

# *The* **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **MAY 2016** Volume 36, Number 9  
A Chapter of the National Audubon [www.VenturaAudubon.org](http://www.VenturaAudubon.org)



## ***CALL NOTES : Looking Back, Looking Ahead ...Bruce Schoppe, President***

May brings us to the end of our program year. The last program will be the Annual Meeting and BBQ on May 14<sup>th</sup> at the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area in Santa Paula. The end of the year is a good time to look back at our accomplishments and to thank those who have made it possible. As a 100% volunteer organization, we can only accomplish what our members volunteer to do; so, thank you to the Board of Directors and all the volunteers who give of their time and talent. Thank you, also, to those who have donated to our annual Birdathon to help support the work we do.

The many field trips of the last several years have been organized by Karin Kersteter with a supporting cast of the many volunteer leaders. Karin is stepping down from that role and as a member of the board. Thank you for your leadership and ideas. Adele Fergusson has volunteered to become Field Trip Chair. Karin will help and will continue to lead some trips. Karin initiated the idea of scheduling trips jointly with Conejo Valley Audubon. We have several joint members and talented trip leaders so it is a great use of resources. But, there is a need for new trip leaders.

We have also enjoyed excellent monthly programs thanks to the efforts of our program committee led by Laura Gulovsen with the assistance of Margaret Wilson and Audrey Vincent. All three are stepping down from those roles and Laura will also step down as a member of the board. Thank you to all for a great job. Debby Burns has volunteered to take on the role of Program Chair and, I am sure, would welcome your help.

In recent years, Ventura Audubon has led the local Shorebird Conservation effort focusing on the Western Snowy Plover and the California Least Tern that nest on local beaches. We have secured funding and contracted with permitted biologists to monitor nests at Ormond and Hollywood beaches. The biologists with whom we contract are Debra Barringer and Cynthia Hartley. Their knowledge and experience have been invaluable and, so, in January, we added them to the Board. We have also partnered with California State Parks to recruit, train and mobilize a docent corps to staff all the beaches where the birds nest. That program is led by Alexis Frangis, also a Board member. Together, they have expanded our visibility and influence in the decisions made by land owners and government agencies. Cynthia serves on the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Ormond Beach restoration. The Coastal Conservancy is seeking funding internally to hire consultants to finalize a restoration plan and do the preliminary engineering. We have written a letter of support. We are also supporting The Nature Conservancy in their quest for Proposition 1 funds to acquire the sod farm.

Three years ago, we expanded our conservation work into the Ventura River with the goal of restoring a viable population of Least Bell's Vireo (LBVI) in the riparian habitat between the estuary and Foster Park. Initially, we found grant money to place a couple of traps in the area of the Main Street Bridge, a project that continued in 2014 and 2015. For 2016, thanks to the efforts of Jackie Worden, Board member, we have secured a four-year grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through the California Department of Fish & Wildlife to place 4 to 6 traps along the river all the way to Foster Park and to conduct surveys each year to measure progress.

Although we are a relatively small chapter of a national organization, we can be very proud of all we have accomplished and all that we are doing. As noted at the outset, what we do is totally dependent upon the volunteers who come forward – and, we can always use more volunteers. Betsy Bachman has done a remarkable job of renewing our education effort. It is very important that we encourage an appreciation for the environment among young people – from grade school to college. When we do field trips with school groups, we are frequently surprised to learn how few have been to the beach, local rivers, or to other natural areas previously. Many kids are nature deprived! We partner with a number of organizations but, all need more volunteers, especially for field trips. Please call Betsy to see what is scheduled and how you might help.

Likewise, it is critical that we expand our docent program. Twenty or 25 people is not sufficient to adequately staff the miles of beaches in Ventura County. Many people don't understand the reason for the fences or that birds actually nest on the ground, in the sand! You can make a difference. Please call Alexis Frangis and join a training program scheduled in May and June.



## *NOTES FROM THE FIELD*

*...David Pereksta*

### *MARCH 2016*

March is typically a slow month for new finds of rare or uncommon species as many of our wintering birds are gone or nearing the end of their stays, and northbound migrants are just starting to arrive. Over the past month northbound migrants were reported widely including **Elegant Terns**, **Rufous Hummingbirds**, **Western Kingbirds**, **Hooded and Bullock's Orioles**, and others. April and May will bring even more migrants streaming north and by late June we will already see the start of southbound shorebird migration, which will continue through the summer. This is the last "Notes From the Field" until September (which will then summarize sightings of note from April-July) so get out in the field and seek out birds that are on the move or nesting locally. The local mountains are great for breeding birds during the late spring and summer, shorebirds and waterbirds should be evident in wetlands and lagoons along the coast, and migrant songbirds can be found virtually anywhere there is an abundance of trees or dense vegetation. If you are feeling adventurous, try a pelagic birding trip (Island Packers is offering one on July 10) or take a trip to the Channel Islands to see some of the seabirds found off our coast.

