed to the National Audubon Society database. We also have this wonderful [database](#) developed by Brad Sillasen using VAS data, which compiles the data from 1980 to 2019.

At this point we are planning on holding our normal "potluck" as a virtual gathering. Stay tuned for more info. We will publish more details in our December newsletter.

Look for more detailed information next month in the December California Condor newsletter!



## Shorebird Recovery Program Update

The nesting season of 2021 is officially over! Now we are working hard at our post-season activities;

- Winter snowy plover population monitoring
- Looking for and reporting banded birds
- Removing seasonal habitat fencing
- Cleaning nesting areas of trash
- Preparing presentations and reports for annual meetings and year end summaries
- Planning for our annual spring "Raise the Roost" SRP fundraiser
- Working on our volunteer appreciation awards!



### Thank you to the CREW for your hard work removing Ormond Beach habitat fences!

In October The Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers (The CREW) removed over 1 mile of habitat fences from the Ormond Beach all along the tideline. This allows the beach to return to a more natural state during the winter months, prevents fences from becoming buried during storms and encourages natural dune formation. Fences will be put

back up in February before nesting season begins on March 15th.



The [Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers \(The CREW\)](#) was established in 1991 to bring career development and leadership skills to local youths who traditionally come from low income and disadvantaged communities and lack access to environmental experiences. CREW members perform challenging work on backcountry trails, habitat restoration and fire prevention to produce healthy, biodiverse and resilient public spaces for all to enjoy. The experience provides the opportunity for CREW members to pursue careers in forestry and environmental science and become life long environmental stewards, and helps to develop the next generation of environmental workers and leaders in our community.

CREW members are ethnically diverse and most members are between the ages of 15-20. Members come from Oxnard, the Ojai Valley, Santa Paula, Oak View and the Filmore communities.

## Conservation Program Updates

### Conservation Workday with Friends of the Santa Clara River (FSCR)



FRIENDS OF  
THE SANTA CLARA RIVER



#### Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Workday

Saturday Nov 7th, 2021  
Meeting Time: 9:00am - 12 noon

**Sandy Hederick** will lead any VAS volunteers interested in helping to maintain the Reed Smith trail. Arrive at 8am for self-guided pre-workday birding. Long pants and boots or closed shoes are required. Bring water, gloves & sun protection.

**Directions:** 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). [GOOGLE MAPS](#)

FSCR Hedrick Ranch Nature Area workday [webpage](#)

FSCR COVID-19 safety measures

Event will be outdoors. COVID-19 precautions will be in place. A mask is required upon arrival, and as directed by our volunteer staff.

Please bring:

- A mask
- Your own gloves
- Water and snacks
- Sturdy shoes and long pants
- Sun protection and/or a hat

## Other News for Birders

### Ormond Beach Restoration Plan

The Ormond Beach Partners (The City of Oxnard, The Nature Conservancy, and the State Coastal Conservancy) are continuing to move forward with the Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Project (OBRAP). The land that will be restored not only includes the beaches where snowy plover and least terns nest, but also the lagoon and upland areas. These areas have been degraded and turned into agricultural and industrial land uses for decades.

**Background:** In 2019, after commissioning a detailed analysis and report of the site by restoration consultants, the Ormond Beach Partners presented 3 different conceptual plans to the public for feedback. This is the 2019 [report](#). The partners collected public input and have continued to work on the plan.

**Next Steps:** Based on public input the designs have been refined into one recommended alternative plan. Another public meeting will be held to:

1. Share highlights about the [Preferred Alternative and Preliminary Design Plan](#) (pdf)
2. Discuss the next steps for the Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Project (OBRAP)
3. Answer your questions

**Date and time: Wednesday, November 17th at 5 pm**

Spanish interpretation will be available.

Zoom link to the OBRAP public meeting: <https://csus.zoom.us/j/83243760400>

If you do not have the Zoom app you can dial in using one tap mobile, which is the phone number followed by the meeting ID number:

Phone number: +16699006833

Meeting ID: 83243760400#

For a link to the OBRAP Project Website with more info on the plan components, and background information: <https://www.oxnard.org/ormond-beach-restoration-public-access-plan/>

### Channel Islands Audubon Update

The October CI Audubon program combined a paint night event with a presentation by John Knapp, Channel Islands Ecologist about the Santa Rosa Island Research Station



## Birding Classes with Frank at Wild Birds Unlimited Ventura



### Falling For Migration

Speaker: Frank DeMartino  
Time: 2-3pm  
Date: Saturday, Nov 7th, 2021



Fall migration is upon us! What does that mean? It means birds are passing through our yards and heading to their wintering grounds. Migration is an amazingly complicated event that birds perform twice a year, at least! We're going to take a look at the history of migration and highlight some of the birds that go that extra mile (literally).

