

The California Condor

Ventura Audubon Society
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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
venturaaudubon.org

Call Notes

by Cynthia Hartley
VAS Executive Director

The exciting news this month is the nest box project at the Ventura Settling Ponds. Thanks to generous donations at the end of 2021, we were able to purchase 12 new nest boxes. We have taken down and replaced many of the old nest boxes that were extremely weathered and falling apart, some were entirely gone. All of this in the nick of time for tree swallow nesting season. This is just the start however. There are still some old boxes left and empty posts, so we will continue to raise funds so we can replace the remaining nest boxes next year. We would also like to organize a volunteer effort to track nesting and we will need to clean out the boxes in the fall. But for now, we are going to step back and let nesting bird do their thing.





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Membership News

Thanks to all of our members who joined or renewed in 2021! As always, if you have any questions regarding membership, please contact membership@venturaudubon.org.

Membership Renewal Reminders

Many of you have requested that we let you know when your membership is expiring. So we've worked hard to develop a system to track membership. Starting this month, we will be sending out email reminders to everyone who's membership expires in January. We will continue to do this on a rolling basis each month. We hope this will make it easier to keep track of your membership anniversary.

Special Perks for Members!

We are planning for a special member's only quarterly newsletter with news, events and other goodies exclusively for VAS members. We are working on special member's only field trips and offers. Stay tuned!

February Guest Speaker

Topic: "Identification and Biology of California's Daytime Raptors"

Speaker: Alvaro Jaramillo

Owner

Alvaro's Adventures

Date: Feb 8, 2022

Time: 7 PM PDT

Program Description The hawks, eagles, kites, harriers, and falcons are a fantastic group of birds. They are not all closely related, but are instantly recognizable due to their hooked beaks, and strong talons they use to capture prey. Some eat rodents, others eat insects, birds or even fish. They are quite diverse in how and what they hunt, and this explains their very different shapes, sizes, and flight styles. Ecology and identification go hand in hand, and this is no clearer than in looking at the diurnal raptors.



We have many species in California, but here we will concentrate time on the more widespread species. We will talk not only about what they look like and how to differentiate them from other similar species, but also what they do, what they eat, and even a bit about their migration. So if you are keen on hawks, eagles, the Osprey, the Peregrine - this should be a talk that will hopefully give you more insight into how to look at raptors, how to tell them apart, and also to understand how they fit into their environment.

Please join us!



To join the program
visit our
[Monthly Speaker webpage](#)

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

Speaker Biography Alvaro Jaramillo, owner birding tour company [Alvaro's Adventures](#), was born in Chile but began birding in Toronto, where he lived as a youth. He was trained in ecology and evolution with a particular interest in bird behavior. Research forays and backpacking trips introduced Alvaro to the riches of the Neotropics, where he has traveled extensively. He is the author of the Birds of Chile, an authoritative yet portable field guide to Chile's birds. Alvaro writes the *Identify Yourself* column in Bird Watcher's Digest magazine. Alvaro recently wrote part of the sparrow chapter for the Handbook of Birds of the

World, and the new ABA Field Guide Birds of California.

He was recently granted the Eisenmann Medal by the Linnaean Society of New York, it is awarded occasionally for excellence in ornithology and encouragement of the amateur. He organizes and leads international birding tours, as well as a full schedule of pelagic trips in central California. Alvaro lives with his family in Half Moon Bay, California.



Diversity is Important for both Birds and Birders

Ventura Audubon Society is committed to fostering and preserving a birding culture of diversity, equality and inclusion. Promoting birding to a diverse audience is critical to the future of birds, benefits humans, improves our chapter and supports our mission to protect birds and their habitat. As an audience member if you ever feel we are not living up to this promise please feel free to reach out and let us know.

If you have topic requests or would like to recommend a speaker, please email or Sabrina, our program chair programs@venturaaudubon.org

February Birding Field Trips

A message from Adele Fergusson, Field Trip Coordinator

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



COVID-19 safety measures:

- 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 to provide for social distancing*
- Participants sign and return a COVID release form
- All participants must be vaccinated - this includes our leaders too
- Everyone must wear a mask and social distance during the field trip
- Field trips will be closed if we get can't keep our ratio of participants to field trip leaders small

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
4. Fill out the form and email back, or bring with you to the trip

Field trips close if we have more than 6 participants per trip leader, so sign up early!

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



White-tailed Kite: By Y S

Carpinteria Salt Marsh

Saturday, February 5, 2022
Meeting Time: 8:30am

The Salt Marsh Reserve is an excellent birding location due to the estuary, wetlands, and upland habitats. Special birds of concern can be found here, including Belding's Savannah Sparrow, and White-tailed Kite. Several species of heron are often seen at once.

Directions: Take HWY 101 North, Exit Casitas Pass Rd. and turn left (south). At Carpinteria Ave., turn right, then left on Linden and right on Sandyland Rd to Ash. Park along Ash.

Bring your own lunch as we have been graciously invited to join Debby Burns at her ocean front home at Rincon Point. She will provide drinks and dessert. Details to the home will be provided at the walk.

