

The CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Ventura Audubon Society **JANUARY 2016** Volume 36, Number 5
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubon.org



CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President

SOAR

SOAR ordinances were adopted in 1998 to Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources in Ventura County. These laws require a vote by the citizens to rezone land currently used for open space or agriculture. They expire in 2020 and organizers decided to aim for ballot initiatives to renew the laws in the November 2016 election. Petitions are now being circulated throughout Ventura County.

The mission of the Ventura Audubon Society is to promote at the local level, by education and action, the protection and restoration of bird populations and wildlife habitat for the benefit of humanity and earth's biodiversity. It seems to me that SOAR goes a long way toward accomplishing that mission.

Separate ordinances cover the unincorporated areas of the county and many of the communities in the county. So, in some cases, we need to sign two petitions. Petitions will be available at upcoming VAS programs. Please plan to attend and sign the appropriate petitions. Better yet, join the effort to collect signatures by contacting SOAR to obtain a kit. Go to www.soarvc.org.

Opponents will argue that SOAR costs jobs. They will argue that we need housing and that farmers should be able to sell their land to developers, if they wish. The fact is that land is much more valuable if zoned for development rather than for agriculture. But, it is not an accident that Ventura County was recently ranked as the best county in America in which to live.

The question is in what kind of place do we want to live? Do we want to retain those qualities which make this a desirable place to live or do we want to become like much of Los Angeles County? In the absence of SOAR, development pressures on city councils and the Board of Supervisors would be huge.

Agriculture faces challenges in Ventura County as elsewhere. Climate change and drought may have a significant impact. Water has become scarce. Farmers have had to cut back on water taken from the aquifers. So, there is another side to this equation. If we want to retain ag lands, we need to support local agriculture. It annoys me when I see oranges from as far away as Australia in our supermarkets when citrus is one of our major crops. Often the produce in supermarkets comes from outside the county with unknown agricultural practices, and is often shipped long-distances.

Buy local whenever you can. We may have to pay more but that is the price for living in paradise!!

JANUARY PROGRAM ...

***7:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 12th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura
"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEES" with Dr. Ruben Alarcón***

Dr. Alarcón will discuss the diversity of bees, their importance for native plant communities and agricultural systems, and ways homeowners can promote bee populations. He is a pollination ecologist and associate professor of Biology at CSU Channel Islands. He earned his Ph.D. at UC Riverside, where he studied plant-pollinator communities in the Colorado Rockies and the San Bernardino Mountains of southern California. More recently Dr. Alarcón expanded his research to study native bees in agricultural systems, including blueberries, peppers, and avocados in Ventura Co. Dr. Alarcón is also the Director of CSU Channel Islands' new Pest Control Adviser Certificate Program and is working with local beekeepers to improve honey bee health.

...Margaret Wilson, Program Committee



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

NOVEMBER 2015

Migration typically slows in November; as does the number of rare migrants found. However, this past month produced a variety of uncommon and rare birds locally.

A **Field Sparrow** (right) the first ever for Ventura County, was at the Krotona Institute in Ojai 19-30 Nov (JG & BS). This is only the 14th state record of the species so it attracted birders from all over California. It looks like it may stay for the winter so get out there to see it if you have not done so already (while being respectful of the people living and working at the institute). The returning wintering **Zone-tailed Hawk** in the Ojai area was seen in Oak View on 5 Nov (SH) and was subsequently seen at Krotona 20-30 Nov (M. Obs.). Other uncommon species found at Krotona included a **Townsend's Solitaire** on 2 Nov (JG) and a **Red-naped Sapsucker** 5-23 Nov (JG). Another **Townsend's Solitaire** was on Frazier Mountain on 8 Nov (DP).



A few other uncommon sparrows were also found in November. While common in deserts to the east of Ventura County, **Black-throated Sparrows** are rare along the coast so one at the Briar Bluff Open Space in Thousand Oaks 22-24 Nov (DKB & CD), with a second bird seen there on 24 Nov (AS), were notable. **Swamp Sparrows** were found at several locations including Ojai Meadows on 2 Nov (BrS), the Ventura Settling Ponds on 14 Nov (FD), and Calleguas Creek 28-29 Nov (LE). **White-throated Sparrow** reports included two at Sycamore Canyon on 1 Nov (AS, ST), one in Ojai 1-4 Nov (JG), one at Lake Sherwood 8-20 Nov (MH), one at Arnold Road on 8 Nov (SS & BA), and another in Hill Canyon on 27 Nov (BL & CL).



