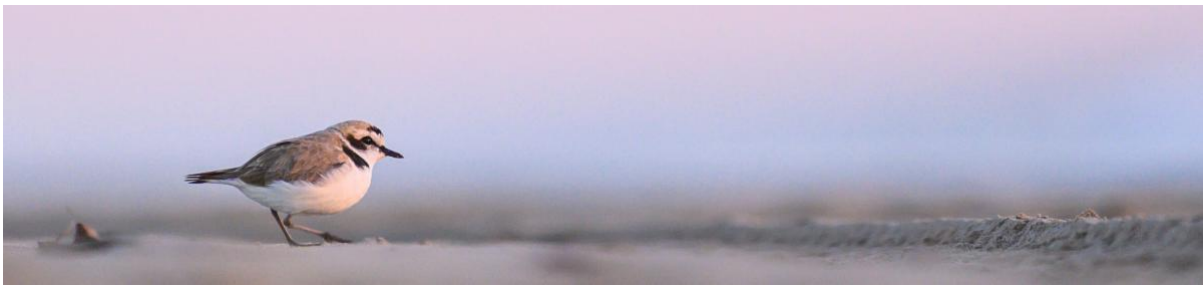


The California Condor

Ventura Audubon Society
May 2023 Volume 64, Number 9
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
venturaaudubon.org



male snowy plover on Ormond Beach, by Alecia Smith

Call Notes

*by Vincent Kinsch
VAS President*

Welcome to our final newsletter of our 2022-23 season! As I reflect on our accomplishments in past year, I am reminded that this work would not be possible without our members, donors, business partners, volunteers and staff. I am humbled by your dedication and generosity in helping VAS protect birds and their habitat in Ventura. Thank You!

I am also reminded that our work is not done. We continue to monitor the construction of an approximately 6,800-foot-long ocean outfall, pump station, and associated onshore conveyance pipeline at the Ventura wastewater treatment plant. This project will ultimately reduce the flow of water into the settling ponds and Santa River Estuary by as much as 90%. While VAS supports the restoration of the Santa Clara River Estuary to a more natural state, we have expressed concerns regarding the impact to critical habitat and public access at the settling ponds. The next step in this process occurs on Friday May 12 at the next California Coastal Commission hearing. To view the agenda item and sign up to speak, go to <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2023/5>. Select agenda item number F9B when you submit a speaker request.

Additionally a project slated for Ormond beach by the City of Oxnard, The Nature Conservancy, and California Coastal Conservancy to implement a 5-year maintenance and habitat conservation program. This consists of year-round and seasonal fencing to protect nesting shorebirds, removal of invasive plant species and tree trimming, maintenance of existing access roads and trails, and field data collection and monitoring activities. Approval of this project will allow the release of funds for our monitoring activities on Ormond and will help protect western snowy plovers and California least terns on this beach. If you'd like to speak on the agenda item, select item F13A when

you sign-up.

Despite the cooler and wetter than average spring weather, western snowy plover nesting is in full swing, and the California least terns will be arriving soon. Read the update from the team later in the newsletter.

Finally, May is election month of our Board of Directors. I wish to extend my gratitude to the retiring members of the board, Cynthia Hartley and Debra Barringer, for their amazing work this past year. Our final meeting will be a party at Topa Topa brewing company. Details are also later in the newsletter.

Wishing everyone a great summer!

Inside this Newsletter

VAS News

- May Meeting
- Raise the Roof: Re-cap & Thank You
- Field Trips
- David Pereksta's Notes from the Field
- Shorebird Recovery Program
- Beach Naturalist Training
- Dog Rangers

Other News

- Birding Classes with WBU Ventura
- Central Coast Audubon Programs

May Meeting and Party Sunday May 21, 12:30

"Birds and Beer"

Our annual meeting, the final meeting for our year, will be a special "Birds and Beer" party at Topa Topa Brewing Company in Ventura. The back of the property is lined with tall eucalyptus trees so it makes for good birding. Bring your binoculars and scopes for an afternoon of birding at the Topa Topa property on Colt Street. Come and socialize with your fellow Audubon members and our newly elected board of directors. **Ventura Audubon members will receive a coupon good for a 2 for 1 beer purchase**, so bring a friend. Even better, bring a friend who is also a member!