Much of the local wintering waterfowl, waterbirds, and shorebirds started to move on to breeding areas to the north or south. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** and a **Snow Goose** continued on San Nicolas Island through 2 Mar. Four **Greater Scaup** and a **Black Scoter** continued at Point Mugu throughout March. As many as 12 **Common Mergansers** continued at Lake Casitas 1-19 Mar, 3 were in the Arroyo Simi 20-31 Mar (RA), and 6 continued at Lake Piru through 15 Mar. Twelve **American White Pelicans** were at the Santa Clara River Estuary on 4 Mar (JW) with at least five there through 28 Mar. Other reports of **American White Pelicans** included as many as five at Lake Casitas through 3 Mar (KK & LE), one at Lake Sherwood on 7 Mar (MH), and four at Lake Piru on 15 Mar (JB). A **Cattle Egret** was at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 29 Mar (AF) and a **Reddish Egret** continued in Mugu Lagoon through 2 Mar. The two **Sandhill Cranes** found in late February continued at Lake Casitas through 3 Mar. Two **Ruffs** were on the Oxnard Plain 29-31 Mar (LS) and eight **Red Knots** were in Mugu Lagoon on 2 Mar (DP).

Raptor reports were scarce; however, **California Condors** were reported from several locations including one near Lake Piru on 6 Mar (RH), three at Valle Vista Campground on 18 Mar (CR & KR), and seven above Fillmore on 25 Mar (SS).

The lone **Lewis's Woodpecker** of the winter season was in the Ozena Valley on 25 Mar (DP). **Vermilion Flycatchers** continued at Point Mugu through 14 Mar and another was at the end of Arnold Road on 18 Mar (JM). The wintering **Field Sparrow** continued in Ojai through 31 Mar; long beyond what any of us would have imagined when it arrived in late November 2015. A **White-throated Sparrow** visited a feeder in Santa Paula throughout Mar (GT).

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 <pereksta@pacbell.net> or 659-5740.

Good birding,  
David Pereksta

Observers: Richard Armerding, Joe Beck, Linda Easter, Adele Ferguson, Roger Hammer, Mary Hansen, Karl Krause, John Mueller, David Pereksta, Cindy and Kim Risen, Larry Sansone, Steven Sprite, Gary Tuttle, and Jackie Worden



## *MAY 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. Carpooling is offered for many trips, but is not guaranteed. If you arrive at the carpool spot and no one is there, please proceed to the trip location.**

**Sunday, May 1, 8:00 a.m. Wheeler Gorge. Leaders: Mary Hansen and Kay Register (805)258-1025.** Joint trip with CVAS! Abundant insects and running water in Wheeler Gorge make for some excellent birding in this scenic area. Target species include: Western Wood Peewee, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, Yellow Warblers, and Pac-Slope Flycatchers. Feeders at the nearby visitor's center give close-up views of Black-chinned Hummingbirds and Steller's Jays. Bring insect repellent, water, hat, sunscreen and your field guide. **To car pool from Ventura**, meet at the parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward at 7:00 a.m. **Directions:** From Ventura, take Hwy 33 towards Ojai. At the "Y" intersection, turn left on Hwy 33 and go past Matilija Springs through 2 tunnels (about 8 miles) & meet at the campground entrance. Parking is on the right and campground is on the left.

**Saturday, May 7, 8:00 a.m. King Gillette Park. Leader: Bonnie Bylin-Clarfield (805)405-5632.** Joint trip with CVAS! In the central Santa Monica Mountains lies 588 acre King Gillette Ranch Park, home to the one time razor blade magnate and now a jointly managed park that hosts a wide variety of oak woodland and chaparral species. We will search for woodpeckers, thrashers, bluebirds, jays, and grosbeaks, orioles, raptors, and sparrows. **Directions:** Take Hwy 101 (Ventura Freeway) to the Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon exit. Head south on Las Virgenes Road and continue to Mulholland Hwy, about two miles. Turn left onto Mulholland Highway and immediately look for the King Gillette Ranch entrance on the right. The address is 26800 West Mulholland Highway Calabasas, CA 91302. **To car pool from Ventura**, meet at the parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward at 6:45a.m.

