

# *The CALIFORNIA CONDOR*

Ventura Audubon Society **DECEMBER 2016** Volume 37, Number 4  
A Chapter of the National Audubon [www.VenturaAudubon.org](http://www.VenturaAudubon.org)



## *CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President*

In a few weeks, 2016 will be history. Given the outcome of the recent election, 2017 and indeed, the next four years promise to be challenging. Nevertheless, before facing future challenges, I thought it might be good to highlight some of our accomplishments during 2016.

These accomplishments result from the hard work and dedication of many people, without whom none of it would be possible. A huge **thank you** to all of them! It begins with scheduling the field trips and the programs. It continues with the monthly newsletter and keeping the books, publicizing the events and maintaining the membership list. The list goes on! Thank you to all who make it possible.

Protection and monitoring of western snowy plover and California least tern nesting at Ormond and Hollywood beaches is the focus of our Shorebird Recovery Project. Permitted biologists were deployed to both locations during the 2016 season. At Ormond Beach, a total of 21 WSP nests were found in which 54 eggs were laid, 35 hatched and eight chicks fledged. As many as 70 individual birds were observed at the beginning and end of the season. For the first time in several years, CLTs nested in the north area near the lagoon. A total of 18 nests were found, 34 eggs were laid, 31 hatched and 14 chicks fledged. A peak population of 34 adults was observed in June.

Of particular significance to Ormond Beach was the adoption in June of an ordinance by the City of Oxnard greatly improving protection of the beach. Dogs and other domestic animals are now prohibited at all times, year-round, as are other, potentially disruptive activities. A major outreach effort was mounted to get the word out and it is encouraging to note a substantial reduction in the number of dogs coming to the beach. Without dogs, we have seen more migrating shorebirds and a wintering flock of 70 WSP was observed on November 12<sup>th</sup>. Protection extends beyond the nesting season!

At Hollywood Beach, the results were less exciting. A total of 5 WSP nest attempts were documented but 4 of the 5 nests were subject to major disturbance resulting in either egg removal or egg loss. Three nests hatched 7 chicks but (continued on Page 4)...

## *DECEMBER PROGRAM... submitted by Debby Burns*

*7:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 13th Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura*

### *"ESTABLISHING NATIVE HABITATS TO ATTRACT NATIVE POLLINATORS"*

*Michael Glenn, US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Michael Glenn has worked for the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a biologist since 2006. In 2008, he began coordinating the Schoolyard Habitat and Outdoor Classroom program in Southern California. Currently, the program has fifteen Schoolyard Habitat projects and 20 Monarch butterfly habitats thriving in Ventura County. He also partners with tribes to restore habitat for native and endangered species on tribal lands. Michael earned a degree in biology from Cal Poly Pomona in 1992. Recently, a Schoolyard Habitat Project at Sierra High School in Fillmore was awarded the Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association. Michael lives in Ventura and is a proud father to three rescued dachshunds.

Backyard habitats are essentials to native and migrating birds. Please join us to learn more about the importance of native pollinators to our natural habitat and how you can create an attractive and welcoming environment in your own yard and neighborhood. **Come early to enjoy home-made cookies, a cup of coffee, & a chat with your board members!**



## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

### OCTOBER 2016

October is generally the peak month for finding eastern and southwestern vagrant warblers locally, but this year saw little in the way of uncommon to rare warblers at usually reliable migrant traps. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was at Marion Cannon Park on 4 Oct (FD & KK). **Tennessee Warblers** were found in a few locations including Sycamore Canyon on 13 Oct (JB) and Pleasant Valley Park on 24 Oct (DP). An **American Redstart** was at Sycamore Canyon on 9 Oct (ES). A **Bay-breasted Warbler** (DP) and a **Blackpoll Warbler** (JM) were at the Wolff Road tamarisks 22-24 Oct. **Palm Warbler** reports included at one at Revolon Slough on 7 Oct (DT), one at the Laguna Road tamarisks 8-9 Oct (FD), and two at Pleasant Valley Park on 9 Oct (MF et al.).



**Vermilion Flycatcher** was at Emma Wood State Beach 4-6 Oct (FD & KK) and a **Hammond's Flycatcher** was at North Ranch Park on 13 Oct (DC). While none were seen at the local tamarisk rows this fall, another **Yellow-green Vireo** was in a Ventura yard on 6 Oct (FD).

The local sod fields along Arnold Road produced some rare species in mid-October, including a few exciting shorebirds. Most surprising was a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** that was seen by a few birders 9-11 Oct (MF et al.). A few Golden-Plovers were also found including an **American Golden-Plover** 9-12 Oct (TW) and a **Pacific Golden-Plover** 2-12 Oct with a second bird there 9-11 Oct (DP). A **Red-throated Pipit** was found among a flock of American Pipits 9-11 Oct (MF et al.) and perhaps a second bird was there on 21 Oct (BH).



