

The California Condor

Ventura Audubon Society
January 2024 Volume 65, Number 5
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
venturaaudubon.org



Photo by: Cynthia Hartley

Call Notes

by Rachel Ameche
President

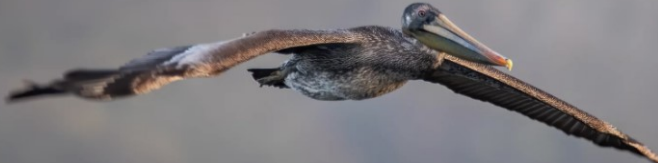
Happy New Year! On behalf of everyone at Ventura Audubon, we wish you a safe and happy 2024! We had an amazing year in 2023. Our shorebird recovery team recorded a record number of western snowy plover nesting pairs at Ormond Beach this season, for the first time since we've been involved in this effort; in fact, we met the Fish and Wildlife Service goal for the number of pairs. In 2023 we had the most members in our history, thank you! In 2023 we formed and maintained collaborative partnerships with the Cities of Port Hueneme and Oxnard, The Port of Hueneme, The Nature Conservancy, The California Coastal Conservancy, The California Conservation Corps, Coastal Keepers, and CAUSE. We will continue to work with all our partners in 2024 to ensure the success of our mission of protecting birds and their habitat. We'd like to thank our donors and members for an excellent 2023 and look forward to 2024

There's a lot to look forward to: an amazing lineup of guest speakers, nesting season, volunteer opportunities and field trips with our talented field trip leaders. In January we get to look forward to hearing how the Christmas Bird Count went. Last year, our species count was well above the historical average at 188. Hopefully this year we' do even better! The count day is on December 30, and week goes until January 2. Be sure to let Frank DeMartino know at venturabirdcount@gmail.com if you see a species you think we may not have counted yet.

If you haven't had a chance to head out on any field trips lately, I highly recommend trying to catch one coming up. Last month the group had a windy, but beautiful morning at the settling ponds where they saw 31 species including Red-breasted Mergansers, a Belted Kingfisher, Cinnamon Teal and many more. Keep reading to see when and where to meet.

National Audubon has listed highlights from 2023 about the work being done by chapters all over the country. VAS made the list for our work on building equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) in our chapter. Check out the article ([Click HERE](#)) to read about it and lots of awesome things being done in conservation through Audubon chapters.

Update from the Membership Coordinator



We would like to thank everyone who joined or renewed their annual membership in 2023! We have the most members in our history and our membership continues to grow. If you're not a member, you can still join by clicking one of the links below. Look for your renewal reminder in your email inbox.

If you have any questions or concerns about your membership, please feel free to send an email to membership@venturaaudubon.org.

We look forward to an exciting 2024!

By joining our local chapter, your donation directly supports Ventura Audubon's mission.

[Membership Webpage](#)

[Join VAS via PayPal](#)

January 2024 Speaker Program

California Condors in the Los Padres National Forest: A Brief History and Current Trends

Speaker: Bryant Baker

Director of Conservation and Research at Los Padres Forest Watch

Date: Tuesday January 9th

Time: 7pm

Location: Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd, Ventura

Learn about how the Los Padres National Forest has played an outsized role in the natural history and ongoing recovery of the famous California condor. This presentation will go over some of the fascinating and lesser-known history of condors in the region, how they were saved from the brink, and how their current local populations are faring. You'll also get to see never-before-seen maps showing how and where condors have been spending their time over the last decade in the Los Padres National Forest and surrounding areas.

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

Bryant Baker is the Director of Conservation & Research at Los Padres ForestWatch, a nonprofit organization based in Santa Barbara, California dedicated to protecting the Los Padres National Forest and other public lands in the region. His research focuses on fire ecology and management in shrubland and forest ecosystems in California. Bryant is a GIS analyst and cartographer, and his maps on land use and wildfire have been published by the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Diego Tribune*, *Oregon Public Broadcasting*, *Montana Free Press*, *Mother Jones*, and other media outlets. In addition to his conservation work and research, Bryant is a plant and landscape photographer—specializing in post-fire habitats and native plants in California—whose work has appeared in books, magazines, and newspapers across the region. He also provides educational information about native plants and ecosystems of California on Instagram as @bryant.the.shrublander

