

The CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Ventura Audubon Society **NOVEMBER 2015** Volume 36, Number 3
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CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President

The nesting season for Western snowy plovers and California least terns is over. Results were mixed. Without the large expanse of beach provided by the sand trap at Hollywood Beach before dredging, it wasn't as exciting. There were nests at Ormond, Hollywood, McGrath and San Buenaventura. Predation and human interference were problems; nevertheless, a number of chicks hatched and fledged. A more complete report from the monitors will be part of an upcoming newsletter.

On September 27, docents gathered for a potluck at San Buenaventura State Beach. More than 20 people donated their time and energy during the season to educate people visiting the beaches about plovers and terns. It was important to recognize their efforts. Each was given a Certificate of Appreciation. We also wanted to thank Alexis Frangis who conducted the training sessions and California State Parks where she is an Environmental Scientist. The Docent Program is essential to the ultimate success of the plover and tern recovery programs. Building a successful docent program is difficult but the last few years have established a strong foundation. We want to continue to grow and expand the program on all Ventura County beaches. Another round of training will be scheduled before the next nesting season begins in March. If you would like to help, please contact Alexis Frangis.

Following the potluck, several of us gathered at San Buenaventura State Beach to dedicate a bench to the memory of Reed Smith. Reed was a powerful voice for protection of wildlife and habitat, especially for plovers, terns, and other shorebirds. He inspired many of the people who continue his work today. The memorial reminds us of the need for action and that one person can, indeed, make a difference. In the picture are, l to r: (on the bench) Debra Barringer, Judy Salazar and Mariana Smith (Reed's widow); (standing) Joyce Schoppe, Bruce Schoppe, Alexis Frangis, Cynthia Hartley, Jim Susha, and Neil Zeigler.



Finally, we also completed a third season of cowbird trapping on the Ventura River. With grants from SCE, USFWS, Ventura Audubon and "in-kind" support from Griffith Biological, three traps were maintained for 90 days. Each trap must be checked every day to release non-target birds and to be sure there is water and food. Griffith Biological, which provides the traps and services them, reported that at least four Least Bell's Vireo nesting territories were identified and at least three of the males were "paired up". Ultimately, "success" will be defined by the ability to sustain a viable population of vireos. That will take several years of continued work to avoid Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM ...

*Global Climate Change/Preserving Ventura's Wild and Open Spaces
7:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 10th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura*

Our November program will be a two-parter. Our main speaker is **Don Price**, who will present a program on "The Global Climate Change." He is a professional engineer now retired from the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. A graduate of Purdue University, he has over 30 years of experience in the control of air pollution. Don has been following global climate change and speaking about it since 2008. A question time will follow his talk.

The second part of the program will be a short talk from a representative of The Ventura Hillside Conservancy, who will give us an overview on their mission to protect & preserve Ventura's wild & open spaces. They will also touch on the proposed hillside acreage donation by Regent Properties. A question period will follow. Please join us!



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

SEPTEMBER 2015

September brings a number of southbound migrant passerines through the county, including eastern and southwestern vagrants. The Laguna Road Tamarisks produced a number of sightings of vagrant warblers including a **Lucy's Warbler**



5-13 Sep (DC), a **Black-and-white Warbler** on 8 Sep (KR), an **American Redstart** 21-23 Sep (JB), and a **Northern Parula** 22-27 Sep (FD). A **Summer Tanager** was also at Laguna Road on 16 Sep (FD). Elsewhere, other warblers of note included a **Black-and-white Warbler** at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 4 Sep (MK) and a **Northern Waterthrush** near Point Mugu on 19 Sep (DP).

Other migrant landbirds of note occurred throughout the county during September. **White-winged Doves** were reported widely including one at Arnold Road on 3 Sep (JS), one at Laguna Road on 8 Sep (BH), and one in a west Ventura yard 24-29 Sep (KK). A **Tropical Kingbird** at Round Mountain 20-24 Sep is likely a returning bird from the previous two winters (BE & SE). A **Bank Swallow** was on the Oxnard Plain on 20 Sep (DP). Two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** and a **Black-throated Sparrow** were along the Chumash

Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains on 29 Sep (JB). Eight **Bobolinks** were on the Oxnard Plain on 30 Sep (DP) and three **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were in the same vicinity 24-30 Sep (DP). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported from a number of places indicating a likely irruption to lowland areas this winter.

Waterfowl, waders, and shorebirds were also migrating through or otherwise visiting local wetlands. Migrant waterfowl included 25 **Greater White-fronted Geese** and 2 **Snow Geese** near Point Mugu 29-30 Sep (LS). Two **Reddish Egrets** and at least 10 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** continued at Mugu Lagoon through 24 Sep. A **Cattle Egret** was at the Ventura Harbor on 20 Sep (JB). The most exciting shorebird of the month was a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** seen briefly near Point Mugu on 11 Sep (DP). A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at McGrath State Beach 4-5 Sep (AF), one was at the Santa Clara River Estuary on 8-10 Sep (BC), and as many as three were near Point Mugu 11-19 Sep (DP). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was on the Oxnard Plain 19-20 Sep (DP).