[Click here for Facebook event link](#)  
Meeting [link](#)

### Bird Feeding 101 Fall & Winter Feeding

Speaker: Frank DeMartino  
Time: 2-3pm  
Date: Saturday, Nov 13th, 2021



Have you gotten into birds during the pandemic? Would you like to enjoy birds more? Come to our Bird Feeding 101 class and learn the basics of fall and winter bird feeding from our experts! We will talk about everything you need to know in order to start your bird feeding hobby off right. We'll cover the setup of your yard, which feeders work where, what types of food are good to offer this time of year, how often to clean your feeders, what you can do about pests, and much more! Questions are welcome and encouraged.

[Click here for Facebook event link](#)  
Meeting [link](#)

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## **Bird ID Class: The Subtlety of Sparrows**

Speaker: Frank DeMartino

Time: 2-3pm

Date: Sunday Nov 21st 2021



This class will focus on those pesky "little brown birds" that can be found on our feeders and in our yards: Sparrows! Inspired by our visiting Lincoln's Sparrow, Abe, we have decided to go ahead and talk about sparrow ID! We'll take a look at some of the many sparrow species that winter in the US and talk about how to tell them apart. It is possible, we promise!

[Click here for Facebook event link](#)

Meeting [link](#)

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## **Programs for Bird Lovers from Other Audubon Chapters**



**Morro Coast Audubon Society**

Serving San Luis Obispo County Since 1966

### **MCAS Community Zoom Program: Birds of SLO - 2020 Part 2**

Speaker: Dave Keeling with music by Oliver Glynn

Time: 7pm

Date: Tues Nov 15th, 2021

Birds of SLO - 2020 Part 2, the Zoom Edition, is a two-part slide show featuring outstanding images of over 200 species of birds taken during the last half of last year by some of the finest nature photographers in San Luis Obispo County and presented by Dave Keeling. The photos are amazing and their impact is heightened by the live piano accompaniment provided by Oliver Glynn. If you enjoy birds and birding, you'll enjoy the evening. We will celebrate and view the many rarities that visited our county in 2020. And along those lines, we will have a contest to guess the number of species shown.

[more info](#) (including zoom link)

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**SANTA BARBARA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**The Carpinteria Snowy Plovers:**

# A First Successful Nesting in 60 Years

Speaker: John Callender

Time: 7:30 - 9 pm

Date: Wed Nov 17th, 2021

Snowy Plovers have a long history in Santa Barbara County. Areas on the north coast and south coast are now protected during nesting season for the Plovers. According to Paul Lehman in his book "The Birds of Santa Barbara County, California", Snowy Plovers nested in substantial numbers in the Santa Barbara area during the 1910-11 season, though numbers declined by 1923. He also states that between 1909 and 1947 27 egg sets were collected from Carpinteria beaches. The last known Carpinteria nesting took place in 1960, although in May-June of 2013 an adult with 2 chicks were found in Carpinteria. Join us as we learn of this year's Snowy Plover nest in Carpinteria, the first since 1960, as documented by John Callender.

[more info](#) (including zoom link)

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## Notes From the Field

### April 2021 - July 2021

by David Pereksta

**Wood Ducks** included a continuing pair at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 30 Jul and another in the Arroyo Simi on 13 Jul (RC). A **Eurasian Wigeon** continued a Mugu Lagoon late into the spring until 16 May. A **Red-necked Grebe** was discovered at a regular wintering location off Point Mugu on 25 Apr (DP) that was likely overlooked earlier in the winter. An **American Oystercatcher** was at Anacapa Island on 1 Jul (DP). **Red Knots** included five at Mugu Lagoon on 16 May (DP); one at the Ventura River Mouth on 24 Jul (GR); and individuals at the Santa Clara River Estuary on 13 Apr (SS), 8-14 May (m. obs.), and 25 Jul (CT & SS). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was at the Ojai Meadows on 7 Apr (SS) and another was along the Santa Clara River on 22 Apr (LH). A **Franklin's Gull** was at Ormond Beach on 22 Apr (SK). A **Common Tern** was at Mugu Lagoon on 2 May (DP). **Neotropic Cormorants** are expanding in southern California and local sightings included one continuing at the Ventura River Mouth through 18 Apr and another (or the same) at Ormond Beach 11 Jun-31 Jul (JA).

Northbound **Swainson's Hawks** were reported widely including individuals at Arroyo Verde Park on 5 Apr (KS), Sulphur Mountain on 6 Apr (LE & CL), Ventura on 12 Apr (DP), Rustic Canyon on 14 Apr (DKB), Arroyo Verde Park on 16 Apr (AF), Mount Pinos on 16 Apr (DP), Toland County Park on 19 Apr (KK), Canada Larga on 25 Apr (LLG), Pine Mountain on 3 May (KK), and Casitas Springs on 25 May (BS). Sightings of multiple birds included two in Ventura on 9 Apr (DP), nine at Point Mugu on 13 Apr (MR), and three at Point Mugu on 13 May (MR). A very late **Zone-tailed Hawk** was in Ojai on 25 Apr (PC), further fueling speculation that the species may be breeding near the Ojai Valley.