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)



Western Bluebird; by Alex Vaca

FOSTER PARK &



Bufflehead Duck: Boe Baty/Audubon Photography Awards

VENTURA RIVER WALK

Wednesday, Feb 9, 2022
Meeting Time: 8:30am
**weekday field trip*

We will meet inside the entrance to the park and bird in the park and some of the Ventura Hillsides Conservancy land to the south. Bring a jacket, as it will be chilly until the sun hits us. Some expected species include egrets, herons, Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebirds.

Directions: Take Hwy 33 toward Ojai, exit at Casitas Vista Rd, go right & park under the freeway bridge. (Parking is also available inside Foster Park at a cost.

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

LAKE LOS CARNEROS

Saturday Feb 26, 2022
Meeting Time: 8:30am

Lake Los Carneros is a wonderful location for bird watching with resident white-tailed kites, shore birds and waterfowl as well as woodpeckers, warblers and sparrows.

Bring a bag lunch and we will have lunch together at Lake Los Carneros.

Directions: Take 101 North to Lake Carneros exit, make a right. Go through the roundabout, make a right into Lake Carneros before the firehouse.

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

Visit our [Field Trip webpage](#) to sign up!

Hedrick Ranch Conservation Workday with Friends of the Santa Clara River (FSCR)



FRIENDS OF
THE SANTA CLARA RIVER



Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Workday

Saturday Feb 6th, 2022
Meeting Time: 9:00am - 12 noon

also, upcoming work days on:
March 6th, 2022
April 2nd, 2022

For more information about attending and updates, please visit the Friends of the Santa Clara River website. This is their Hedrick Ranch Nature Area workday [webpage](#)

Ventura Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Update



Preliminary results

So far we are currently at 176 species, although reports are still coming in.

Some good sightings include:

- [Short-Eared Owl](#)
- [Orchard Oriole](#)
- [Summer Tanager](#)
- [Gray Flycatcher](#)
- [Northern Fulmar](#)
- [Steller's Jay](#)

If you still have outstanding CBC data please send to [Frank DeMartino](#) ASAP

Here is the [link](#) to CBC data for Ventura Audubon from 1980-2020



Merlin - Sector 6, City of Ventura
Photo by Adele Fergusson
Cornucopia Community Gardens

We love seeing any of your CBC photos!

If you have photos, of birds or people, and you would like to share please post them to the VAS Facebook account (click icon below) or email them to director@venturaaudubon.org.



Shorebird Recovery Program Update

Nesting season is around the corner! Hard to believe, but nesting season will be here in just 6 short weeks, "officially" on March 15th. This means we must get our beach prep work done by March 1st. We already can see male snowy plovers in their breeding plumage, and if we get some nice weather we may even start seeing some pre-nuptial nest scraping soon.





This male snowy plover was photographed by Alecia Smith just a few days ago at Ormond Beach. He is ready for nesting season already! His crown and collar markings have already turned dark black. We are seeing many male plovers looking sharp!

Nesting season reports from 2021 are finished and submitted to USFWS and CDFW. Reports for both Ormond and Hollywood Beaches can be accessed on our [nesting reports web page](#).

Next up is fence work! On Ormond Beach, we took down all of the fences at the tideline last October. We have scheduled them to go back up on Feb 22-25. We will be working with The C.R.E.W. again this spring. We will also be holding a few small beach cleanups to pick up trash in the nesting habitat, and we will be staging predator exclosures around the habitat so they are ready to go for nesting season. Interested in getting involved? See the article on Beach Naturalists below!

Feature: Joan Tharp 2021 Volunteer of the Year



Joan is one of our most active Beach Naturalist. She dedicated 92 hours in 2021 to our program. Every week she helped our nest monitoring team by doing the tideline survey in parallel with the team surveying the dunes. She even found a snowy plover nest outside the habitat fences. Thanks to Joan we were able to protect the nest from getting trampled. It hatched and fledged a chick. Joan helped us erect emergency fencing multiple times when we found nests outside of habitat fences, and basically helped with anything that needed doing.

Thank you Joan, you are a hero on Ormond Beach!



**Congratulations & Thank You to
Rachel Ameche and Joan Tharp!
2021 Volunteers of the Year**

Would you like to join our Beach Naturalist team?

Join Biologist Kat and Volunteer Coordinator Alecia for Beach Naturalist training on **Saturday, February 26th 9:00-11:30 AM PST.**

You'll learn about dunes, and special status species such as California least terns and Western snowy plovers that rely on Ormond and Hollywood Beaches for nesting habitat. This training will also cover some of our data collection apps and projects that you can get involved with!



This is a free virtual training through Zoom, with a follow-up weekend field training at Ormond Beach. Register on our [website](#) signup page and/or email volunteer@venturaaudubon.org with any questions. More dates will be added in the coming months.

Classes for Birders



This Saturday!

Bird Feeding 101: Winter Feeding

Saturday, February 5th at 2pm

[Facebook Event Link](#)

[Meeting link](#)

Did you get a new feeder for the holidays? Want to get the most out of a new setup in your yard? Come to our Bird Feeding 101 class and learn the basics of winter bird feeding from our experts! We will talk about everything you need to know in order to start your bird feeding hobby off right. We'll cover the setup of your yard, which feeders work where, what types of food are good to offer this time of year, how often to clean your feeders, what you can do about pests, and much more! Questions are welcome and encouraged.