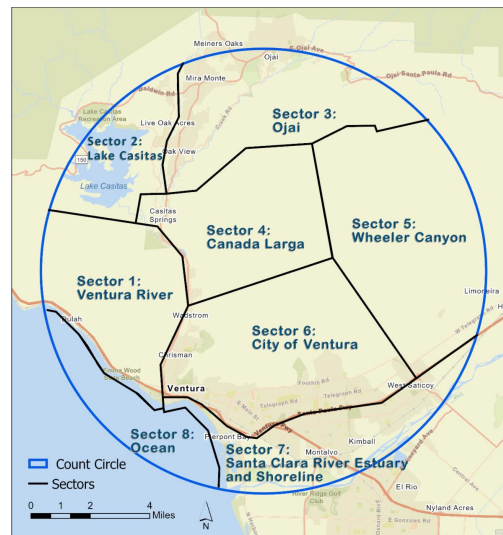


Ventura Audubon Christmas Bird Count Saturday December 30, 2023

Ventura Count Circle

Each winter the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a chance to participate in the oldest and longest running community science project. Click [here](#) for information from National Audubon on the history of the CBC, and [here](#) for reports from 1900-present.

Each Audubon chapter counts a 15-mile diameter "count circle". The same circle is counted each year for consistency. The Ventura Audubon count circle is subdivided into 8 sectors (see map to the right). Each sector has a leader who organizes teams within their sector, and the entire circle is organized by our CBC coordinator and compiler, Frank DeMartino. Frank will report the data after the count is completed to the National Audubon Society database.



If you would like to participate this year, either in the field or from your backyard, please do one of the following:

- Email Frank DeMartino at frank@colynx.com,
- Visit or call the [Wild Birds Unlimited](#) store in Ventura

What are we learning from the CBC?

Each year CBC data is added to a database and is available to researchers and the public. The Ventura count has been held each year since 1980. Brad Sillasen created

an interactive database that shows trends in bird populations within Ventura Audubon's Count Circle. Below is an overview of the data we have collected. To explore the data, please visit the website link below:

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

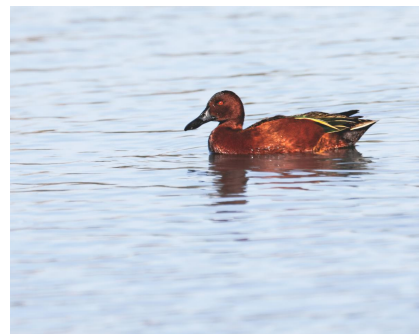
Questions or need help? Email fieldtrips@venturaaudubon.org

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.

January Field Trips



Ormond Beach,



Lake Piru

**Saturday Jan 27th, 2024
Meeting Time: 8:30**

A beautiful haven away from it all, tucked in the mountains and adjacent to Los Padres National Forest. Home to many raptors,

Arnold Road

Saturday Jan 13th, 2024

Meeting Time: 8:30am

One of the top birding areas in Ventura County used by over 200 shorebird, raptor, and migratory bird species. Includes a protected nesting site for the endangered California Least Tern and the threatened Western Snowy Plover. Notable visitors can include Black-Necked Stilt, Yellow Headed Blackbird, and Peregrine Falcon. Walking will be mainly on dirt paths and sandy beaches. Portable restrooms at parking lot.

[Go to our field trip page to sign-up](#)

songbirds, and waterfowl including Bald Eagles and Western Grebes. Recent visitors include Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneye. And of course, don't forget to keep a lookout for Condors! Restrooms available throughout. No cell service. There is a fee for parking and carpooling is recommended. Our guide is trying to arrange a discount

[Go to our field trip page to sign-up](#)

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

Notes from the Field -- September - November 2023 by Dave Pereksta

This period was highlighted by two outstanding birds for Ventura County. A **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher** was seen briefly at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 21 Sep (SK). This is the second county record and the first for Ventura since 1974 when California's first was found at Sycamore Canyon. A **White-rumped Sandpiper** was on the Oxnard Plain 11-17 Sep (LS & DP). This was also a second county record and the first in the county since 1988.

Wood Ducks included two at Calleguas Creek on 2 Oct (ZA), one at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds 14-25 Oct (RM), and one at the Ventura Settling Ponds 15-21 Oct (KS). A **Long-tailed Duck** was at Ormond Beach 22-25 Nov (AS). A **Common Gallinule** was at Point Mugu on 3-24 Nov (DP) and another was at the Ventura Settling ponds on 16 Nov (MBo). A **Mountain Plover** was on the sod fields along Arnold Road 29 Oct-2 Nov (JF & RC) with a second bird there on 1 Nov (SC). A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at the Santa Clara River Estuary on 2 Sep (NA), and a late **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and a **Red Knot** were on the Oxnard Plain on 24 Sep (LS & DP). As many as five **Stilt Sandpipers** were on Oxnard Plain 1-20 Sep and 6 were there 24 Sep (LS & DP). A **Western Cattle Egret** was in Fillmore 10-26 Sep (TT), one was on the Oxnard Plain 15-17 Sep (DP), two were at the Ventura Settling Ponds 13-19 Oct (AF) increasing to eight there on 29 Oct (MB), and one continued at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds through 18 Nov. A **Neotropic Cormorant** was in the Arroyo Simi 4-10 Sep (PR)