Topa Topa is located at 4880 Colt St in Ventura [Map](#).

If you would like to attend, **please RSVP** by emailing membership@venturaaudubon.org with the number of guests. We'll have a list at our check-in table and your 2-for-1 beer coupon.



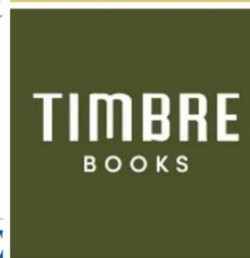
Raise The Roost Re-Cap & Thank You

Our hard working shorebird recovery team would like to thank all who purchased our special Shorebird Recovery logo pub glasses and participated in the silent auction. We raised over \$5,000 during the auction and party at [Ventura Coast Brewing Company](#) (VCBC). We depend on grants and donations to monitor and protect snowy plovers and least terns, so it is thrilling to have your support. We would like to extend a special thank you to the VCBC team who were instrumental in making the party a success. We are looking forward to Raise the Roost 2024!





**Thank you to all of the businesses and individuals
who donated to our silent auction!**
Click on the logos to find out more



May 2023 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 new 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*
- COVID-19 safety measures: We ask that all participants be vaccinated - this includes our leaders too

Sign up early to participate in a field trip:

1. Visit our [Field Trip webpage](#) to sign up
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@venturaudubon.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.

Field Trips

Satwiwa

Saturday, May 20, 2023 - 8:30am

Scenic park in Newbury Park with hiking, biking & horseback riding trails plus an American Indian cultural center. The hiking trails can be hilly and steep in some areas with little tree cover. Sunscreen and water are highly recommended. Birds of interest here are Lazuli Buntings, California Thrasher, California Quail, Cactus Wren, Greater Roadrunners and various hummingbird species.



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

NOTES FROM THE FIELD - Jan-Mar 2023 by David Pereksta

A **Tundra Swan** continued at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds through 2 Jan. Two **Wood Ducks** were at Santa Ana Creek on 29 Jan (LLG) and one was at Lake Casitas on 18 Mar (SK). **Eurasian Wigeons** included one at Lake Casitas 17-19 Jan (TT) and a continuing one at Lake Sherwood through 4 Feb. Two female **King Eiders** continued at the Ventura Pier through 5 Feb before moving north to San Francisco and then Monterey. Individual **Black Scoters** included one at Oxnard Shores Beach 28-31 Jan (DP) and continuing birds at Ormond Beach through 13 Mar and Point Mugu through 16 Feb. A **White-winged Scoter** continued at the Santa Clara River mouth through 3 Jan and was later found at Oxnard Shores Beach 28-31 Jan. Another **White-winged Scoter** was at Ormond Beach on 21 Jan (SK, SS, & LLG). Two **Long-tailed Ducks** and a **Brown Booby** were at Anacapa Island on 23 Feb (JB) with at least one **Long-tailed Duck** continuing through 22 Mar. A **Black Scoter** and **American Oystercatcher** were at Anacapa Island on 4 Mar (DP et al.). A **Red-necked Grebe** was in the Ventura Harbor 23 Jan-20 Mar (LB). A pair of **Marbled Murrelets** were off Ventura on 9 Feb (JB). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continued in the vicinity of the Santa Clara River mouth through 5 Jan. An **American Bittern** continued at Point Mugu through 5 Mar.