**Saturday, May 14, 9:00 a.m. BBQ and Annual Meeting at Hedrick Ranch Nature Area. Leader: Sandy Hedrick (805)340-0478.** We will be birding along the recently dedicated Reed Smith Memorial Trail, along with some additional trails that lead to new birding locations. We will look for Least Bell's Vireos in the willows, along with other spring specialties, such as Hutton's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow Warbler and if we are lucky, we may even see the elusive Yellow-breasted Chat! Bring water, hats, field guides and sun protection. Arrive at 9:00 for birding, and the BBQ and annual meeting will follow At 11:00. **Directions:** Take Hwy 126 to Santa Paula, 10th St. Exit. Go under freeway, rt. on Harvard, rt. on 12<sup>th</sup> 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).

**Tuesday, May 17, 8:30 a.m. Ventura Settling Ponds. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805)415-4304.** The Settling Ponds at the Ventura Harbor is a reliable place to find summer gulls and terns, as well as songbirds and raptors. We should hear Yellow Warbler and orioles, possibly even tanagers! 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. Park in lot on right hand side of road. Use caution in crossing road at blind curve. Meet in front of gate

**Saturday May 21, 8:30 a.m. Canada Larga. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805)415-4304.** Meet near the beginning of the road off Hwy 33 under the bridge. We will carpool from that location as we walk and drive this long county road. Target species will include Blue and Black-headed Grosbeak, Barn Owl, Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, Lark Sparrow, Roadrunner, Phainopepla, various species of swallows and if we are really lucky, a Lazuli Bunting. **Directions:** Take Hwy. 33 toward Ojai. Exit Canada Larga Rd. Meet near the beginning of the road under the bridge.

**Saturday May 28 – No trip planned – Happy Memorial Day!**



***NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING***  
**Saturday, May 14, 2016 at 11:00 AM**  
**Hedrick Ranch Nature Area**  
**20385 South Mountain Road, Santa Paula, CA**

The VAS annual meeting will begin at 11:00. We will report our accomplishments and plans for the future, and elect our next board of directors. The candidates for the 2016-2017 VAS Board of Directors recommended by the Nominating Committee are:

Debra Barringer	Joyce Schoppe
Deborah Burns	Bruce Schoppe
Adele Fergusson	Marianne Slaughter
Alexis Frangis	Janice Susha
John Connor	Jim Susha
Cynthia Hartley	Jackie Worden
Sandy Hedrick	

The annual meeting will be followed by a BBQ lunch available for \$15.00 per person (\$7.50 for children). The menu will include chicken, tri-tip, veggie beans, two salads, garlic bread and special steamed vegetables for our vegetarian members. **If you would like the vegetarian menu, please order when you make your reservation.** Please bring your own plates and utensils (to reduce trash) and an appetizer or dessert to share. You may also bring your own beverage including beer and wine. VAS will provide water.

If you wish to have the BBQ, reservations are required by May 6, 2016. Please send a check to Marianne Slaughter, Treasurer at P.O. Box 24198, Ventura, CA 93002. You may also call Marianne or Bruce with your reservation and pay at the event.

Directions: Take Hwy 126 to Santa Paula, 10th St. Exit. Go under freeway, right on Harvard, right on 12th and cross board of directios: 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).



## VENTURA COLLEGE

### FIELD TRIP ...John Connor

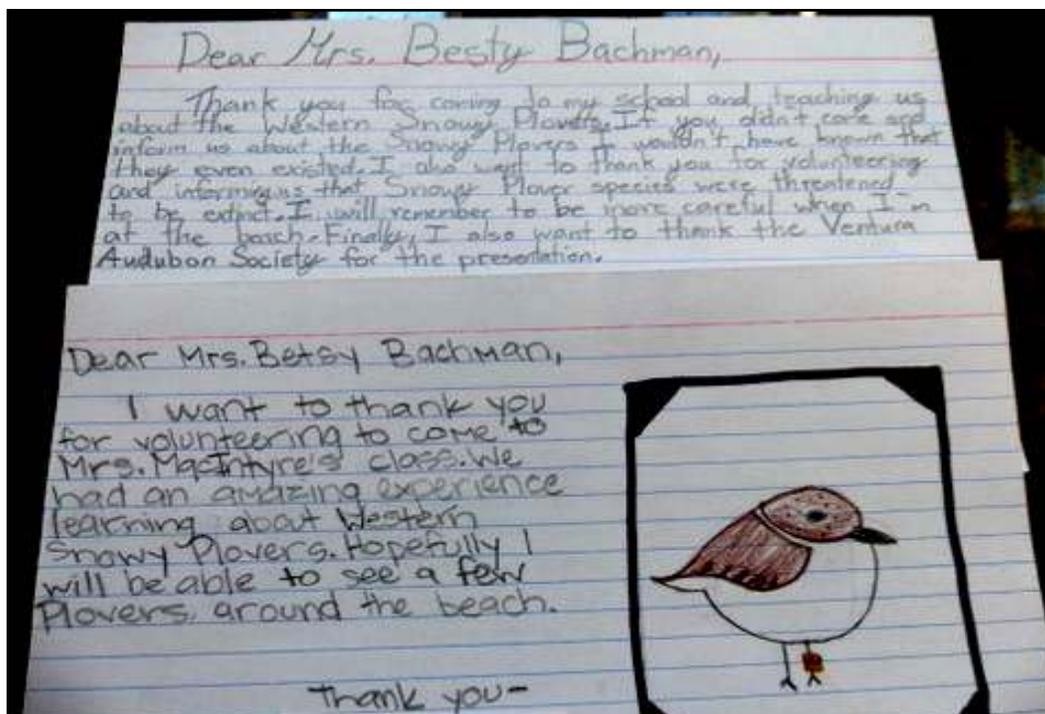
On March 18, VAS partnered with the Ventura College (VC) Field Biology class for our 5th annual field trip to the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park, the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Reserve and the Harbor Seals Rookery. Associate Professor Kamelia Algiers led the field trip assisted by VAS members Estelle Ichino and John Connor with the VAS Education Program providing binoculars for the students. The highlight of the field trip was a spectacular view of a Greater Roadrunner (spotted by Estelle) vocalizing while atop the roof of a mobile home at the north end of the boundary of Carpinteria Salt Marsh. At Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Reserve on the way to the Harbor Seal