Two **Broad-winged Hawks** were over Camino real Park on 3 Oct (GA). A **Swainson's Hawk** was in Ormond Beach on 31 Oct (AS). There were several **Zone-tailed Hawk** sightings in the Ojai vicinity and it is not clear how many individual birds were involved including north Ojai on 6 Sep (JM), Casitas Springs on 5 Oct (EC), Mira Monte on 18 Oct (JM), Lake Casitas on 14 Nov (SK), and Sisar Canyon on 28 Nov (SK).

White-winged Doves included individuals in midtown Ventura on 16 Sep (SS) and 14 Oct

(MBr), one in east Ventura 9-12 Oct (DP), one at Arroyo Verde Park 13-15 Oct (GP), and one at Point Mugu on 3 Nov (DP). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at Canada Larga 24-25 Nov (MB). **Red-naped Sapsuckers** included one at Taft Gardens 8-28 Nov (JM) and likely a returning one at Lake Casitas 12 Oct-30 Nov (LO).

Ventura's fourth **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** was at Camino Real Park on 2 Oct (DP). A **Tropical Kingbird** was at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 19 Sep (GA), one was at Ormond Beach 20 Sep-13 Oct (SK), and another was in Ventura on 10 Oct (ASz). **Eastern Kingbirds** included one at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds on 1 Sep (BM) and another at Point Mugu on 12 Sep (MR). A Returning **Gray Flycatcher** was at Arroyo Verde Park 23-30 Sep (MBr) and an **Eastern Phoebe** was at Canada Larga on 26 Nov (NB). **Plumbeous Vireos** were at Mission Oaks Park 27-29 Oct (RCo & KW), Sheills Park on 1 Nov (SC), and Rancho Simi Park 6-28 Nov (ND). Two **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** continued at Rincon Creek through 16 Nov. A **Sage Thrasher** was at Lake Casitas 14-16 Nov (SK) and a **Pacific Wren** was at the Ventura River Preserve on 14 Oct (CM et al.).

An **Evening Grosbeak** was near the summit of Mount Pinos on 20 Oct (AS) and two were near the Mount Pinos Campground 27 Oct-4 Nov (DP & SP). **Lark Buntings** included individuals at Canada Larga Road on 28 Sep (JB), the Saticoy Spreading Ponds on 30 Oct (RM & JMc), and Emma Wood State Beach 13-16 Nov (SK). As many as two **Bobolinks** were at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds 15-17 Sep (RM & AA). **Orchard Orioles** included individuals at the Camarillo Outlet tipus on 12 Sep (SC), Saticoy Spreading Ponds on 1 Oct (RM), near Brown Barranca on 19 Oct (EC), Ventura on 10 Nov (RM), and at Bubbling Springs Park 29-30 Nov (MB & RCo). A **Baltimore Oriole** was at the Camarillo Outlet tipus 15-18 Sep (KS). **Clay-colored Sparrows** included individuals at Canada Larga on 17 Sep (SS) and 29 Sep (MB), Emma Wood State Beach on 2 Oct (NA), Channel Islands Regional Park on 4 Nov (SK), and Ventura 5-24 Nov (MBr). **Swamp Sparrows** included two at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds 1-25 Nov (GA), one at the Ventura Beach Marriott on 9 Nov (MBi), and Lake Casitas on 16 Nov (MB).

A **Northern Waterthrush** was at the Ventura Settling Ponds 23 Sep-1 Nov (GA) and another was at Sycamore Canyon 28 Sep-4 Oct (GA). **Black-and-white Warblers** included individuals at the Camarillo Outlet tipus 8-10 Sep (DS), the Saticoy Spreading Ponds on 19 Sep (VP), the Ventura Settling Ponds 22 Sep-12 Nov (ASz), Sycamore Canyon 22 Oct-6 Nov (DP), and two at Pitts Ranch Park on 18 Sep (JB).

