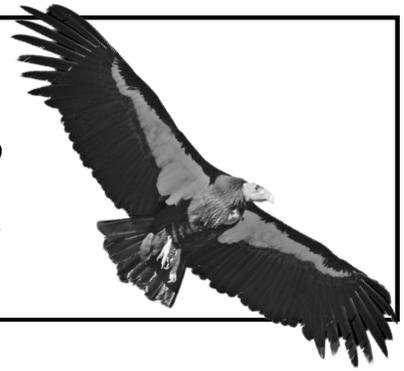


The **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **MARCH 2020** Volume 59, Number 16
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MARCH PROGRAM

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and the Ventura River ***by Ben Pitterle***

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 10th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura



Ventura River



Ben Pitterle and Son

For 20 years, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has been a watchdog and advocate for the protection, restoration and sustainable management of the Ventura River and its groundwater. This program will cover background information about the history of Channelkeeper's involvement in the Ventura River watershed including events that led to Channelkeeper's litigation against the State Water Board and City of Ventura to address over-pumping.

Ben Pitterle is the Science and Policy Director for the Santa Barbara Channelkeepers. Ben joined Channelkeeper as an intern managing our Stream Walk program in 2005, and became our Director of Watershed Programs in January 2006. Before that he worked as a staff scientist for GeoSyntec Consultants, a Stream Team field technician for Heal the Bay's Malibu Stream Team, and an environmental instructor for the Community Environmental Council. He has a Masters in Environmental Science and Management from UC Santa Barbara's Bren School and a BS in Environmental Science from UC Riverside. Ben has extensive experience with water quality monitoring, stream surveying, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, and environmental education.



MARCH 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, sunscreen, 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.

Sunday March 8, 2020 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.

Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8:30 a.m. Ventura Settling Ponds

Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

Enjoy a morning of mostly waterfowl birding. Spotting scopes are always welcome.

Directions: Take Harbor Blvd to Spinnaker and enter Ventura Harbor. The Water Treatment Plant is on Angler before Spinnaker curves to the right. Park either across from the entrance on Angler or if there is not room, park in the lot on the right side of Spinnaker past the Ventura Boat Yard and meet at the gate. Note: Take care in crossing Spinnaker due to the blind curve.

Saturday, March 14 2020, 8:30 a.m. Rustic Canyon Golf Course/Happy Camp

Leader Cody Swanson 805-304-2505

The walk begins alongside the rustic canyon golf course, and continues into open area. We will encounter coastal sage scrub, riparian wetland, open grassland, and oak woodlands along the trail. The diverse habitat allows for many different species of birds. We can expect to see: towhees, phoebes, red-tailed hawks, goldfinches, and a variety of sparrows. Target species include: roadrunners, California quails, California thrashers, western meadowlarks, loggerhead shrikes, a variety of raptors, and the possibility of owls.

Directions: from California 23 north to the 118 freeway east, take Princeton Ave exit. Head north on Princeton (turn left), and then turn left onto Campus Park Dr. Meet at the trailhead (located to the right of the golf course entrance).

Saturday March 21, 2020 8:30 a.m. Canada Larga

Leader: Linda Easter 818-519-2833

Meet near the beginning of the road off Hwy 33. We will carpool from that location as we walk and drive this long county road. Target species will include Barn Owl, Western Bluebirds, Lark Sparrow, Roadrunner, Phainopepla and various species of swallows.

Directions: Take Hwy. 33 toward Ojai. Exit Canada Larga Rd, make a right. Meet near the beginning of the road. Bring binoculars, a field guide, hat & water.

Saturday March 28, 2020, 8:00 a.m. Carpinteria Salt Marsh

Leader Tevin Schmitt 661-904-1563

The Salt Marsh Reserve is an excellent birding location due to the estuary, wetlands, and upland habitats. Special birds of concern can be found here, including Belding's Savannah Sparrow, and White-tailed Kite. Several species of heron are often seen at once.

Directions: To car pool meet at the Museum of Ventura Co. back lot at 8:00. Take HWY 101 North to Carpinteria, exit Casitas Pass Rd., rt. on Carpinteria Ave., left on Linden & rt. On Sandylane Rd. to Ash. Park along Ash.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD ...David Pereksta

A variety of geese were seen locally during January. As many as 24 **Snow Geese** were along Arnold Road through 31 Jan (m. obs.) and one continued in Camarillo through 15 Jan. **Ross's Geese** included one at Arnold Road 26-31 Jan (SC) and another continued in Camarillo through 11 Jan. Four **Greater White-fronted Geese** continued in Camarillo through 15 Jan and 25 continued on the Oxnard Plain through 19 Jan. A **Cackling Goose** was in Camarillo 3-8 Jan (JM) and five were at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds on 23 Jan (KK). **Wood Ducks** included one near Round Mountain 3-5 Jan (JMu) and one in Fillmore 12-13 Jan (DP). **Redheads** included six at Lake Casitas on 2 Jan (KK), one continuing at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 4 Jan, and two at Oak Canyon Community Park on 31 Jan (GC). The wintering **Red-necked Grebe** continued at Point Mugu through 10 Jan. A **Common Gallinule** continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 31 Jan. The **Ruff** and **Stilt Sandpiper** that were seen earlier in the fall of 2019 on Point Mugu continued there through 10 Jan and were later found at the end of Arnold Road where they thrilled many birders 16-30 Jan (JB). Three **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were on the sod fields along Arnold Road 17-20 Jan (DM). Four **Brown Boobies** were at Anacapa Island and the Santa Barbara Channel on 3 Jan (JB). A **Least Bittern** was at Matilija Lake on 1 Jan (DP) and as many as three continued at Lake Sherwood through 29 Jan. A **Tricolored Heron** continued at Point Mugu through 31 Jan and a **Cattle Egret** was there 1-15 Jan (DP).