Wintering **Swainson's Hawks** included one near Casitas Springs on 21 Jan (DS), one in Ventura on 27 Jan (GA), and one at Point Mugu 17 Jan-5 Mar (MR). Presumed migrant **Swainson's Hawks** were over Ojai on 6 Mar (LLG) and Thousand Oaks on 24 Mar (AM). An adult **Zone-tailed Hawk** (possibly two) was in the area between Lake Casitas and Canada Larga 17 Jan-13 Feb (TT). Another (possibly the same bird seen in December in the Upper Ojai Valley) was in Sisar Canyon 12-25 Mar (DF).

A **Williamson's Sapsucker** was at Reyes Creek Campground on 8 Feb (DI) while others continued at Lake Piru through 16 Mar and Thousand Oaks through 26 Feb. **Red-naped Sapsuckers** included one in Thousand Oaks 22-28 Jan (GR), one at Lake Sherwood on 12 Feb (SC), one at Conejo Community Park on 13 Mar (RS), and one continuing at Lake Casitas through 26 Feb. A **Tropical Kingbird** was at Ormond Beach on 4 Feb (RC) and another continued at Camino Real Park through 8 Jan. A **Gray Flycatcher** continued at Arroyo Verde Park through 13 Feb. An **Eastern Phoebe** was in Ventura 31 Jan-1 Feb (RM). Away from their local stronghold at Point Mugu, **Vermilion Flycatchers** included one at Lake Piru on 19 Mar (TT) and one in Fillmore 21-22 Mar (TT).

Plumbeous Vireos included one in Simi Valley on 11 Feb (SC), one in Thousand Oaks on 1 Jan (GR), and a continuing individual at Pitts Ranch Park through 19 Jan. A **Bank Swallow** was over the Oxnard Plain on 26 Mar (DP). As many as two **Pacific Wrens** continued at Rincon Creek through 3 Mar and the **Pacific/Winter Wren** continued at Sycamore Canyon through 1 Jan. A **Gray Catbird** continued in Ventura through 14 Jan. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** continued at the Thousand Oaks Community Park through 26 Jan. A **Large-billed Savannah Sparrow** continued near the Santa Clara River Estuary through 19 Mar. A **Swamp Sparrow** was on the Oxnard Plain 20 Feb-26 Mar (DP). An **Orchard Oriole** was at Mission Oaks Park 20 Feb-16 Mar (MB) and another continued in Port Hueneme through 28 Jan. The **Rusty Blackbird** continued at several parking lots along Main Street in Ventura through 16 Feb.

A **Northern Waterthrush** continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 12 Feb and a **Black-and-white Warbler** continued there through 19 Mar. A **Tennessee Warbler** continued at Mission Oaks Park through 18 Mar. An **American Redstart** was in Somis on 6 Jan (ZA). **Summer Tanagers** included one in Ventura on 8 Jan (DW), one in Ojai on 26 Mar (LLG), and continuing individuals at Mission Oaks Park through 20 Feb and at Kimball Barranca through 8 Mar. A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was in Fillmore on 16 Jan (MB, CL & LE) and another continued at Camino Real Park through 2 Jan. **Blue Grosbeaks** are very rare locally in winter so one visiting a feeder in Camarillo on 23 Jan was exceptional (RA).

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

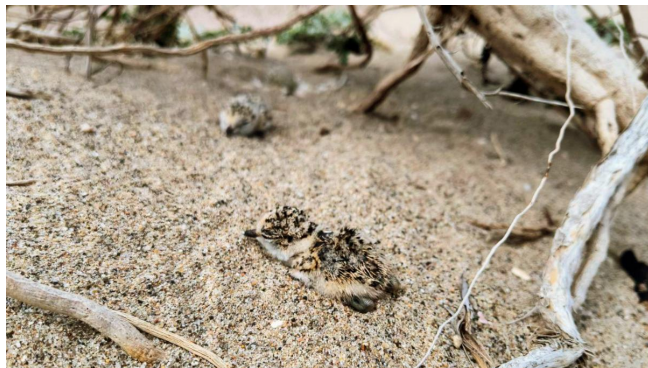
Observers: Zack Abbey, Rachel Ameche, Glenn Austin, Joel Barrett, Marc Better, Linus Blomqvist, Rick Constantino, Sammy Cowell, Linda Easter, DP Ferry, Daniel Irons, Sangeet Khalsa, Carol Langford, Lukas LeGrice, Robert McMorran, Ava Molnar, David Pereksta, Griffin Rohrer, Martin Ruane, Spencer Seale, David Sexton, Roger Swanson, Tina Tan, and David Wappler