Tennessee Warblers were at the Camarillo Outlet tipus on 27 Sep (MB), the Lombard tipus on 10 Sep (SS & MB), Anacapa Island on 22 Sep (SK), Sycamore Canyon 29 Sep-2 Oct (SC), and the Ventura Settling Ponds 14-19 Oct (BS). **Lucy's Warblers** were widely reported with individuals at the Camarillo Outlet tipus 6-16 Sep (JMu) and likely a different individual there on 7-10 Oct (SC), Dunkirk Park on 29 Sep (RM), West Village Park on 29 Sep (RM), the Gonzales tamarisks on 8 Oct (MB), the Ventura River on 12 Oct (DP), and Oxnard College on 14 Sep and 12 Oct (SC). **Virginia's Warblers** were at Bob Kildee Park on 6 Sep (SC), the Camarillo Outlet tipus 9-10 Sep (MB), and Ventura on 18 Sep (MT). **American Redstarts** were at Arroyo Verde on 10 Sep (MBr), the Lombard tipus on 11 Sep (KK), Oxnard College on 17 Sep (TT), Sycamore Canyon 28 Sep-4 Oct (VB), and the Ventura Settling Ponds 2 Oct-1 Nov (PS). Two were in Ventura on 1 Nov (NA). A **Northern Parula** was at the Ventura Settling Ponds 6-8 Oct (MB). A **Magnolia Warbler** was at Wildwood Park 25 Oct-4 Nov (BCB & SB). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Sycamore Canyon 29 Sep-1 Oct (TT) and another was at Harmon Park on 10 Nov (RM). A **Blackpoll Warbler** was at the Lombard tipus 9-11 Sep (MB). **Palm Warblers** included individuals at Dunkirk Park (RM & MR), Valle Lindo Park 17-19 Oct (DP), Bob Kildee Park on 31 Oct (DP), and the Saticoy Spreading Ponds 12-25 Nov (RM). A **Canada Warbler** was in Ventura on 10 Sep (SR) and a **Painted Redstart** was at Kenney Grove Park 27 Oct-1 Nov (TT).

Summer Tanagers were at Rincon Creek 8 Oct-18 Nov (OJ) and Sycamore Canyon 3-10 Nov (SS). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was on the Oxnard Plain on 17 Sep (DP). An **Indigo Bunting** was at a feeder in Ventura 7-13 Nov (RM) and a **Painted Bunting** was at a feeder in Faria on 5 Oct (EBC).

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 messages about nuisance birds) e-mail David Pereksta at <pereksta@pacbell.net>

Good Birding,

David Pereksta

Observers: Zack Abbey, Allison Alvarado, Noah Arthur, Glenn Austin, Vincent Baker, Joe Beck, Marc Better, Mark Billings, Mario Borunda, Nathan Bradford, Max Breshears, Elizabeth Brewer Chouinard, Stephen Bylin, Russell Campbell, Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin, Rick Constantino, Sammy Cowell, Eric Culbertson, Nicole Durtschi, Adele Ferguson, Jodhan Fine, Sangeet Khalsa, Karl Krause, Jerry Maryniuk, Bruce Mast, Chris McCreedy, Jimmy McMorran, Robert McMorran, John Mueller, Lynn Oldt, David Pereksta, Sandy Pereksta, Giles Pettifor, Van Pierszalowski, Steve Ritt, Peter Robertshaw, Martin Ruane, Larry Sansone, Spencer Seale, Kirill Shtengel, Alistair Skinner, Dessi Sieburth, Bridget Spencer, Peder Svingen, Antal Szijj, Tina Tan, Michael Tiffany, Ken Ward

Birding Classes with Frank at Wild Birds Unlimited Ventura



Waterfowl ID Workshop - Saturday, January 6th at 1pm on ZOOM

Welcome to the Waterfowl ID Workshop! Join us online on Sat Jan 6, 2024 at 1:00 PM (PST) for an exciting event where you can enhance your waterfowl identification skills.

Whether you're a beginner or an experienced birder, this workshop is perfect for anyone interested in learning more about waterfowl species. Frank The Bird Guy will guide you through various identification techniques, including plumage patterns, bill shapes, and distinctive behaviors.

During the workshop, you'll have the opportunity to participate in interactive activities, quizzes, and engaging discussions with fellow participants. By the end of the session, you'll be able to confidently recognize different waterfowl species in the wild.

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to expand your knowledge and appreciation for these magnificent birds. Register now to secure your spot in the Waterfowl ID Workshop and get ready for an enjoyable and educational online experience!

There is an optional Bird Walk on Sun Jan 7, 2024 at 8:00 AM (PST) where we will test our waterfowl ID skills!

Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/waterfowl-id-workshop-tickets-719445509887>

A recording of the workshop will be made available to everyone who registers!

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 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

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