

The California Condor

Ventura Audubon Society

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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

venturaaudubon.org



American Avocet, Santa Clara River Estuary - photo by Rick Evans

**Our vision for Ventura County is a place where
our native birds thrive in healthy habitat, and
humans co-exist respectfully with birds and other wildlife**

Birdathon Issue

*by Cynthia Hartley
VAS Executive Director*

This month is our annual **Birdathon** fundraising month. It is Ventura Audubon's primary annual fundraiser and donations enable us to operate the chapter, conduct field trips & speaker meetings and protect Ventura County's birds. Although grants support our basic work of species monitoring and habitat protection, they only provide a part of our funding needs, and grants require significant resources to administer.

Donations provide a critical part of our fundraising needs

The first half of this newsletter features all our programs that donations support,

so please also scroll down to read our October newsletter features and program news, including Call Notes from our new president, Vince Kinsch

Ventura Audubon is a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation; so, all contributions are tax deductible. Our mailers are already in mail boxes, or you may go online and donate through our PayPal link.



How do you support Birdathon?

You may contribute either online or via mail:

Online contribution

1. Go to our website, www.venturaaudubon.org. During October, this will take you to our Birdathon home page.
2. Click on the "Donate to Birdathon- PayPal" button, this will take you to the our PayPal page. There you can donate with either a credit card or a PayPal account.

Mail-in contribution:

- If you received a mailer, just fill out the pledge form and return it with a check in the pre-addressed envelope that has been provided with this letter.
- If you did not receive a mailer, send a check payable to:
Ventura Audubon Society, P.O. Box 24198, Ventura, CA 93002

For all checks, write "Birdathon" in the memo line

What do Birdathon donations support?

Protecting Birds and Their Habitat in Ventura County

Nest boxes at the Ventura Settling Ponds



In early 2022 we purchased 10 new nest boxes and replaced the very old nest boxes at the Ventura Settling Ponds. Several of the boxes were used the first year by tree swallows! We will continue to build the nest box program this year.



Least Bell's Vireo Recovery on the Ventura and Santa Clara rivers

This small river loving bird has been on the federal endangered species list since 1986.

It is especially vulnerable to cowbird brood parasitism. So in concert with habitat restoration, we have worked to reduce cowbird parasitism.



Currently, we are supporting ongoing population monitoring of Least Bell's Vireo to track the success of these efforts on Ventura County rivers.



Least Bell's Vireo (top, left) and nestling 2020 (bottom, left) Santa Clara River; photo credit @JaneGriffith Griffith Wildlife

right, at Hedrick Ranch, photo by Alex Vaca

Public Comment

Our conservation committee was created in 2018 to improve our efforts to monitor and comment on local developments and proposals that impact birds. We have spoken at both the Port Hueneme and Oxnard City Councils on issues that impact nesting snowy plovers and least terns. Below are a list of comment/support letters on issues that we have submitted. Our [website](#) has links to many of these letters.

- Opposition to Reyes Peak Logging
- MS4 Permit Comments to the LARWQB
- City of Port Hueneme General Plan update
- Ventura County Local Coastal Plan
- Ormond Beach Restoration Plan
- Condor Take Permit
- Opposition to Arctic Refuge Drilling
- Bird Friendly Landscaping Practices
- Scoping document for SCR-1
- Fisherman's Wharf Development
- Offshore wind farms

Shorebird Recovery Program - Science



Our staff of 2 part time biologists and one contract biologist conducts **nest monitoring** of the CA least tern and western snowy plover. We locate nests and track outcome and manage fencing.

At Ormond we use **trail cameras** to help us better identify predators and threats and verify nest hatches. Cameras are placed on nests 24/7 and are motion activated. [more info](#)

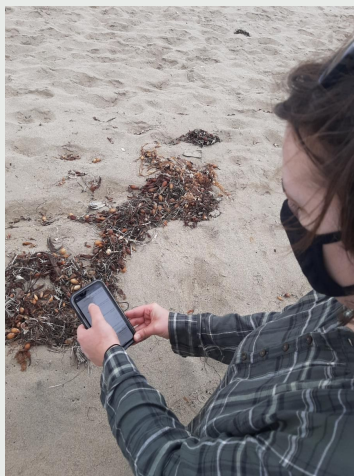
2022 Nesting Outcome

Ormond Beach

- 56 snowy plover nests
- 34 least tern nests

Hollywood Beach

- 12 snowy plover nests
- 24 least tern nests



Volunteers collect data on their phones while they conduct their beach patrols.