Both trips to the Channel Islands and organized pelagic trips found rare and uncommon seabirds during September. Unusual close to shore, a **Black-footed Albatross** was off Ventura on 4 Sep (IP). A **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** and **Guadalupe Murrelet** were on the Cortez Bank on 10 Sep (DP & TM). A **Red-billed Tropicbird** off the Channel Islands and Ventura Harbors 11-20 Sep (JB) was unusually close to shore. **Brown Boobies** continue to increase around the Channel Islands and sightings during September included 9 on Anacapa Island on 11 Sep (JB) and 10 there on 30 Sep (PG); several in the Santa Barbara Channel including 1 on 19 Sep (AK), 1 on 20 Sep (DS), and 3 on 30 Sep (JB); and 2 south of Anacapa Island on 26 Sep (JB). Other seabirds of note included six **Least Storm-Petrels** south of Anacapa Island on 28 Sep (PG) and a **Sabine's Gull** off Ventura 12 Sep (JB). Unusual and unexpected at sea was a **Short-eared Owl** south of Anacapa Island on 26 Sep (JB).

Thank you to those who reported sightings during the spring and summer. 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!
Dave Pereksta

Observers: Joel Barrett, Dan Cooper, Bill Crowe, Frank DeMartino, Bill Eaton, Serena Eaton, Alexis Frangis, Peter Gaede, Bruce Henderson, Karin Kersteter, Amber Knieriem, Marv Kwit, Todd McGrath, Island Packers, David Pereksta, Kay Regester, Larry Sansone, Dennis Shepler, and John Sterling



NOVEMBER 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, Nov 1, 8:00 a.m. Work Day Hedrick Ranch Nature Area. Leader: Sandy Hedrick (805) 340-0478. Arrive at **8:00** for 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. 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.

Saturday, Nov 7, 8 a.m. Pine Mountain (NEW TRIP!). Leader: Karin Kersteter (805)901-2203. If you have never birded Pine Mountain (not to be confused with Mt Pinos), now is time! Join us as we bird several locations, beginning at Pine Mountain Inn on Hwy 33 and ending at the top of Pine Mountain, at an elevation of 6600 feet. The fields around Pine Mountain Inn (our first stop) are teeming with sparrows and finches, including Lawrence's Goldfinches and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Glowing golden cottonwoods will add to the fall scenery, so bring your camera for some photo ops. Further up the mountain, we will be seeing and hearing usual montane species, such as Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch and Steller's Jays. Other exciting birds that were present in November of 2014 were Lewis's Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cassin's Finch, Varied Thrush and Evening Grosbeak...so who knows what we may find? Carpooling is suggested for this trip, due to narrow, winding roads. The majority of the road is paved, but we will encounter some rough, rocky roads on our way to the peak. There are pit restrooms in the campgrounds. This will be a day trip, so bring a lunch and snacks. Dress accordingly, as it may be quite cold in the morning. **To carpool from Ventura: Meet at 6:45 a.m.** at the Casitas Vista exit under the bridge. From Hwy 33, exit Casitas Vista, take two right turns and park under the bridge. If you wish, you may meet the group at Pine Mountain Inn at **8 a.m.**, located on the right side of the Hwy 33 (it is an abandoned inn/restaurant with a fence

around it). If for some reason weather makes Pine Mountain impassable, we will bird Wheeler Gorge as an alternate.

Tuesday, Nov 10, 8 a.m. Emma Wood/Ventura River Estuary. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805)415-4304. We will begin at the entrance to Emma Wood State Beach, searching the scrub for sparrows and warblers. We will follow the path that leads through the willow forest (often finding Wrentit and other secretive birds here) and finally across the sand dunes to the Ventura River Estuary. The estuary is always an exciting place to bird, and target birds will include: Snowy, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, 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 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.

Sunday, Nov 15, 8:30 a.m. NEW BIRDERS WALK! Ventura Settling Ponds. Leader: Frank DeMartino. The Settling Ponds are one of our leader's favorite birding spots. Both new and experienced birders will benefit from his intimate knowledge of the birds in the ponds and surrounding scrub habitat. Frank will help us determine the difference between blue-winged and green-winged teal, help us find gallinules lurking in the reeds, and sort out the various sandpipers, dowitchers and other shore birds that leave us scratching our heads. Not to mention the gulls and sparrows, too! **Directions:** Take Harbor Blvd to Spinnaker Dr and enter Ventura Harbor. The water treatment plant is on Angler, a left turn before Spinnaker curves to the right. There is limited parking in front of the gate, and additional parking in the lot on right hand side of road. Use caution in crossing road at blind curve. Meet in front of gate.