Shorebird Recovery Program Update



Ormond Beach

Nesting for snowy plovers up and down the California coast got off to a slow start, surely because of the wet cold weather early in the season. Ormond and Hollywood Beaches were no exception. The first Ormond nest was established at the end of March. Last year we had many more nests at the same time. However, nesting is in full swing now. We have just 20 nests as of this week. Four nests have hatched, but sadly two have been vandalized by humans.



Snowy plover nest #2 hatching on May 9th, taken by VAS Biologist Kat Whitehouse during this week's nest survey



Ormond Beach snowy plover nest #2 tucked under a beach bur plant that was blown out by winds this winter. Left picture taken the day it was found, with still just one egg (Kat Whitehouse). The parents later added 2 more eggs for a full set of 3. Right picture is dad standing guard outside the beach bur nest, captured by our trail camera.

A huge thank you to the Oxnard Police for transporting fencing 1.5 miles down the beach so our volunteer could replace stolen fencing. We've had 1,000 feet of fencing stolen

already this year and we are working extra hard to keep the fence lines tight. We anticipate a large number of nests will hatch in the coming weeks. To keep hatching birds and new chicks safe we need to make sure there are no breaks in the fence.



Volunteers team that came out to replace stolen fencing

If you'd like to help protect this year's nesting western snowy plovers please consider become a volunteer Beach Naturalist!

Beach Naturalist Training Class

Join Our Team!



Want to make a difference at your local beaches? Become a beach naturalist volunteer and help educate visitors on Western snowy plovers and California least terns as part of the Shorebird Recovery Program.

Attend a free half-day workshop, where you'll learn about beach ecology, bird biology, rules and regulations, and data collection. After training, complete two beach shifts per month to share your knowledge.

WHAT IS A BEACH NATURALIST?

As a beach naturalist, you will educate and inform visitors to area beaches as part of the Shorebird Recovery Program. You will teach them about Western snowy plovers and California least terns and how to help these birds.

Half-day workshop info:

- Morning session: in-person classroom learning

- Late morning/early afternoon: Practice what you learn in classroom - field training at either Ormond, Hollywood, or Hueneme Beaches

Volunteers learn about the following topics from a Ventura Audubon Biologist and Outreach Coordinator:

- Beach/Dune Ecology: History and Processes of the Beach
- Biology/Ecology of Western Snowy Plover and CA Least Terns
- Rules and Regulations pertaining to locations we serve
- Data collection to support population recovery and wrack abundance

After volunteers have completed training, they sign up for two 2-hour beach shifts per month through September at either Ormond or Hollywood Beach and share their knowledge.

Next Date: June 3rd 2023

Classroom and Field Training locations: to be announced (contact outreach@venturaaudubon.org with any questions ahead of training and register to receive location details once available)

The class is free, click the button below or go to <https://www.venturaaudubon.org/beach-naturalists> to register

This work is supported by a Whale Tail grant.

REGISTER

Dog Rangers News



Meet new Dog Ranger Winston Pufferton

Would you and your dog like to join Winston? We'll post your Dog Ranger's photo on our special Instagram account, [@VC_Dog_Rangers](#)! We also invite everyone to follow this new Instagram account so we can welcome and thank new Dog Rangers as they take their pledges.

If your dog is interested in taking the pledge, but you can't join our next training, we'd still love to have you on the team. So please email us at volunteer@venturaaudubon.org

Will your dog take the Dog Ranger pledge?