**Black Swifts** are a rarely observed spring migrant through Ventura County. However, they were reported extensively this spring, perhaps aided by heavy coastal overcast during their peak northbound window. A number of reports came from the vicinity of the Ventura Settling Ponds and Santa Clara River Mouth 10 May-7 Jun (DP, KS, et al.) with a high of 15 on 7 Jun (KS). Elsewhere individuals were reported at Arroyo Verde Park on 10 May (SS) and Lake Sherwood on 18 May (MH). **Calliope Hummingbirds** included one or more in Thousand Oaks 6-17 Apr (KR & SR), individuals in Thousand Oaks on 10 Apr and 4 May (TMC), one in Simi Valley on 6 Apr (CS), one near Moorpark on 11 Apr (SC), one in Ventura on 17 Apr (DP), one in Hill Canyon on 20 Apr (SC), and one in Thousand Oaks 8-18 May (AM). The wintering **Tropical Kingbird** continued at Ormond Beach through 22 Apr and a **Hammond's Flycatcher** was an unseasonably late migrant at Sycamore Canyon on 31 May (DP).

**Purple Martins** included a male and a female at the Ventura Settling Ponds 22-25 Apr (DP, SS et al.), two others there 18-22 May (BD), and one over east Ventura on 24 Apr (RM). **Bank Swallows** were reported widely in the vicinity of the Santa Clara River Mouth including two at

the Ventura Settling Ponds 22 Apr-18 May (SK & NA), which may have involved more birds moving in and out, two at McGrath Lake on 14 May (SK), as many as three at McGrath State Beach 8-14 May (SC), and singles at the estuary on 25 Apr (SK) and 11 May (LLG). Two were at San Nicolas Island on 13 May (SK).

**Gray Catbirds** included one on San Nicolas Island on 13 May (SK) and another at the Ventura Settling Ponds 25-26 May (MB). Two **American Dippers** continued in Santa Paula Canyon through 28 May. **Townsend's Solitaires** are uncommon in our local mountains and spring reports included a number of independent reports from various places on Mount Pinos 16 May-7 Jul (m. obs.) and one on Pine Mountain on 18 Jun (RC). A **Vesper Sparrow** was in the Rose Valley on 19 Apr (DKB). **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were reported by many along the coast and at a few inland sites, but noteworthy numbers were detected at the Ventura Settling Ponds and the Santa Clara River Estuary 19 Apr-16 May when numbers as high as 80 were detected (KS, m obs.). A **Black-and-white Warbler** was on San Nicolas Island 13-19 May (SK) and another was singing near Matilija Lake 16 Jun-23 Jul (PG). **Rose Breasted Grosbeaks** included one at Canada Larga on 18 May (MD), two in Ventura on 20 May (ETG & DP), one in Newbury Park on 2 Jun (CB), and one in Thousand Oaks on 7 Jun (CJ).

A pelagic trip out of Ventura on 31 Jul had some notable species in Ventura County waters including 2 **Craveri's Murrelets**, 2 **Black-footed Albatrosses**, 17 **Cook's Petrels**, and a **Brown Booby** (DP, JB et al.).

Thank you to those who reported sightings during this period. If you have any questions about local birds or have a good one to report (please no calls about nuisance birds) e-mail David Pereksta at <pereksta@pacbell.net>

Good birding,  
**David Pereksta**

Observers: John Apperson, Noah Arthur, Joel Barrett, Marc Better, Catherine Bourne, Peter Cantle, Rick Constantino, Sammy Cowell, Brian Daniels, Michael Davis, Linda Easter, Adele Fergusson, Peter Gaede, Linnea Hall, Mary Hansen, Carol Johnson, Deven Kammerichs-Berke, Sangeet Khalsa, Karl Krause, Carol Langford, Lukas Le Grice, Robert McMorran, Thomas McNamara, Ava Molnar, David Pereksta, Griffin Rohrer, Martin Ruane, Karen Rusch, Steve Rusch, Spencer Seale, Kirill Shtengel, Brian Sullivan, Cody Swanson, Elisa Taylor-Godwin, and Cameron Tescher

## Support Ventura Audubon Society

**A special thank you this month  
to our local USFWS office in Ventura!**

Our local office purchased next year's supplies of fencing and trail cameras for our Shorebird Recovery Program. This will benefit both Ormond and Hollywood Beaches throughout the 2022 nesting season. THANK YOU!!



# Thank you to our supporters!

Financial contributions to our chapter allow us to continue our work protecting birds and their habitat

## Grants

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife and United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Act Section 6 Grant
- National Foundation of Fish and Wildlife (NFWF)
- National Audubon Society, Audubon in Action Grant

Please consider donations to VAS  
Ventura Audubon Society is a registered tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

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