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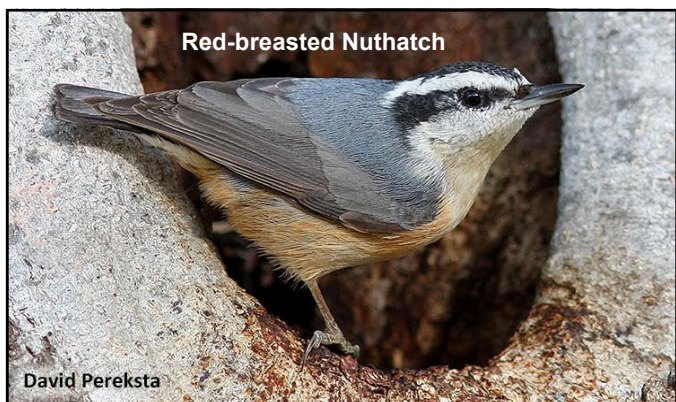
...FIELD TRIPS (continued from Page 3)

Friday, Nov 20, 7:30 a.m. – noon. Pt Mugu Naval Base (Restricted to 20 – pre-registration required). Leaders: Mugu Staff & David Pereksta. For those registered, please note: You must have picture ID cards with names matching the names on the list. Vehicles, articles and personnel are subject to search. Cameras and video equipment are not allowed. Please bring a scope if you



have one. **Directions:** From Hwy 101, travel south on Las Posas Rd, west on Hueneme Rd, south on Wood Rd, crossing over PCH. Meet at the main entrance at Naval Air Rd. and Mugu Rd. near Buildings 112 & 116. Drive to gate 1 at Frontage Rd.

Saturday, Nov 21, 8:30 a.m. Soule Park. Leader: Neil Ziegler (805) 208-3149. Fall mornings are spectacular at this beautiful Ojai park. The Topa Topa mountain rises above the yellow trees and brisk fall mornings bring out winter feeding flocks of sparrows, bluebirds, & warblers. Big trees shelter sapsuckers, woodpeckers and raptors. Thrushes and thrashers scratch under the trees. And we all hope to hear the call of the Red-breasted Nuthatch!



Join us for an easy, flat walk around one of our most scenic birding spots. **Directions:** From Ventura, go north on Hwy 150 through Ojai, turn right on Boardman Rd, and turn right at park entrance. Meet at lot just inside the gate - \$4 per vehicle. **NOTE: There is no parking outside the park – please bring \$4! To car pool,** meet at the parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward at **8 a.m.**

Saturday, Nov 28, 9:30 a.m. Ocean Beach County Park, Lompoc (NEW TRIP!) Leader: Alexis Frangis (805)217-4833. Join us on a day trip to a beautiful coastal location in northern Santa Barbara County. Ocean Beach, reminiscent of Bolsa Chica, sits in pristine isolation just steps from some of our most engaging and beautiful shoreline. Bird-watchers and nature photographers flock to this park. Western Snowy Plovers nest on the beaches. Birds we hope to find will include: Chestnut-backed Chickadee, up to 8 species of gulls, 3 tern species, Marsh Wren, Redhead, Reddish Egret, mergansers and dowitchers. Please bring scopes if you have them! Bring food, water and a lunch. **To car pool,** meet at the



parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward at 6.45 a.m. **Directions:** From Ventura, hwy 101 N to 1 frwy (just past Gaviota State Park). Go northwest on 1 towards Lompoc. Turn left on Hwy 246 into Lompoc. Continue through Lompoc heading west, and the road becomes W Ocean Ave. The entrance to the park is on the right hand side.

Volunteers!

If you'd like to renew your faith in humanity and the youth of today *please volunteer* to help out at one of the VAS Education events coming up in the next month and next year. You won't be sorry. The children are eager to learn and become conservation-minded citizens. They may even teach their parents a thing or two. Events involve staffing a table with other volunteers for a few hours, possibly taking students on bird finding walks, basically being a representative for VAS at events sponsored by other entities. Dates are as follows: October 27, 8-12 (observing only), and November 1,3,19/20, and Nov 22nd. Call or email Betsy for details.



Betsy Bachman, Ed. Chair, eabirder@sbcglobal.net

VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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VAS OFFICERS AND CHAIRS

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	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, November 3rd, at the Susha's home, 2207 Eastridge Court in Oxnard.. Call 805-983-3929 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 November **12th** for the December issue.* [Send submissions to: Janice Susha for the December edition: armybrat1@verizon.net](mailto:armybrat1@verizon.net)