1) I will never chase birds or wildlife



2) I will wear my leash at the beach to help birds feel safe



3) I will give birds 100 feet of space to relax and refuel

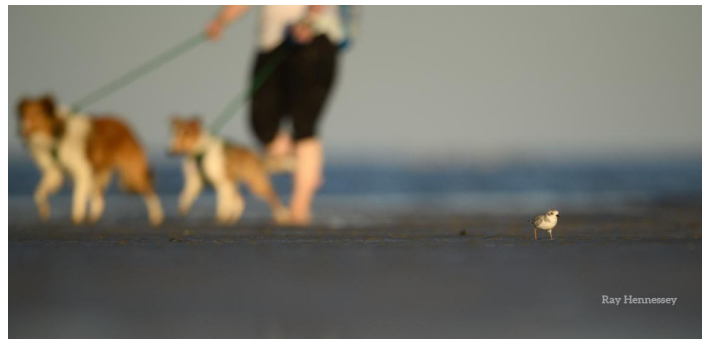


4) I won't climb the dunes or walk-through established nesting areas

Why take the Dog Rangers pledge?

All dogs are seen as predators to shorebirds and seabirds, no matter the size, age or temperament of the dog.

Dogs frighten shorebirds and seabirds (especially while unleashed), which leads to nest abandonment, interruptions to eating and resting. Disturbances to migrating or nesting birds takes precious energy away when they are forced to use distraction displays on dogs, people, and anyone that approaches too closely. From migrating to nesting to feeding, shorebirds and seabirds are specially evolved to live in beach habitats. These birds have no other home.



Least Bell's Vireo photo by Jane Griffith

Birding by Ear: Spring Songs!

Saturday, May 27th at 2pm

Who is singing in your yard now? Birds make a lot of noise and each sound conveys something different. People who have practiced listening to the birds are able to tell what birds are in an area, what they're doing, if there are any threats around, and much more! We're going to talk about some of the different bird sounds and get started learning some common spring songs!

Here is the Zoom link to the event: [Click here](#)

Beginner Bird ID: Summer Edition!

Saturday, June 4th at 2pm

Struggling to identify sparrows? Frustrated with finches? Are there flashes of yellow going through your yard that you wish you could name? What's going on with those birds? Nesting season is rolling along and fledglings are fluttering all over the place. 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 (including the babies!) and how you can tell them apart.

Here is the Zoom link to the event: [Click here](#)

Speaker Programs Central Coast Audubon Chapters



SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Pelagic Birding off Southern California: Searching for Seabirds in the Open Ocean

Speaker: Dave Pereksta

Time: 7:30pm

Location: Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Date: May 24th

The waters offshore of southern California are one of the last birding frontiers in the state, where an exciting mix of seabirds that are rarely if ever seen from land can be found at sea if you know when, where, and how to look for them. A limited number

of trips, unpredictable weather, and challenging viewing conditions make pelagic birding trips an adventurous way to explore this frontier. Birders wishing to see these special birds must find some of the few scheduled trips each year, get a reservation before they sell-out, and hope that the weather and birds cooperate.

David Pereksta took his first pelagic trip in 1994, which was a major birding-life changing event. That trip was the start of David's fascination with seabirds and since then he has spent a considerable amount of time at sea looking for them. With hundreds of days on the water in the Pacific and Atlantic, and trips to remote breeding areas in Russia and the South Pacific, David has immersed himself in understanding the lives of seabirds. David will show us what experiences southern California pelagic birding trips offer including the species that occur off our coast, how the status and distribution of many species have changed recently, where local pelagic trips go and how they operate, and how to best schedule a trip to see the birds (and marine mammals) you are looking for.

[more info](#)

Thank you to our grant funders!

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

Grants

- National Foundation of Fish and Wildlife (NFWF)
- National Audubon Society, Audubon in Action Grant

Join

Donate ONLINE



VOLUNTEER: Fill out this SURVEY FORM



**FOR THE
PLANET**
— NONPROFIT PARTNER —



[Contact Us](#)

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