This data helps us understand things that might be affecting nesting and fledgling outcomes:

- Dog Log Survey
- Shorebird Disturbance
- Wrack Abundance Survey
- Banded Bird Reports

Beach naturalists also have an opportunity to accompany a biologist to assist with nest monitoring [more info](#)

Shorebird Recovery Program - Habitat Protection



On Ormond Beach we maintain fencing around **4 large nesting areas**, enclosing a total of **120 acres** of high value nesting habitat with **3 miles of fence** line.

At Hollywood Beach the habitat we protect is comparatively small (**3-5 acres**), but without fencing nests would not survive on this busy urban beach.

Left - inside nesting habitat

Right - outside habitat

Shorebird Recovery Program - Beach Naturalists

Beach Naturalists educate and inform beach visitors about the

natural history of western snowy plovers and California least terns and how to reduce disturbance to nesting birds and chicks.



Beach Naturalists Fred Dale conducting at Hollywood Beach (above)

We provide a free 3 hour training session (currently hosted on Zoom), and a follow-up field training. Thereafter naturalists work shifts on either Hollywood or Ormond Beach. Some of the activities they conduct include:

- Outreach and Education
- Tabling at events
- Report and Document Ordinance Violations
- Fence and Sign Maintenance

In 2022 volunteers served over 1,000 hours on Hollywood and Ormond Beaches



Placing sandbags around a snowy plover nest on Ormond Beach to prevent flooding from King tides, June 2022 (above)



Dog Rangers

Dog Rangers reframes the public conversation around the disturbance of shorebirds and seabirds by dogs, letting beachgoers know how their dog can help birds. The pledge directly asks dogs to make following promises, in support of birds:

- I will never chase birds or wildlife.
- I will wear my leash at the beach to help birds feel safe.
- I will give birds about 100 feet of space to relax and refuel.
- I won't climb the dunes or walk-through established nesting areas.

Dogs have been taking the pledge to protect birds and we already have a

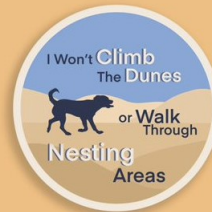
growing team of 30 rangers.



Why take the Dog Rangers pledge?

Unleashed dogs:

- Frighten birds (birds see them as predators)
- Interrupt eating and resting
- Lead to nest abandonment
- Damage sensitive nesting habitat



Fostering our Local Birding Community

Reed V. Smith Trail at Hedrick Ranch



As part of the restoration work with the Santa Clara River Conservancy, we have held joint habitat restoration work days on Hedrick Ranch on the Santa Clara River. As part of this effort we have created a trail for birders, in honor of one of our VAS conservation leaders, the "Reed V. Smith Trail". VAS remains committed to maintaining this trail and we will be scheduling clean up days this year to keep it open.

Birding field trips



This is by far our most popular activity. Fostering a love of birds and understanding of their needs is critical to protecting them and inspiring the next generation of birders. We provide trip leaders at local birding hotspots. Currently we hold field trips twice monthly. We provide enough trip leaders that we can break into small intimate groups.

Some of the local hot spots we visit include:

- Arroyo Verde Park
- Camino Real Park
- Santa Clara River Estuary
- Ormond Beach
- Settling Ponds
- Ventura River Estuary
- Carpinteria Salt Marsh

Monthly Speaker Programs



We provide a monthly speaker each month who presents on a topic of interest to our audience. Due to COVID we have been using ZOOM to reach our audience. We will probably provide a Zoom option from now on, since we find that we can present a greater variety of speakers and more people

can attend.

Upcoming topics

- Birds of the Great Salt Lake
- Ventura CBC
- Sparrow Appreciation
- Sea Birds
- Santa Clara River conservation

To make a BIRDATHON donation

Donate

US Mail

send a check:

Ventura Audubon Society
P.O. Box 24198
Ventura, California 93002

Other ways you can support the Ventura Audubon Society

Select Ventura Audubon as your Amazon Smile charity



This is a very easy way to support your favorite charity.
When you shop via smile.amazon.com,
Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to your charity
no fees, no extra cost, no hassle.
Click on the Amazon Smile link above to sign-up .

Do you work for a company that uses Benevity?

If you volunteer for Ventura Audubon your volunteer hours go even further with matching funds

Check with your employer



Ventura Audubon is proud to be an
environmental partner with 1% for the Planet



THANK YOU!

Call Notes

Vince Kinsch -- President

I am honored to be elected as the Ventura Audubon president this year. I want to thank Bruce Shoppe for his many years as the president, I have very big shoes to fill.

