

The California Condor

Ventura Audubon Society
February 2024 Volume 65, Number 6
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
venturaaudubon.org



Photo by: Alistair Skinner, taken on the January 27th field trip at Lake Piru

Call Notes

by Rachel Ameche
President

Ventura county's beautiful beaches enrich the lives of all who live here. They are full of precious wildlife and offer opportunities for recreation and relaxation. This last month we saw the power and destruction of the king tide combined with a large storm swell. While this occurrence wasn't directly attributed to sea level rise, it provided us with a firsthand experience of the havoc that could unfold, particularly when exacerbated by more intense storms.

Coastal Resiliency is an ecosystem's ability to recover after events like the dangerous high tide event we had in January, and will ultimately serve as a line of defense for the birds and people who live in coastal communities. Establishing resilient ecosystems depends on the dedication and collective efforts of the community. The Ventura Audubon Society is committed to being an advocate for birds and the places they live by supporting efforts to protect beaches. Ormond beach is considered one of the most important wetland restoration opportunities in Southern California.

This month, we get to hear from Peter Dixon from The Nature Conservancy who will tell us about the Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Plan (OBRAP). The Ormond Beach landowners TNC, the City of Oxnard, and the Coastal Commission are creating a plan to protect sensitive native plant and animal species, restore the

habitat, and improve public access to Ormond. VAS has given valuable input to this project and will continue to be involved during the design and construction phases. Please join us at our next program for more details on the exciting work being done in our community. Visit our website www.venturaaudubon.org, or keep reading for details on the time and location.

We have posted the video of our January speaker program, click [HERE](#) to watch.

February 2024 Speaker Program

“The Future of Ormond Beach”

Speaker: Pete Dixon

Restoration Project Manager for The Nature Conservancy

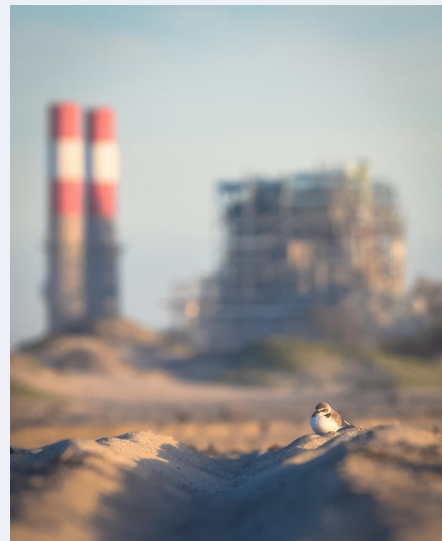
Date: Tuesday February 13th

Time: 7pm

Location: Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd, Ventura



Join us for our February speaker presentation on the planned restoration of Ormond Beach Wetlands, known as the Ormond Beach Restoration and Access Plan (OBRAP). Ormond Beach in Oxnard, CA, is one of the largest and most significant coastal restoration opportunities in Southern California, encompassing over 1,000 acres of rare and endangered habitat. This two-mile stretch of beach, dunes, wetlands, and uplands is home to 30 rare, threatened, or endangered species and used by over 200 species of birds. The City of Oxnard, California Coastal Conservancy (SCC), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have partnered to develop a plan for the preservation, enhancement, and restoration of this crucial yet long-neglected coastal area. Pete Dixon, Restoration Project Manager for The Nature Conservancy, will provide updates and status on the restoration plan for the coastal dune and upland ecosystems and Ormond Lagoon. Pete will address the challenges of planning for sea level rise, storm



erosion, and striking a balance with public access while restoring this important natural and community resource.



To join the program via Zoom, visit our

[Monthly Speaker webpage](#)

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

Our February speaker Pete Dixon brings a wealth of expertise in botany and landscape architecture to his role as Restoration Project Manager for The Nature Conservancy. Graduating from the University of Oregon with a degree in landscape architecture, Pete's passion for native landscapes and civic engagement led him to various roles in conservation. Early in his career, he honed his skills at his grandfather's native plant nursery in Michigan, cultivating a deep understanding of plant ecology. His journey continued as he worked with the Catalina Island Conservancy, focusing on habitat restoration and conservation efforts. Pete's dedication to preserving natural resources and fostering community involvement propelled him to his current position, where he works on the Ormond Beach Restoration and Access Plan (OBRAP). Through his work, Pete remains committed to creating sustainable solutions for coastal ecosystems while engaging the public in the stewardship of our precious natural heritage.