Waterfowl of note included a **Wood Duck** at Santa Rosa County Park 8-12 Oct (JM) and a **Redhead** at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 15-23 Oct (LE). Waders included two continuing **Reddish Egrets** at Mugu Lagoon through 23 Oct and a **Cattle Egret** along Arnold Road 17-18 Oct (LE). **American White Pelicans** continued at several locations including as many as 35 at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 25 Oct and as many as 15 at Lake Sherwood through 31 Oct. A **Common Gallinule** was at the Ventura Settling ponds on 6-16 Oct (ES). A **Zone-tailed Hawk** returned for another winter in the Ojai area 17-22 Oct (DR).

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 at [pereksta@pacbell.net](mailto:pereksta@pacbell.net) or 659-5740.

Good birding,  
David Pereksta





## ***DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS ...Adele Fergusson***

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, sun-screen, binoculars and field guides

A few reminders about birding etiquette: Stay behind the leader, move quietly, ask questions, listen to what people are pointing out. When socializing, stay behind the group. **Questions/suggestions** about an organized trip? E-mail Adele Fergusson at [adelefergusson@yahoo.com](mailto:adelefergusson@yahoo.com), subject: VAS trip questions. We are looking for leaders for bird hikes so please contact Adele if you are interested.

### **Saturday, December 3, 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 impassable; if in doubt, call Sandy to check road conditions.

### **Sunday, December 4, 8:30 a.m. Santa Clara River Estuary/Surfers Knoll.**

**Leader: David Torfeh 805-794-5334**

We hope to see a variety of shore-birds 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 parking lot 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,

### **Tuesday, December 6, 8:30 a.m. Ojai Meadows**

**Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304**

We should see a large variety of birds, such as, raptors, meadowlarks, sparrows, egrets, and bluebirds.

**Directions:** To car pool meet at 8:00 a.m at The Museum of Ventura Co. 100 Main St. (side parking lot). Take Hwy 33 toward Ojai and follow it to Nordoff High School. Meet at the main entrance to Ojai Meadows.

### **Saturday, December 10, 8:30 a.m. – Arroyo Verde Park.**

**Leader: Linda Easter 805-482-7537**

Arroyo Verde park is a fantastic place to view many birds, such as California Thrasher, Wrentit, woodpeckers and California Quail.

**Directions:** From Hwy 101, exit Victoria and go north toward the hills. Turn left on Foothill Rd. The park will be on the right, at the intersection of Foothill and Day. Meet at the last parking lot with restrooms. **NOTE:** There is a \$2.00 parking fee on weekends.

### **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17...**

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT & POTLUCK (see Page 5)**

### **Save the Date**

**Overnight trip to Salton Sea Jan 20 to Jan 22 Kurt**

Leuschner, a western field ornithologist who lives in Palm Desert will be leading a hike Saturday morning. If you are interested in going contact Neil Ziegler by email with subject Salton Sea. His email is [neilziegler@yahoo.com](mailto:neilziegler@yahoo.com) We will be staying at Calipatria Inn.



## **...CALL NOTES** (continued from Page 1)

none survived beyond 2-1/2 weeks. Crows were present and many dogs were allowed to run off leash during the season. At least 4 eggs were lost due to human interference. No CLT nest scrapes were observed and only 6 birds were seen in the area. Human interference continues to be the biggest barrier to successful nesting at Hollywood Beach.

VAS presented our first **Beaches Are Habitat – Share Our Shores** event in March at the Channel Islands Boating Center. The objective was to educate beach goers, especially those visiting and living in the Hollywood Beach area, about federally listed birds, their habitat, and the threats to their existence. Several local people were among the 50 attendees but more work is needed as nest disturbance is still a problem. A follow-up event is planned for 2017.

Four training sessions were held for docents that were deployed to the beaches including those within McGrath and San Buenaventura State Beaches. We heard from some that the term “docent” may not really fit; so, we renamed them “volunteer naturalist” because that does better describe what they do – interpreting the natural history of nesting shorebirds to visitors.

The second major bird conservation project is the restoration of least Bell’s vireo to the riparian habitat along the lower Ventura River, building upon the restoration work of Ventura Hillside Conservancy. A substantial 4-year grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation permitted operation of five traps for Brown-headed Cowbirds along the river south of Foster Park to the estuary April through June. A total of 53 cowbirds were removed from the area. The same four breeding territories as in previous years were found and it is estimated that 11 or 12 vireo young fledged. The grant also funded a baseline survey of species richness and density during the breeding season. A total of 64 species were identified.

VAS volunteers supported the Sierra Club’s efforts to avoid concrete levees and include storm water retention in the design of improvements to the flood protection structures on the Santa Clara River north and south of Highway 101. Money and FEMA requirements get in the way! We are keeping an eye on Agromin’s request to modify their CUP and expand operations at the Arnold Road site. Volunteers also manned our booth at Oxnard’s Earth Day event in Plaza Park and at the Santa Clara River Parkway Conference in Santa Paula.