Fall migration is well underway! Audubon has started the [Migratory Bird Initiative](#). The mission of the Migratory Bird Initiative is to secure the future of migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere by reducing direct threats and protecting key places across the Americas in coordination with science, conservation and policy partners.

Migratory birds face threats during all stages of the annual cycle, and these threats are accelerating. Fortunately, scientific data, particularly during migration, are accumulating; however, we need to act swiftly and collectively to protect birds and the places they need before the opportunities to do so disappear. Partnerships will be central to the success of the Migratory Bird Initiative, and Audubon looks forward to building and strengthening relationships with other key research and conservation organizations.

As part of this initiative, Audubon has teamed with [ESRI](#), the global leader in GIS software to create the [Bird Migration Explorer](#). This is a guide to the heroic annual journeys made by over 450 bird species and the challenges they face along the way.

Check out these important initiatives by visiting the Bird Migration Explorer [HERE](#) and the Migratory Bird Initiative [HERE](#)

VAS Christmas Bird Count is coming on Dec 17th!

More info in next month's newsletter

October VAS Programs



October Field Trips

Ormond Beach

[Google Maps](#)

Ventura Settling Ponds

[Google Maps](#)



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8th 8:30 AM

Join us at this excellent coastal location, where we will look for a variety of birds, such as Willets, Whimbrels, Long Billed Curlew, Black Bellied Plovers and other migrating shorebirds. We will also look for Peregrine Falcon, Loggerhead Shrikes and Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers. Dress in layers, as the morning may be chilly.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21st 8:30 AM

The settling ponds at the Ventura Harbor is a reliable place to find ducks, grebes, gulls and terns, as well as songbirds and raptors. We should hear Spotted Towhees, Yellow Rumped Warblers and Blue-gray gnatcatchers

Visit our field trips [webpage](#) to sign up for a field trip or for more details

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

Questions or need help? Email fieldtrips@venturaaudubon.org

October Speaker Program



Protecting and Promoting Southern California Wildlands

Speaker: Isabelle Edwards

Date/Time: October 11, 2022; 7 PM PDT

VIA Zoom

Presentation Summary: Have you ever been curious about owls? If you would like to learn more about these mysterious nocturnal birds, please join our October program. We will be doing a deep dive into owl photography and life history with Izzy Edwards. Follow along as Izzy shares her journey learning to find and photograph these elusive raptors. She will share her experiences with owl conservation work and go over the ethical issues of approaching such sensitive animals without harming or distressing them. Learn what photographers and birders can do to minimize their impacts to these amazing birds. Our program will be virtual via Zoom.



Speaker Bio: Isabelle (Izzy) Edwards is a 19-year-old nature photographer based in Maple Valley, Washington. Izzy has been passionate about wildlife her whole life and she is especially drawn to owls. She has devoted the past 4 years to locating, observing and photo-documenting owls and has become an accomplished owl photographer. In 2020 she succeeded in the amazing feat of encountering all 19 unique American owl species. She has participated in the Global Owl Project and hands on burrowing owl conservation. She teaches about the life history of owls at schools and organizations throughout the country. Izzy's Instagram handle is @northwest_wildlife and website: isabelleedwardsphoto.com.

For more information and a Zoom link visit our programs page [HERE](#)



Other Programs for Birders



Wild Birds Unlimited®
Nature Shop



Falling For Migration

Sat Oct 9, 2021 at 2-3pm

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).

Facebook [invite](#)

Saving Songbirds

Sat Oct 23, 2021 at 2-3pm

The birds need our help! Population declines have hit many of our favorite birds and it's time we talk about how we can help them out. We will take a closer look at Cornell's Seven Simple Actions as well as some other local organizations and projects that are helping restore lost habitat. We'll talk about turning your yard into a Certified Wildlife Habitat and how native plants can help turn the tide for our feathered friends.



Facebook [invite](#)

Other Audubon Chapter Programs



Morro Coast Audubon Society
Serving San Luis Obispo County Since 1966

Program: Planting Native Plants to Attract and Support Birds

Speaker: Peggy Burhenn

Time and Date: 7 PM; Oct 17

Website [link](#) for more info

Thank you to our supporters!

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

Businesses, Organizations and Agencies

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife and United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Act Section 6 Grant (S6)
 - National Foundation of Fish and Wildlife (NFWF)
 - National Audubon Society, Audubon in Action Grant
 - The Baltoro Trust
 - 1% for the planet
 - Ventura Coast Brewing Company
 - Topa Topa Brewing Company
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