Rookery an observant student found a small partially-broken eggshell. It was light blue mottled with dark spots. Within a few minutes of the find the VC students used their smart phones to identify it as the eggshell of a Western Scrub Jay. The ongoing partnership of VAS and the Ventura College Field Biology class is one example of the value of the VAS Education Program. Volunteers are needed for many other VAS Education Programs. Please contact Betsy Bachman at [eabirder@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eabirder@sbcglobal.net). hours. Note in the photo how the Ventura College students are looking high and low for any bird they can spot.

### VAS AUDUBON EDUCATION ...Betsy Bachman



If you'd like to spend a fun and fulfilling morning at the beach and wetland helping students learn birding skills, please volunteer to help at Ormond Beach on any of the following dates: May 2nd, May 3rd, May 16th, 18th and 19<sup>th</sup>. We also need people for June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Hansen Property/Mission Rock near Santa Paula, from 8 to 2 (or any part of that time period) and June 3<sup>rd</sup> at San Buenaventura Beach. The students are eager to learn, and we're building the next generation of conservation minded citizens. Contact Betsy Bachman at [eabirder@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eabirder@sbcglobal.net) or (805) 646-4407.



# VOLUNTEER DOCENTS NEEDED!

Learn about endangered shorebirds  
Share your knowledge with others

3-hour training sessions (select 1):



**2016 Dates:** April 3, May 7, June 4 or June 25

**Time:** 9 a.m. – noon

**Location:** Channel Coast District Conference Room  
San Buenaventura State Beach  
911 San Pedro St, Ventura

**WE** teach you about the western snowy plover and California Least Tern in Ventura County:

Ventura County beaches, where and when these birds nest

Federal Status and what that means

Life History: migration, mating, feeding, nesting, chick rearing

How to conduct public outreach

**YOU** come to the beach and teach others

**Make a difference! Sign up today**

Contact CA State Parks docent coordinator Alexis Frangis:

Phone: (805) 585-1852 or email: [Alexis.Frangis@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Alexis.Frangis@parks.ca.gov)

*We request trained docents commit to regular beach visits during nesting season on any Ventura County public beach where these birds nest*

# VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 24198  
Ventura, CA 93002

## LAST EDITION UNTIL SEPTEMBER

The Editor would like to thank all the contributors and proof readers for our newsletter during the past Audubon Year, which runs September through May! Enjoy the summer, good birding, and see you in September! Dee



## VAS OFFICERS AND CHAIRS

President	Bruce Schoppe	658-2396
Vice-President		
Secretary	Joyce Schoppe	658-2396
Treasurer	Marianne Slaughter	484-8415
Conservation	Sandy Hedrick	643-2408
Field Trips	Karin Kersteter	901-2203
Publicity	Jim Susha	983-3929
Webmaster/Science	Alexis Frangis	217-4833
Membership	Jackie Worden	657-2837
At Large:	Adele Fergusson	415-4304
	John Connor	654-1805
	Janice Susha	983-3929
	Deborah Burns	933-3929
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](mailto:jbworden7@gmail.com) and she will check it out for you.

**BOARD MEETING:** There will be a Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, May 3rd, at Marianne and Dee's home, 1656 Riente Street in Camarillo. Call (805) 484-8415 for more information. VAS members are welcome to attend.

**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](mailto:deepress2@gmail.com)