Also rare along the coast, a **Sage Thrasher** (left) was along Canada Larga 1-30 Nov (BrS) where it looks like it will spend the winter. A second **Sage Thrasher** was there on 5 Nov (ETG & DFD) and yet another **Sage Thrasher** was at the Ojai Meadows on 8 Nov (KK, CR & JM). Other birds of note at Canada Larga included a **Red-naped Sapsucker** 4-30 Nov (DP) and as many as eight **Mountain Bluebirds** 4-30 Nov (AS, DM & GJ).

Elsewhere on the coastal plain, a **Least Bittern** continued at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant through 30 Nov with a second bird also there 17-30 Nov (LE). The **Tropical Kingbird** continued at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant through 26 Nov with a second one seen there on 20 Nov (LE). A male **Wood Duck** was at Camrosa 1-2 Nov (AS) and as many as eight **Hooded Mergansers** were there throughout Nov (M. Obs.). Uncommon finds on the Oxnard Plain sod fields included as many as three **Lapland Longspurs** along Casper Road 1-6 Nov (DP et al) and as many as three **Pacific Golden-Plovers** along Casper, Arnold, and Hueneme

Roads 1-10 Nov (DP, AS, ST). Highlights from the Ventura Settling Ponds included a **Common Gallinule** 15-29 Nov, a **Redhead** on 15 Nov, a **Common Goldeneye** on 21 Nov, two **Common Goldeneyes** on 22 Nov, and a **Hooded Merganser** 18- 22 Nov (all FD). Rarely seen in the county, a **Swainson's Hawk** was in Camarillo on 6 Nov (RM) and a **Short-eared Owl** was at Hollywood Beach on 5 Nov (DM). A **Black-and-White Warbler** was at the Ventura River Estuary on 5 Nov (JB).

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JANUARY FIELD TRIPS ...Karin Kersteter

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

Sunday, Jan 3 – VAS Christmas Bird Count! See newsletter for details and sign up information!

Saturday, Jan 9, 8:00 a.m. Work Day Hedrick Ranch Nature Area. Leader: Sandy Hedrick (805) 340-0478. Arrive at 8:00 for self-guided birding which usually yields some interesting birds. **Work from 9am – noon. Long pants and boots or closed shoes are required.** Bring water, gloves & sun protection. **Directions:** Take Hwy 126 to Santa Paula, 10th St. Exit. Go under freeway, rt. on Harvard, rt. on 12th and cross the S.C. River Bridge. Go 3.7 miles to 20395 S. Mountain Rd. Turn left onto the dirt road & follow it to the end (approx. ½ mile). Even a little rain can make the road impassible; if in doubt, call Sandy to check road conditions.

Sunday, Jan 10, 8:30 a.m. Veteran's Park, Sylmar. Leader: Karin Kersteter (805)901-2203, Half day trip. Joint trip with CVAS! This spacious park in the foothills above Sylmar is often full of surprises. In bad winter weather, montane species can be pushed down from the mountains into the park. There are also rolling grassy hills, which attract flickers and Varied Thrushes while the eucalyptus trees near the disc golf course attract all four species of sapsuckers. Last year's trip gave us great views of a very cooperative male Williamson's Sapsucker, as well as an adorable Hutton's Vireo! Target species will include all 4 species of sapsuckers, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Plumbeous Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Fox Sparrow and Golden-crowned Kinglet. **To carpool from Ventura: Meet at 7:30 a.m.** behind Carrows, located in the Vons Shopping Center at the corner of Harbor and Seaward. **Directions:** 126 E to 5 S to 210 E. Exit Hubbard, go north (toward the foothills), turn left on Garrick, turn right on Sayre. As you enter the park, turn left and park in the parking lot on the left hand side. **To carpool from Simi Valley: Meet at 7:45 a.m.** at the Stearns exit Park n Ride (please note: the leader will meet you at the park). **Directions:** 118 E to 210 E and follow same directions as noted above. There are restrooms at the park. Bring snacks and a lunch, water, binoculars and

sun protection. Dress in layers and wear comfortable shoes. **NOTE:** Please be aware that this park is a disc golf course. We will be birding in the course area, but the players do have the right of way. Also, be prepared for a good deal of walking, as the park is very large.

Saturday, Jan 16, 8:30 a.m. Rustic Canyon/Happy Camp, Moorpark. Leader: Don and Chrystal Klabunde (805)558-9254. Coastal sage scrub and oak woodland dominate in Rustic Canyon. We will explore the stream/canyon that borders the golf course, targeting sparrows, woodpeckers and sapsuckers, roadrunners, Phainopepla and hope for some other interesting species. **To car pool, meet at 7:45 a.m.** behind Carrows, located in the Vons Shopping Center at the corner of Harbor and Seaward. **Directions:** 101S to 23N to 118E, exit Princeton Ave and head north. When Princeton Ave ends, turn left on Campus Park Dr (Campus Park Dr will become Happy Canyon Rd). The golf course is on the left. Meet at the gate.

