

The California Condor



Savannah Sparrow at Ormond Beach, by Alex Vaca

Ventura Audubon Society
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Call Notes

by Rachel Ameche
President

As Spring approaches, anticipation builds at VAS for the beginning of nesting season. Our dedicated shorebird recovery team has been diligently preparing for the arrival of Western snowy plovers at Ormond Beach and Hollywood Beach. These small shorebirds, distinguished by the snow-white plumage on their breasts and bellies, play a vital role in the ecosystem of Ventura County's coastal dunes.



For over two decades, under the direction of our lead shorebird biologist, Cynthia Hartley, VAS has been steadfast in its commitment to protecting, monitoring, and advocating for these federally threatened birds. Moreover, in the coming months, the federally endangered California least terns will use these same dunes as their nesting grounds. Their loud calls are a delight to bird watchers as the terns are observed foraging in the lagoon in sea.

Ormond Beach is recognized as an important wetland restoration opportunity in Southern California, in no small part due to the presence of these remarkable species. For the next 6 months, our Shorebird Recovery team will be working hard documenting nests, maintaining fencing, monitoring disturbances and counting chicks. Special thanks to The CREW of Ojai for installing over 1.5

miles of fencing! While Ormond Beach has made significant strides in its restoration journey, there remains a considerable amount of work ahead.

If you're interested in contributing to this important work, we invite you to join us for our upcoming free training session to become a Beach Naturalist. Keep reading to find out how.

[Membership Webpage](#)

[Join VAS via PayPal](#)

Shorebird Recovery Program Update

by Cynthia Hartley
Shorebird Recovery Program Lead



Nesting season starts in March!

We have been very busy in January and February preparing for the 2024 nesting season by doing habitat fence repairs and installation. A big thank you to [CREW of Ojai](#) for doing this work between rain storms. It was a challenging time to work on the beach.

The CREW accomplished the following work:

- Installed 0.82 miles mesh fence
- Installed 0.53 miles symbolic fence
- Pounded in 450 T-posts
- Repaired 1.52 miles of existing mesh fence



Meet our new Volunteer Coordinator: Kristen McKenna

We are excited to welcome our new volunteer coordinator Kristen, who brings experience in event coordination and conservation education to our team.

Kristen will be reaching out to our existing volunteer list to organize a March work day. You may also contact Kristen (see below) to be added to our list of volunteer announcements, including our first Beach Naturalist training of 2024 (dates to be announced later this month).



Hello! I'm Kristen McKenna, the new Volunteer Coordinator for Ventura Audubon. While originally from New York, my love for travel has taken me far and wide, allowing me to explore diverse corners of the globe. When I'm not enjoying Mother Nature's natural playground, I could either be baking to satisfy my insatiable sweet tooth, testing out a new food scrap recipe, or rolling through a yoga flow.

Next up in March, we will be having a volunteer work day. Below are the tasks we need to accomplish to finish our preparations for nesting season. We are very much looking forward to connecting with our repeat and new volunteers!

- Beach Signs: clean, clear coat and hang on fences
- Waterproof the roof of our storage containers
- Plover Pal craft project practice
- Storage container organization

Contact Kristen to be added to our volunteer distribution list. She will be sending a survey this week to select the day:

volunteer@venturaaudubon.org





Save the Date to Raise the Roost

When: Throughout April!
Where: Various locations, see below

Join us for Raise the Roost, our annual fundraiser dedicated to supporting the Shorebird Recovery Program. Your participation directly contributes to the essential conservation efforts led by VAS Biologists for threatened and endangered shorebirds at Ormond Beach.

Engage Your Way: Join us for a series of events throughout the month, tailored to accommodate diverse preferences. Please join us to meet our team, learn about our program, and support the conservation of the western snowy plover and endangered least terns that call Ormond Beach home.



- Tuesday, April 9th, 7pm: Chapter Speaker program by Cynthia Hartley, Ormond Beach Shorebird Recovery Program lead
- Saturday, April 20th, 8:30 am: Ormond Beach Field Trip
- Tuesday, April 23rd, 6pm: Bird Trivia Night at Ventura Coast Brewing Co
- Saturday, April 27th, 1pm-4pm: Social, Prize Raffles, logo pint glasses and other merchandise at Ventura Coast Brewing Co
- Date TBD: Free Beach Naturalist Workshop

Proceeds from the Raise the Roost will directly benefit the Shorebird Recovery Program, enabling us to continue our work protecting threatened and endangered shorebirds nesting on Ormond Beach.