Education of young people to respect nature and the ecosystem we all depend upon is an important part of our mission. In 2016, volunteers acted as guides and interpreters for classes brought to Ormond Beach and Hedrick Ranch Nature Area. We are engaged with the Environmental Science and Resource Management program at CSUCI which provides 15 hours of field work by each student, mainly at Ormond Beach.

By the time you receive this edition of **The Condor**, our new website should be up and running. Designed and implemented by Christi Lester with assistance from Jim Susha, it brings our online presence into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! The new website will continue to evolve over the next several months.

As noted at the outset, 2017 will bring new challenges as January brings to power a president who ran a campaign often at odds with Audubon’s core values. As Audubon CEO, David Yarnold, said in a message to chapter leaders across the country, “Audubon has persevered and prospered through the tenure of presidents from across the political spectrum. Because we are home grown everywhere, we bring an authentic voice to the local and state policies that are likely to hold the greatest opportunities for progress over the next four years”. In Ventura County, local progress is evidenced by passage of Measure C and its companion laws in communities across the County. These measures extend SOAR protection to 2050. VAS supported SOAR and signed the argument in favor of Measure C in the Voter Information Pamphlet. To help preserve our way of life, it is also important to shop locally for the agricultural products grown in Ventura County.

**YEAR-END APPEAL:** Our conservation programs are long term. It will take as many years to reach the target population of WSP and CLT on the Central Coast as it will to restore LBVI to the Ventura River. Funding for our conservation efforts comes largely from grants from a variety of sources, including government agencies. Reliable, long-term funding for these efforts is difficult to come by. I am sure that you are inundated at this time of year (as am I) by non-profit organizations encouraging year-end gifts. Ventura Audubon has, historically, promised that we have only one annual fund-raising effort – the Birdathon in April; however, if you are so inclined, year-end gifts to VAS would be welcome whether to our general fund or earmarked for a specific conservation project.

Your financial contributions are important but, just as important is the gift of your time. VAS depends totally on volunteers. We have no paid staff. We can always use more help! Happy Holidays!

## VENTURA AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

We will do our Christmas Bird Count on **Saturday, December 17, 2016**. 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 117<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count conducted by National Audubon. On the Ventura Audubon count last year, we recorded 186 species, more than 19,000 individual birds.

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 Frank DeMartino ([frank@colynx.com](mailto:frank@colynx.com)) at (856) 906-8733 if you want to volunteer where needed. Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate.

Section	Location	Section Leader	Section Leader Email	Telephone
Section1	Ventura River	Kay Regester	kaybirder@aol.com	285-1025
Section 2	Lake Casitas	Frank DeMartino	frank@colynx.com	906-8733
Section 3	Ojai	Rick Burgess	rburgess@toaks.org	449-2326
Section 4	Canada Larga	Linda Easter	dleaster17@gmail.com	818-519-2833
Section 5	Wheeler Canyon	Gary Tuttle	gt10k2826@verizon.net	525-2327
Section 6	Ventura City	Jackie Worden	jworden7@gmail.com	657-2837
Section 7	SCRE & Coast	Alexis Frangis	alexisraehamilton@gmail.com	217-4833
Section 8	Ocean	David Pereksta	pereksta@pacbell.net	404-8265

We will get together at the end of the day to review the day's highlights and to consolidate the sector counts for a provisional total of species count. Frank DeMartino will again serve as Compiler.

The end of day review includes a **potluck dinner at the Church of the Foothills, 6279 Foothill Road, Ventura at 6:30 PM**. The potluck is open to members, friends and guests; you do not have to be a field observer to be included. Those attending are requested to bring the following types of dishes based on the first letter of your last name.

Main Dish: K– R      Salad: A - J      Dessert: S - Z

Please bring your own place settings, utensils and beverages (water and hot coffee are provided).



## ***VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY***

P.O. Box 24198  
Ventura, CA 93002



### ***VAS OFFICERS AND CHAIRS***

President	Bruce Schoppe	658-2396
Vice-President	Cynthia Hartley	795-4115
Secretary	Joyce Schoppe	658-2396
Treasurer	Marianne Slaughter	484-8415
Conservation	Sandy Hedrick	643-2408
Field Trips	Adele Fergusson	415-4304
Programs	Deborah Burns	933-0647
Publicity	Jim Susha	983-3929
Webmaster/Science		
Membership	Jackie Worden	652-0577
At Large:	John Connor	654-1805
	Janice Susha	983-3929
WSP/CLT Team:	Cynthia Hartley	795-4115
	Debra Barringer	Unlisted
Education	Betsy Bachman	646-4407
Newsletter Editor	Dee Press	484-8415

**MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION:** If you are not sure whether your membership has expired, please **email** Jackie at [jbworden7@gmail.com](mailto:jbworden7@gmail.com) and she will check it out for you.

**BOARD MEETING:** There will be a Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, January 3rd, at the home of Jim and Janice Susha, 2207 Eastridge Court in Oxnard. Call (805) 983-3929 for more information. VAS members are welcome to attend.

**THE VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY** holds its monthly 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](mailto:deepress2@gmail.com)