

The **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **FEBRUARY 2016** Volume 36, Number 6
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubon.org



CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President

Great Backyard Bird Count

We invite you to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count! Simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, **February 12-15, 2016**. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world!

If you would rather join an organized event, VAS will conduct a bird walk on Monday, February 15 (President's Day) at Camino Real Park. It will be led by Adele Fergusson and will begin at 8:30 AM. New birders and families interested in birds are invited. It is a great opportunity and a great place to learn about birds and birding.

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

Since then, more than 100,000 people of all ages and walks of life have joined the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

If you're new to the count, first [register online](#), then enter your checklist. If you have already participated in another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing login.

In 2015, Great Backyard Bird Count participants in more than 100 countries counted 5,090 species of birds on more than 147,000 checklists! [See the full 2015 summary](#).

During the count, you can explore what others are seeing in your area or around the world. Share your bird photos by entering the photo contest, or enjoy images pouring in from across the globe.

(continued from Page 4)

FEBRUARY PROGRAM ...

***7:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 9th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura
"SANTA ROSA ISLAND, RESEARCH & EDUCATION "
with Cause Hanna, Ph.D, Director, Santa Rosa Station***

Cause Hanna, Ph.D California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI), will discuss the mission of and activities at Santa Rosa Island Research Station. The research station provides students, faculty, researchers, and our local community with the resources and opportunities to engage in natural and cultural resource based research and education via a partnership between the US National Park Service and CSU Channel Islands. The ability of the research station community to confront management challenges from multiple perspectives enables energetic, adept and successful responses to our changing natural and human landscapes.

A native of Ventura County, Dr Hanna obtained his B.S and M.Ed. from UC San Diego and Ph.D. from UC Berkeley. Currently, as the Santa Rosa Island Research Station Director, he is committed to conserving the biodiversity and educating the community that has and will continue to define his life.

...Reva Vincent, Program Committee



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

DECEMBER 2015

Last month's highlight, Ventura County's first **Field Sparrow**, continued in Ojai through 31 Dec where it looks like it will likely spend the winter. In addition to the Field Sparrow, other uncommon or rare passerines and other landbirds were found throughout the county in December. Three **White-winged Doves** were in a Camarillo yard throughout Dec (LH). A **Vermilion Flycatcher** was at McGrath State Beach 3-15 Dec (AF) and three continued at Point Mugu through 31 Dec. A **Tropical Kingbird** continued at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant through 31 Dec and another (likely a returning bird from the last few winters) was at Point Mugu on 18 Dec (DP). A **Plumbeous Vireo** was in Thousand Oaks on 9 Dec (RS). Two **American Dippers** were in Santa Paula Canyon on 29 Dec (BH). A **Northern Waterthrush** was at Point Mugu 17-31 Dec (MR) and a **Black-and-white Warbler** was presumably continuing at Emma Wood State Beach through 28 Dec. Sparrows of note included a continuing **Black-throated Sparrow** at the Briar Bluff Open Space through 20 Dec, a "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** and a **White-throated Sparrow** in Point Mugu State Park on 1 Dec (BCB, BL & CL), a **Swamp Sparrow** at Point Mugu on 20 Dec (DP), a **White-throated Sparrow** in Camarillo 18-20 Dec (JM), and a continuing **Swamp Sparrow** in Calleguas Creek through 21 Dec. A "**Pink-sided**" **Junco** and a "**Slate-colored**" **Junco** were at the Conejo Mountain Cemetery on 2 Dec (JG & RM). The **Red-naped Sapsucker** and **Sage Thrasher** first seen in early November, continued along Canada Larga through 31 Dec.

Waterfowl arrived for the winter, including several uncommon species. A **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Point Mugu on 20 Dec (DP) and a male returned again to Conejo Creek North Park on 20 Dec (CK & DK). A **Long-tailed Duck** was in the Channel Islands Harbor 15-31 Dec (GJ) and a **Snow Goose** was there 16-19 Dec (DM). A **Black Scoter** was at Mugu Lagoon 18-31 Dec (DP). **White-winged** Scoter reports included one in the Ventura Harbor 19-31 Dec (BS), a continuing individual at Point Mugu through 20 Dec, and another at Point Mugu on 20 Dec (AF & DP). Single **Common Goldeneyes** were at Mugu Lagoon on 7 Dec and 18 Dec (DP) and two were there on 20 Dec (DP). **Hooded Mergansers** were reported widely including two in Oak Park on 31 Dec (DP), varying numbers at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant throughout December with a high of 43 on 10 Dec (FO & LP), and three continuing in the Arroyo Simi through 26 Dec.

A variety of waterbirds and seabirds were also found during December. A **Red-necked Grebe** was at Point Mugu on 20 Dec (DP). **Brown Boobies** continued on Anacapa Island and in the offshore water between Ventura and Anacapa Island throughout Dec with a high of 64 birds on the arch on 28 Dec (JB). Two **Brown Boobies** were seen from Mugu Rock on 11 and 20 Dec (AS et al.). Twelve **American White Pelicans** were over McGrath State Beach on 18 Dec (AF), 14 were over Point Mugu on 15 Dec (JM), and a number continued at Lake Sherwood through 20 Dec with a high count of 38 on 3 Dec (MH). Two **Least Bitterns** continued at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant through 13 Dec and two **Cattle Egrets** were in Calleguas Creek on 20 Dec (DKB). Two **Reddish Egrets** and 26 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** continued at Point Mugu through 31 Dec.