Beginner Bird ID Class Winter Edition!

Sunday, February 20 at 2pm

[Facebook Event](#)

[Meeting link](#)

This class will focus on those pesky "little brown birds" that can be found on our feeders and in our yards: Sparrows! Inspired by our visiting Lincoln's Sparrow, Abe, we have decided to go ahead and talk about sparrow ID! We'll take a look at some of the many sparrow species that winter in the US and talk about how to tell them apart. It is possible, we promise.

Bird ID Class The Subtlety of Sparrows

Sunday, February 27 at 2pm

[Facebook Event](#)

[Meeting link](#)

This class will focus on those pesky "little brown birds" that can be found on our feeders and in our yards: Sparrows! Inspired by our visiting Lincoln's Sparrow, Abe, we have decided to go ahead and talk about sparrow ID! We'll take a look at some of the many sparrow species that winter in the US and talk about how to tell them apart. It is possible, we promise!

Speaker Programs Central Coast Audubon Chapters

**Conejo Valley
Audubon Society**



"NESTING IN THE CITY"



Speaker: Daniel S. Cooper PhD

Time: 7:30 - 9 pm

Date: Mon Feb 7th, 2022

Bird populations, particularly in urban areas, are in constant flux, with some species adapting and thriving, and others declining. Daniel S. Cooper Ph.D. will describe two studies he recently conducted as part of his dissertation for his Ph.D. from UCLA (Biology, 2020). He will discuss trends in species distribution and abundance, explore traits that appear to confer success in urban areas, and offer predictions as to which species - or types of species - will continue to thrive in urban and urbanizing Southern California. He will also discuss species that declined during this time period, and offer suggestions for their conservation

[more info](#) (including zoom link)



Morro Coast Audubon Society

Serving San Luis Obispo County Since 1966

"The Decline and Not So Certain Recovery of the California Condor: A Tale of Three Heroes"



Photo by Noel Snyder

Speaker: Bill Toone

Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Date: Mon Feb 21st, 2022

This program is a summary of the political and biological drama of the early years of the recovery program, from the late 1970s up until the first releases of the California condor back into the wild. The story is told through Bill's eyes and experiences, but it is a tale of three personal and professional heroes who he believes have made it possible for these majestic birds to once again fly in our skies.

[more info](#) (including zoom link)



SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY



Windradar, courtesy of State Lands Commission

"Offshore Wind Along the Central Coast"

Speaker: Kristen Hislop
Time: 7:30 - 9 pm
Date: Wed Feb 23rd, 2022

For the past five years, the Environmental Defense Center has been engaged in conversations with state and federal agencies, industry, and partnering nonprofits (including the Audubon Society) about proposals for offshore floating wind along the Central Coast. In this discussion, Kristen will provide an overview of the potential for offshore wind to help our communities achieve carbon neutrality goals, as well as the need to avoid impacts to marine and coastal resources. Specifically, this discussion will focus on a proposal about 20 miles offshore Morro Bay, and two proposals in nearshore waters off Pt. Arguello near Vandenberg Air Force Base.

[more info](#) (including zoom link)

Ways to Support Ventura Audubon Society

Please consider donations to VAS as part of your year end giving.
Ventura Audubon Society is a registered tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

Prints and Post Cards Fundraiser

All net proceeds go to Shorebird Recovery Program
photography by Alecia Smith

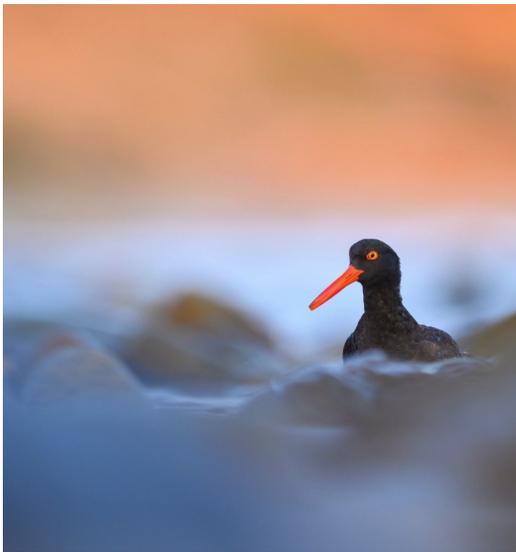
To find out more or to place your order, please visit this [website](#)



Willet Pair at Dusk
11x14



Western Snowy Plover
8X12



Black Oyster Catcher
11x14



Western Snowy Plover Card
Flat Card 4'x5.5'
on Linen Photographic Paper)

Thank you to our grant funders!

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

Grants

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife and United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Act Section 6 Grant
- National Foundation of Fish and Wildlife (NFWF)
- National Audubon Society, Audubon in Action Grant

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VOLUNTEER: Fill out this SURVEY FORM



[Contact Us](#)