*Drone photo of Ormond Beach; courtesy of Sand Shed CSUCI, Matt Wells drone pilot
Snowy Plover with power plant, photo by Alecia Smith; Snowy Plover picking up kelp, photo by Alex Vaca*

Shorebird Recovery Program

2023 Nesting Report Published

by Cynthia Hartley

The 2023 Nesting Report has been completed and is linked on our website. The report details the outcomes of the 2023 nesting season for western snowy plovers and California least terns on Ormond Beach. To find the pdf, browse to our Nesting Report webpage [HERE](#), and click on the Ormond "2023" button to download the report pdf.



Thank you to our Shorebird Recovery Team at Ormond Beach; Kat Whitehouse, Alecia Smith, Joan Tharp for a great nesting season last year. Thanks also to Whale Tail summer interns Kai Miyashiro and Hector Serrano Abundez and Ormond Beach Steward Walter Fuller. Of course, a huge thank you to our Beach Naturalist volunteers who donated many hours patrolling the beach, collecting data, hanging signs and maintaining habitat fences.



Here are our 2023 Volunteer Awardees Holly, Joan, Anna, Sean and Rachel! Thanks to all of our volunteers for all you do for our snowy plovers and least terns.

Next Up

Snowy plover nesting season starts in mid-March, so it will be here before we know it!

Habitat Fences

We will be very busy in February. The C.R.E.W. of Ojai will re-install 1.5 miles of tideline fences, and do repairs on the fences that stay up in the winter. We will also be cleaning and re-hanging signs, and cleaning and organizing our storage containers at the Arnold Rd entrance to Ormond Beach in preparation for the 2024 season.

New Employees

Our Shorebird Recovery team will be welcoming some new faces this month! We have a new volunteer coordinator, a first time ever diversity coordinator and a CSUCI student field intern. Look for introductions in the March Newsletter.

Volunteer Program

In February our shorebird recovery team will be working hard to plan a new round of volunteer workshops and volunteer work days. Stay tuned for announcements of dates and events!

We are looking forward to working with our volunteer veterans and new volunteers in the upcoming season!



Camarillo Costco Development to be discussed at Council Meeting February 14th at 6PM!

Proposed Development in Camarillo will Impact Burrowing Owls and Hawks



Calling all bird lovers! Show your love for birds on Valentine's Day. Come to the Camarillo City Council meeting and advocate for burrowing owls and hawks.

In December, the Camarillo Planning Commission approved a Costco Warehouse store with a 32 pump gas station to be built on the corner of Springville Drive and Ventura Road. The site is a 20 acre open field used as hunting ground for hawks and owls. Owl burrows have been spotted in the area in recent years. Burrowing owls are listed as a species of concern; their populations have decreased significantly due to habitat loss.

The City of Camarillo is not requiring that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) be conducted for the project. An EIR is the usual protocol, and is essential to assess the local and cumulative impacts the project will have on wildlife, traffic, and air pollution. As bird lovers, we have an opportunity to tell the council that an EIR is warranted, especially when there is a species of concern involved.

If you already have a romantic evening planned, written comments can also be submitted! For more information on commenting in person or by email, go to https://www.cityofcamarillo.org/departments/city_council/index.php or click the button below.

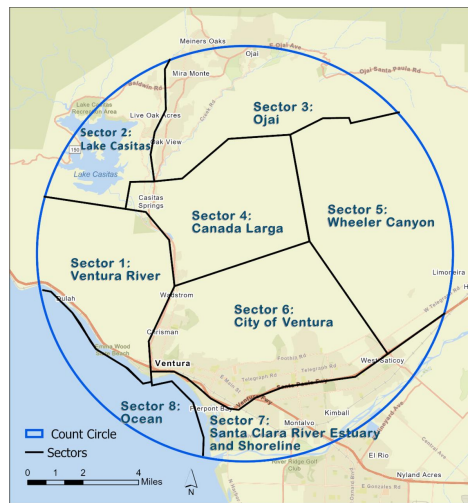
The meeting will be at 6 p.m. at the Camarillo Library, 4101 Las Posas Road. You can also email Kristen at kess4652@gmail.com with any questions.

Click here for the Camarillo City Council Webpage

Ventura Audubon Christmas Bird Count Update

On January 5th we conducted our, delayed, Christmas Bird Count. Frank is busily compiling the final tally. Here's its latest update:

We had over 100 volunteers manage to make it out for a rare Friday Christmas Bird Count and we were rewarded with 175 species. Interesting species that were found include: Chestnut-sided Warbler, Grace's Warbler, American Redstart, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, and our first Lesser Nighthawk! Thank you to all who helped coordinate, count, compile, and celebrate our local birds!