Tuesday, Jan 19, 8:30 a.m. Surfer's Knoll. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805)415-4304. We hope to see a variety of shorebirds including Snowy Plovers, grebes, turnstones, Whimbrels, godwits, cormorants and sandpipers, as well as many ducks and gulls. **Directions:** Take Harbor Blvd to Spinnaker and enter Ventura Harbor. Follow Spinnaker as it curves around to the right. Surfers' Knoll is on the left. Please bring scopes if you have them. We will be walking a good distance on sand, so please wear appropriate footwear and plan on dressing in layers.

Friday, Jan 22 – Deadline to sign up for Ventura County Game Preserve trip on Feb 13. See below.

Saturday Jan 23, 8:00 a.m. Ormond Beach/Arnold Rd. Leader: Kay Regester (805) 258-1025. Join us at this excellent coastal location, where we will look for a variety of waterfowl. We should see Willets, Whimbrels, Black-necked Stilts, Black-bellied Plovers and other interesting birds. We will also look for Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Peregrine Falcon, and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Dress in layers, as the morning may be chilly. Please bring a scope if you have one. **Directions:** From Ventura, take Hwy 101 south and exit on Rice, turn right and continue to Hueneme Rd. Turn right on Hueneme Rd. After Olds Rd. take

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...FIELD TRIPS (continued from Page 3)

a left on Arnold and continue to the end of the road. **Please note:** Avoid leaving valuables in your car if you are parking it at the end of Arnold Rd. **To car pool, meet at 7:30 a.m.** behind Carrows, located in the Vons Shopping Center at the corner of Harbor and Seaward. If there is time afterwards, and at the leader's discretion, we may bird the sod fields along Arnold and Casper Rd.

Saturday, Jan 30, 8:30 a.m. Emma Wood/Ventura River Estuary. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805)415-4304. We will begin at Emma Wood State Beach, where we will target Snowy and Semipalmated Plovers and Caspian Terns. We will then walk along the path that leads through the willow forest and across sand dunes to the Ventura River Estuary. The estuary is always an exciting place to bird, and target birds will include: Black-bellied Plover, Willet, Whimbrel, Black Turnstone, Red-necked Phalarope and Forster's Tern. There will be a fair amount of walking, so please dress appropriately in layers and comfortable shoes. **Directions:** From US-101, exit California St, turn right and then make a quick left onto Thompson Blvd. Follow Thompson (becomes Garden St) and turn left on W. Main St. Follow W. Main St until just before it enters the northbound 101 freeway. Emma Wood is on the left. There is ample street parking along the outside of the group park on W. Main St (we must park outside and walk in). Please do not leave valuables in your car, and be sure to lock your vehicle.

Save the date!

Saturday, Feb 13, 8:00 a.m. Ventura County Game Preserve. Leaders: Matthew Page and Karin Kersteter (805)901-2203. This special trip is for Ventura and Conejo Valley Audubon members only and is limited to 30 people to ensure a good birding experience for all! The game preserve has generously opened their private grounds for our groups. Please use good birding etiquette...you must remain with the group at all times! On past trips, we have seen species such as Vermillion Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, and American Bittern. We cannot drive the grounds so there will be considerable walking (about 2 miles total). **NOTE: The deadline to reserve for this trip is Jan 22.** Email fieldtrips@conejovalleyaudubon.org and include your name and phone number. **We will accept 15 members from each group.** **Directions:** Take Casper Rd. south from Hueneme Rd. (between Saviers Rd. and Hwy.1). Follow the left curve to the barn/house buildings and park on the road outside the buildings. Please bring scopes, binoculars, and field guides. **To car pool, meet at the parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward at 7:30 a.m.**

Saturday, Feb 20 – Seal Beach/Bolsa Chica Day Trip (limited to 20 people, reservations required). Details to follow in the February newsletter! Contact fieldtrips@conejovalleyaudubon.org if you are interested.

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Point Mugu hosted a number of uncommon or rare species. Field trips through the local Audubon chapters saw 4 **Snow Geese** on 6 Nov, as many as 26 **Blue-winged Teal** 6-20 Nov, 4 **Greater Scaup** on 20 Nov, a **White-winged Scoter** 4-30 Nov (MR), 4 **American White Pelicans** on 20 Nov, a **Bald Eagle** 6-20 Nov, a **Ferruginous Hawk** on 20 Nov, a **Red Knot** on 6 Nov, 2 **Thayer's Gulls** on 20 Nov (DP & TB), 4 **Vermilion Flycatchers** on 6 Nov and 7 on 20 Nov, and a **Palm Warbler** 6-20 Nov (all DP, MR et al. unless noted). Two **Reddish Egrets** continued at Mugu Lagoon through 23 Nov and as many as 15 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** continued through 30 Nov.