Meet our new Diversity Coordinator: Alexis Saint Germain

Alexis, a senior at CSUCI, will spearhead efforts to ensure birding is inclusive and accessible to all members of our community. With a focus on expanding the joy of birding beyond traditional demographics, our coordinator will assess inclusiveness and work towards a membership and leadership reflective of our diverse county. Together, we aspire to create a welcoming environment where everyone feels empowered to explore and enjoy the wonders of birding.

Diversity Coordinator

My name is Alexis Saint Germain, and I am a local from the Ventura County area. My formal education in Environmental Science & Resource Management, paired with several Central Coast based research experiences have helped hone in my concerns and expertise for a changing climate. This knowledge has nurtured a passion for our community's needs due to the ever-changing impacts of climate change. I hope to expand our reach further to prospective birders in the community!



Watch for a membership survey coming out soon to start these efforts!
Contact Alexis at alexis@venturaaudubon.org.

March 2024 Speaker Program

Birds and Offshore Wind Energy Development: BOEM's Avian Study Strategy to Assess Data Needs and Effects

Speaker: David M. Pereksta, Avian Biologist, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Date: Tuesday March 12th

Time: 7pm PST

Live at the Poinsettia Pavilion and via Zoom, see link below.

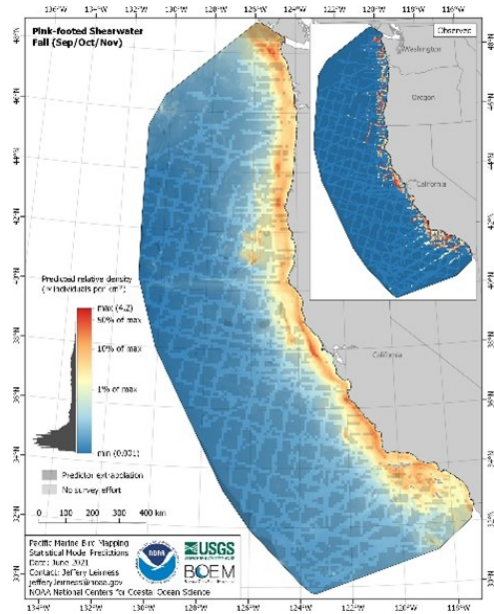
Program Description:

The offshore waters and the coastline of the Pacific states and Hawaii provide year-round habitat for many bird species, at least 13 of which are federally listed as threatened or endangered, and 80 others have some level of special status designation. The prospect of renewable energy development off the Pacific coast of the United States has led to a scramble for data needs on potentially affected resources, particularly those related to avian species. The potential effects from renewable energy development to avian species are complex and varied including collision, displacement, barrier effects, and attraction. As the lead Federal agency for renewable energy development on the Federal



outer continental shelf (OCS), the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has initiated a variety of avian studies to provide an improved understanding of

offshore ecosystems, a baseline for assessing effects, and the scientific basis for development of regulatory measures to mitigate adverse impacts. David will share BOEM's efforts to understand these issues and inform their decision-making process given the uncertainties that exist in the knowledge regarding the effects these types of projects could have on avian species on the Pacific OCS. David will provide the details of BOEM's avian study strategy for the Pacific and how it is being used to proactively address key avian issues for offshore wind assessment. This includes assessing available information from recent and historical surveys, updating information and filling data gaps, predictively modeling seabird distribution off the Pacific coast, technology testing for efficient ways to inventory birds on the OCS, assessing vulnerability of marine birds to offshore wind energy infrastructure, and developing approaches to monitoring and mitigating potential effects.