Click to visit the Ventura Audubon CBC database

Years on Record: 42
Total Species Recorded: 304
Most Species Recorded: 202 (1987)
Least Species Recorded: 156 (1981)
Average Species Recorded: 178

Ventura Audubon Birding Field Trips



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!

- We request that 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*
- This also enables us notify participants of any changes

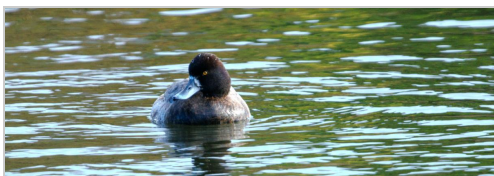
Sign up early to participate in a field trip:

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

Questions or need help? Email 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.

February Field Trips

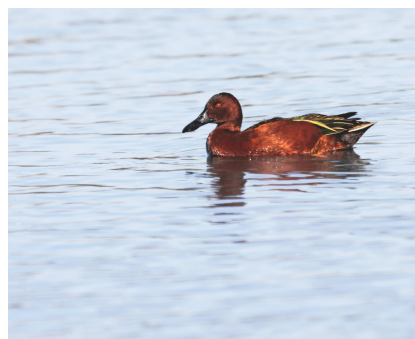


Lake Castias

Saturday Feb 10th, 2024
Meeting Time: 8:30am

Join us for a walk by the lake, there's usually something for everyone here. From Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers, and Warblers, to Ducks, Grebes, and Raptors. Recent sightings include Phainopepla and Red-naped Sapsucker. And there's always a chance we might see one of the resident Bald Eagles! Restrooms are available throughout the park.

Go to our field trip page to sign-up



Arroyo Verde Park

Saturday Feb 24th, 2024
Meeting Time: 8:30

Enjoy birding the oak woodland, grassy areas, and chaparral in this long, broad canyon. We'll be looking for Sparrows, Woodpeckers, Warblers, Raptors, and more! Recent sightings include Chestnut-sided Warbler, Brown Creeper, and Merlin. Parking is \$2/hour or \$5/day, or park on Foothill or Day and walk inside.

Go to our field trip page to sign-up

[Click here to sign-up for all our field trips](#)

Special Pelagic Trip for June 2024! Pre-Register Now!

Please Pre-register now for this field trip so we can gauge interest. The trip is expected to cost approximately \$50. You are not committed at this time.

Join us for a morning of introductory Pelagic birding. This exclusive trip will be approximately 4 hours by boat in the Santa Barbara channel where we will look for Loons, Scoters, Jaegers, Auklets, Petrels, Shearwaters, and more. We are planning this as a joint venture with Conejo Valley Audubon Society.

For questions, send an email to fieldtrips@venturaaudubon.org

[Pre-register Here](#)

**Birding Classes with Frank at
Wild Birds Unlimited Ventura**

Birds...in Love? - Saturday, February 10th at 2pm on ZOOM

Step into the fascinating world of avian romance with our presentation, "Birds... in Love?" Dive deep into the intricate realm of bird mating rituals, exploring the dazzling displays, elaborate dances, and melodious serenades that form the foundation of their courtship. Join us on a captivating journey as we unravel the secrets behind avian pair bonds, discovering the extraordinary lengths some birds go to find their perfect mate. Delve into heartwarming stories of enduring partnerships, uncovering the species that choose a life-long commitment, and learn about the fascinating dynamics that contribute to their remarkable unions.

Click button for more information and the Zoom link

[Click for more info](#)

Thank you to our supporters!

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

- The Nature Conservancy, National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant
- National Foundation of Fish and Wildlife (NFWF)
- National Audubon Society, Audubon in Action Grant
- California Coastal Commission, Whale Tail Grant
- The Port of Hueneme
- The City of Port Hueneme
- Patagonia
- 1% for the planet
- Ventura Coast Brewing Company
- Topa Topa Brewing Company

Thanks to our Donors in January!

- Bonnie Burgess
- Fred Mc Fadden
- Elisabeth Treadwell
- Cynthia Ellington
- Robert Kyle
- The McConnell Family Trust
- Mike and Erica Swimmer

Support Ventura Audubon Society

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

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