A few notable birds of prey were seen in December. A **Zone-tailed Hawk** continued in Ojai through 30 Dec. **Ferruginous Hawks** included one in Ojai on 6 Dec (DP) and a continuing individual at Point Mugu through 31 Dec. A **Prairie Falcon** was at Canada Larga on 12 Dec (KR) and a **Short-eared Owl** was on Anacapa Island on 28 Dec (JB).

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: Joel Barrett, Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin, Alexis Frangis, Jesse Grantham, Linnea Hall, Mary Hansen, Bruce Henderson, Gareth Jones, Deven Kammerichs-Berke, Chrystal Klabunde, Don Klabunde, Bill Langford, Carol Langford, Dan Maxwell, Robert McMorrان, John Mueller, Frances Oliver, David Pereksta, Linda Pittman, Kay Regester, Martin Ruane, Brad Sillasen, Roger Swanson



FEBRUARY 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, Feb 7, 8:00 a.m. Work Day Hedrick Ranch Nature Preserve. 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.

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 Vermilion 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 was Jan 22. 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.

Monday, Feb 15, 8:30 a.m. Camino Real Park and Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb 12-15). Leader: Adele Fergusson (805)415-4304. The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual citizen science count sponsored by National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. To participate, count birds in your

yard (or wherever you are birding) for as little as 15 minutes, and enter the results in E-bird. Scientists will use the data to determine how birds are doing. If you cannot make this Camino Real trip, you can still participate in your own back yard! For the trip, meet at the park at 8:30 a.m. We will begin along Aurora Drive at the east end of the park and walk into the park. **Directions:** Take Telegraph Road toward Ventura College. Across from Ventura College, turn onto Estates, take a right on Aurora, go to the grass beltway across from the mobile home park. Park closest to the last house in the residential tract.

Saturday, Feb 20, 8:00 a.m. Seal Beach Wildlife Refuge/Bolsa Chica. Leader: Karin Kersteter (805)901-2203. Joint VAS/CVAS trip – limited to 20 people! Pre-Registration by Feb 11. Join us for some of the best winter birding around on this day trip to nearby Orange County. Our day will begin promptly at 8 a.m. at Seal Beach, where navy vans will transport us around a variety of habitats and we will see specialty species that appear every year. During last year's trip, we saw 70 species, including Ferruginous Hawk, Nelson's Sparrow and Burrowing Owl. After the navy trip ends, we will drive a few miles down the coast to the beautiful Bolsa Chica wetlands. Bolsa Chica is a delightful place to bird, and a great place to test your knowledge of terns. Other excellent birds we may encounter are Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, Ridgway's Rail and Reddish Egret. If you wish to register, you must send an email to field-trips@conejovalleyaudubon.org and include the following information: **First name, Last name, Middle initial, date of birth, zip code and home phone number.** Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Be sure to bring a valid ID. **To car pool from Ventura,** meet at the parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward at 6:15 a.m. **Directions:** From 405S, take Seal Beach Blvd West, cross over Westminster Blvd, and proceed approximately one mile. Take left onto Forrestal Ave into main gate parking lot for Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach. Do not proceed past the gate. **To car pool from Conejo Valley:** meet at Stearns Rd exit Park n Ride at 6:30 a.m. and follow directions from the 405S.

(continued on Page 4...)

...CALL NOTES (continued from Page 1)

Why count birds?

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

Scientists use information from the Great Backyard Bird Count, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the [Christmas Bird Count](#), [Project FeederWatch](#), and [eBird](#), to get the “big picture” about what is happening to bird populations. The longer these data are collected, the more meaningful they become in helping scientists investigate far-reaching questions, like these:

- How will the weather and climate change influence bird populations?
- Some birds, such as winter finches, appear in large numbers during some years but not others. Where are these species from year to year, and what can we learn from these patterns?
- How will the timing of birds’ migrations compare with past years?
- How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?
- What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?

...FIELD TRIPS (continued from Page 3)

Saturday, Feb 27, 8:30 a.m. Lake Casitas. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805)415-4304. We will bird the lake and surrounding brushy habitat. Birds we should see include: the resident Bald Eagles, Green Heron, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Common Merganser and Spotted Sandpiper. **Directions:** Take Hwy 33 towards Ojai; exit Casitas Vista Rd. Turn right twice and go under freeway past Foster Park to first right, Santa Ana Rd. Follow to park, on left. Or take Hwy 33 to Hwy 150, turn left and follow signs to the lake. Park out front and we will walk into the park. There will be lots of walking, so wear comfortable shoes and bring snacks and water. Bring scopes if you have them!