Speaker Bio: David Pereksta is an avian biologist with the Pacific OCS Region of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management in Camarillo, California. His primary duties are studying and analyzing the effects of offshore oil and gas production, and renewable energy development, on birds and bats off the Pacific coast of the U.S. and Hawaii. Since arriving at BOEM in 2010, David has collaborated on and developed a number of avian-related studies that will inform BOEM's decision making for renewable energy projects on the Pacific OCS. Before coming to BOEM, he spent 16 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working on the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species along the Pacific coast, and 3 years with the U.S. Forest Service surveying, monitoring, and managing late seral stage forest species in the Sierra Nevada. Throughout his 35-year career, he has studied imperiled bird species including Snowy Plovers, Piping Plovers, Least Terns, Ospreys, Northern Goshawks, Brown Pelicans, Spotted Owls, and Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. In addition, He has spent hundreds of days observing birds at sea off California, Oregon, North Carolina, Mexico, Bermuda, South America, and the Russian Far East.



To join the program visit our

[Monthly Speaker webpage](#)

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

VAS Installs Tree Swallow Nest Boxes at Ventura Settling Ponds



Tree Swallow at Ventura Settling Ponds in 2022, photo by Rick Evans

On February 23rd Ventura Audubon volunteers installed 6 new nest boxes at the Ventura settling ponds. The new boxes are especially suited to tree swallows and have been carefully positioned to favor nesting success. We hope to attract tree swallows to establish nests and raise their young this coming spring.

We are seeking volunteers to help us monitor the boxes. If you are interested please send an email to contact@venturaaudubon.org.



Special thanks to Linda England for her work in coordinating this project!

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 and to get notifications if a field trip is changed or cancelled!

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.

March Field Trips

Taft Gardens, Ojai

Saturday, March 16
Meeting Time: 8:30am

Taft Gardens & Nature Preserve, located in the foothills of Ojai, is home to the beautifully curated Taft Gardens. The property also includes 200 acres of preserved Native California Open Space which provides connectivity and safe passage for wildlife who live among the surrounding lands. Recent visitors include Red-breasted Sapsucker, Phainopepla, and Purple Finch. You must sign-up in order to attend, no drop-ins will be accepted.

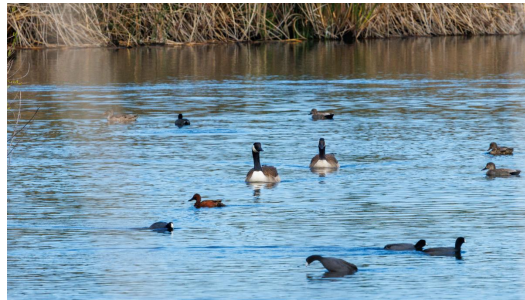


For directions please sign up here: [Field Trip webpage](#)

Ventura Settling Ponds

Saturday March 25th
Meeting Time: 10:00am

An easy walk along dirt paths around the shore of the settling ponds, one of the top birding locations in Ventura County. We'll be looking for Ducks, Grebes and Herons. Gulls and Pelicans are likely, and Hawks and Harriers possible. No restrooms or drinking water, nearest public restrooms are at Surfer's Knoll parking lot.



For directions please sign up here: [Field Trip webpage](#)

June Pelagic Field Trip Pre-Registration Filling Up Fast

Please Pre-register now for this field trip so we can gauge interest. The trip is expected to cost approximately \$50. We have a tentative date of Thursday, June 13th.

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

Wild Birds Unlimited Ventura Events



Beginner Bird ID Class - Spring Edition March 9th 2pm PST on ZOOM

Struggling to identify sparrows? Frustrated with finches? Are there flashes of yellow going through your yard that you wish you could name? We will be having a beginner bird identification class focusing on the most common species that you are likely to see at your feeders this time of year and how you can tell them apart. This talk will include common western and eastern species!

Click this [link](#) to sign up

Thank you to our supporters!

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

- The Holdfast Collective
- The Nature Conservancy, National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC) 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
- 1% for the planet
- Ventura Coast Brewing Company
- Topa Topa Brewing Company
- Jill Foreman

Support Ventura Audubon Society

Ventura Audubon Society is a registered tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

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VOLUNTEER: Fill out this SURVEY FORM



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Visit our website

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

[Unsubscribe cynthia.hartley@venturaaudubon.org](mailto:cynthia.hartley@venturaaudubon.org)

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