Brown Boobies continued on Anacapa Island with numbers increasing to 36 on 4 Nov (DP) and 48 on 27 Nov (DKB). Others were seen regularly offshore of Ventura. A **Manx Shearwater** was offshore of Ventura on 4 Nov (DP).

Thank you to those who reported sightings during the last month. If you have any questions about local birds or have a good one to report (please no calls about nuisance birds), call or e-mail David Pereksta at 659-5740 or <pereksta@pacbell.net>

Good birding,
David Pereksta

Observers: Bruce Aird, Joel Barrett, Tom Benson, Dan Cooper, Frank DeMartino, Denise Finnegan Dewire, Cedric Duhalde, Linda Easter, Jesse Grantham, Mary Hansen, Stephanis Herrera, Gareth Jones, Deven Kammerichs-Berke, Karl Krause, Bill Langford, Carol Langford, Jennifer Matos, Dan Maxwell, Robert McMorran, David Pereksta, Craig Rudolph, Adam Searcy, Bill Shanbrom, Brad Sillasen, Steve Sosensky, Elisa Taylor-Godwin, and Scott Terrill

National Audubon Membership

Over the last few months, National Audubon has moved membership management to a new system. A look at the first roster from the new system revealed a few anomalies.

VAS has received a couple of calls from people who have experienced problems.

If you have problems with your membership in National Audubon, please contact Audubon Customer Service at:

(844)-428-3826 (toll free) or
customerservice@audubon.org

VENTURA AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

We will do our Christmas Bird Count on **Sunday, January 3, 2015**. The CBC is the longest running citizen science effort in existence. Bird counts take place all over North America with a few in the Caribbean and Latin America as well. This will be the 116th Christmas Bird Count conducted by National Audubon. On the Ventura Audubon count last year, we recorded 179 species, more than 25,000 individual birds and placed 22nd in the nation.

Volunteer counters are assigned to one of the section leaders who coordinate the count in each of eight areas within the VAS count circle. If you wish to participate in the count, please contact the section leader of the area where you would like to count. He/she will give you the start time, meeting place and other details. You may contact Alexis Frangis if you want to volunteer where needed. Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate.

Location	Location	Section Leader	Email Address	Telephone #
Section 1	Ventura River	Kay Regester	kaybirder@aol.com	258-1025
Section 2	Lake Casitas	Alexis Frangis	alexisraehamilton@gmail.com	217-4833
Section 3	Ojai	Rick Burgess	rburgess@toaks.org	449-2326
Section 4	Canada Larga	Neil Ziegler	neilziegler@yahoo.com	983-7207
Section 5	Wheeler Canyon	Gary Tuttle	Gt10k2826@verizon.net	525-2327
Section 6	Ventura City	Eric Waian	dawaians@roadrunner.com	630-0100
Section 7	SCRE & Coast	Alexis Frangis	alexisraehamilton@gmail.com	217-4833
Section 8	Ocean	David Pereksta	pereksta@pacbell.net	404-8265



**Let There Be
Peace On Earth**



VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 24198
Ventura, CA 93002



VAS OFFICERS AND CHAIRS

President	Bruce Schoppe	658-2396
Vice-President		
Secretary	Joyce Schoppe	658-2396
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	John Connor	654-1805
	Janice Susha	983-3929
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Education	Betsy Bachman	646-4407
Newsletter Editor	Dee Press	484-8415
Program Committee:	Laura Gulovsen	642-6544
	Margaret Wilson	647-7962
	Audrey Vincent	525-5826
WSP/CLT Team:	Cynthia Hartley	795-4115
	Debra Barringer	Unlisted

If you are not sure if your membership has expired, please **email** Jackie at jbworden7@gmail.com and she will check it out for you.

BOARD MEETING: There will be a Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, January 5th, at the Laura and Ernie Gulovsen, 157 Madera Ave, in Ventura. Call (805) 642-6544 for more information.

THE VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY holds its regular meeting on the second Tuesday of the month at the Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd. in Oxnard at 7:30 p.m., September through April. The May meeting is a barbecue. Call the President for information. Board Meetings are held bi-monthly on the first Tuesday of the month. A Membership Form is available on the VAS web site.

THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR is published nine times per year (September-May). Members are encouraged to submit articles, announcements, letters and drawings, preferably in WORD format, or in the form of an e-mail message. *The deadline is noon on the **12th** of the month preceding the month of publishing.* Send submissions to deepress2@gmail.com