BEACH CLEANUPS KICK OFF WESTERN SNOWY PLOVER NESTING SEASON

Western Snowy Plover (WSP) nesting season is right around the corner! Nesting season officially starts March 15, but birds can move in and start establishing territories in early March. Join us in preparing the nesting areas for the 2016 breeding season by helping with a beach cleanup. This year we have two opportunities for volunteers to help clean nesting areas, Mandalay State Beach and Ormond Beach. Both beaches have WSP breeding populations. The fenced nesting areas close when breeding season starts, so this is our last chance to remove trash from in and around the fences. Removing trash makes the area less attractive to predators which can help nest survival. WSP biologists will be onsite to answer your questions. For additional WSP volunteer opportunities contact Alexis.Frangis@parks.ca.gov or wsp.ventura.audubon@gmail.com.

Details: Bring water and snacks. Wear layered clothing, sunscreen and closed shoes. Beach cleanup supplies will be supplied, although you are welcome to bring your own such as gloves, buckets and pick-up tools. Volunteers sign a liability waiver. Underage volunteers are welcome, but must have a parent or guardian present in the beginning to sign a waiver.

Saturday, Feb 20, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. Mandalay State Beach Cleanup with CSUCI Surfrider Club and CA State Parks. Leader: Alexis Frangis. Directions: From Ventura take Harbor Blvd toward Oxnard. Turn right on West 5th St. Continue to the end where West 5th intersects Mandalay Beach Rd at the beach. Park along on the roadside. The beach cleanup starts at the corner of West 5th and Mandalay Beach Rd. **Rain policy:** heavy rain or winds cancel. **Surfrider contact:** Kevin Piper (310) 982 0488 or kevin.piper818@myci.csuci.edu

Saturday, Feb 27, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. Ormond Beach Cleanup with Ventura Surfrider. Leader: Cynthia Hartley. Surfrider also keeps metrics on beach trash and will provide a data card so you can help them track what you find. **Directions:** Hwy 101 south and exit on Rice, turn right and continue to Hueneme Rd. Turn right on Hueneme Rd. After Olds Rd. take a left on Arnold and continue to the end of the road to the parking lot. **Rain policy:** heavy rain or winds cancel. **Surfrider contact:** volunteercoordinator@ventura.surfrider.org



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED...

CALIFORNIA BROWN PELICAN ROOST AND COASTAL ACCESS POINT SURVEY

MAY 7, 2016 (5:00-7:00 PM)

This year, Audubon California, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, eBird and state wildlife agencies are sponsoring a statewide Brown Pelican survey. We are looking for Audubon chapter members who would like to participate in the survey, either as coordinators or observers. If you would like to volunteer, please let me know.

In 2016, Audubon California, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state wildlife agencies, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird are collaborating to initiate a biannual survey of the California Brown Pelican subspecies (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*). This iconic bird was removed from the Endangered Species List in 2009 after decades of successful conservation efforts. In recent years, however, this subspecies has experienced poor breeding success and unusual mortality events raising questions about its conservation status. It is more critical than ever to track the distribution, abundance, and population structure of Brown Pelicans as their ocean and coastal environment changes. Of highest importance in the survey are observations of pelicans at known roosts, as they are ideal places for citizen scientists to reliably report on the numbers and ages of pelicans. Pelicans at roosts will be counted, aged, and photographed. Data will be reported through a special portal set up in eBird. In addition to roosts, participants can report observations at other coastal access points within the same time frame.

Please participate on May 7 and help your California Brown Pelicans!

For more information, please see <http://ca.audubon.org/news/audubon>

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2016

1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

"BEACHES ARE HABITAT – SHARE THE SHORE"

CSUCI Boating Center, Channel Islands Harbor

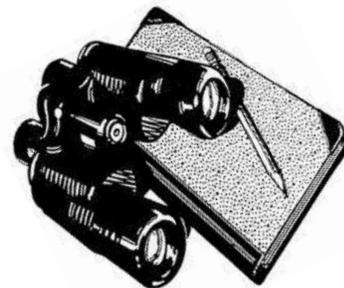
Learn about beach and dune ecology, Western Snowy Plover and California Least Tern natural history, threats, habitat protection and habitat restoration.

Refreshments & Tabletop Exhibits
See the March Newsletter for More Details

Volunteers!



Betsy Bachman, Education Chair, could still use volunteers for the second semester of the school year. Call her at 805-646-4407 or email eabirder@sbcglobal.net



VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 24198
Ventura, CA 93002

SUPPORT VENTURA AUDUBON!

EAGLE OPTICS – If you are in the market for optics, click on Eagle Optics for the VAS website home-page. Eagle Optics gives 5% of your purchase to Ventura Audubon.

AMAZON SMILE – More and more people buy online. Amazon is a major online retailer of all sorts of things. By using Amazon Smile and choosing Ventura Audubon Society as your charity, Amazon will contribute 0.5% of purchases to Ventura Audubon. A small percentage but purchase totals can add up.

Go to www.smile.amazon.com to register and select Ventura Audubon. Then, remember to start your Amazon search on the smile.amazon.com site.

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 and she will check it out for you.

BOARD MEETING: There will be a Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, March 1st, at the home of Bruce and Joyce Schoppe, 4875 Mascagni St in Ventura. Call (805) 658-2396 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