The **Zone-tailed Hawk** continued to be reported around the Ojai area through 1 Jan before eventually settling in at Lake Casitas on 29 Jan. Another **Zone-tailed Hawk** was found injured in Fillmore on 16 Jan, but later died at the Ojai Raptor Center. **Ferruginous Hawks** included individuals at Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge on 21 Jan (AL), in the Upper Ojai Valley 24-26 Jan (JM), and Hidden Valley on 28 Jan (JBe). The continuing **Swainson's Hawk** at Point Mugu was joined by another on 10 Jan (MR & DP) with both being seen through 31 Jan.

A **Gray Flycatcher** was discovered at Camino Real Park during the Ventura CBC on 4 Jan and remained until 17 Jan (MB, CL et al.). Another **Gray Flycatcher** continued at Point Mugu through 31 Jan. A **Plumbeous Vireo** was in Fillmore on 24 Jan (KO) and a **Varied Thrush** was in Wheeler Gorge on 1 Jan (DP). Rarely recorded in Ventura County, a **Lark Bunting** was near the county line at the Upper Las Virgenes Open Space 10-31 Jan (RT). Two "**Pink-sided**" **Dark-eyed Juncos** were at the Medea Creek Natural Area on 19 Jan (DC). Sparrows of notes included a **Clay-colored Sparrow** returning for a third winter in Pitts Ranch Park 7-31 Jan (DP), a **White-throated Sparrow** at Rancho Matilija on 4 Jan (JG, RR & PL), and a "**Large-billed**" **Savannah Sparrow** at Emma Wood State Beach on 19 Jan ([JG, RR & BS](#)). Two **Orchard Orioles** were at the Ventura Community Park off Kimball 1-12 Jan where they are undoubtedly wintering (NA & SK). **Black-and-white Warblers** included individuals at the Ventura Community Park on 3 Jan (KK), Camino Real Park 4-18 Jan (MB, CL et al.), and the Ventura Settling Ponds 11-29 Jan (DD). A **Summer Tanager** was at Camino Real Park on 4 Jan (MB, CL et al.) and another continued in the Kimball Barranca through 4 Jan.

Continuing birds reported in previous months included individual **White-winged Doves** in Camarillo through 28 Jan and 1 Jan, individual **Lewis's Woodpeckers** at Lake Casitas through 29 Jan and Canada Larga Road through 18 Jan, a **Red-naped Sapsucker** and **Tropical Kingbird** at CSUCI through 31 Jan, a **Dusky Flycatcher** at Matilija through 12 Jan, a **Painted Redstart** at Arroyo Verde Park through 31 Jan, an **American Tree Sparrow** in Ventura through 9 Jan, and a **Green-tailed Towhee** at Wildwood Regional Park through 27 Jan.

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 805-659-5740 or <pereksta@pacbell.net>.

Good birding,
David Pereksta

Observers: Noah Arthur, Joel Barrett, Joe Beck, Marc Better, George Clark, Dan Cooper, Sammy Cowell, Dana Duncan, Jesse Grantham, Sangeet Khalsa, Karl Krause, Aubrey LaBarre, Carol Langford, Peter Larramendy, Dan Maxwell, Jerry Maryniuk, John Mueller, Kris Ohlenkamp, David Pereksta, Rick Ridgeway, Martin Ruane, Bill Shanbrom, and Robert Thoren.



2019-2020 Conservation Notes

Bruce Schoppe, VP Conservation

In January, I attended a lecture in Santa Barbara by Dr. Kenneth Rosenberg one of the main authors of the Cornell report saying that we have lost 3 billion birds since 1970. He outlined the basis for the report and its conclusions. Much of the information is available on a website called 3billionbirds.org. Worth a look! Among its recommendations are seven ways to help birds. Many of these are familiar to Audubon members but, they bear repeating:

7 SIMPLE ACTIONS TO HELP BIRDS

1. MAKE WINDOWS SAFER, DAY AND NIGHT

The challenge: Up to [1 billion birds](#) are estimated to die each year after hitting windows in the United States and Canada.

The cause: By day, birds perceive reflections in glass as habitat they can fly into. By night, migratory birds drawn in by city lights are at high risk of colliding with buildings.

These simple steps save birds: On the outside of the window, install screens or break up reflections—using film, paint, or [Bird Tape](#) or other string spaced no more than two inches high or two inches wide.

Take it further: Work with businesses or public buildings to offer a contest for creative “window mural” designs that make windows safer for birds. Support legislation for bird-friendly building designs. Start a lights-out campaign in your city.

Get started today:

- [Quick, affordable ways to keep birds from hitting your windows](#)
- [Follow bird migration forecasts to know when birds are on their way to you](#)
- [Help pass the Bird-Safe Buildings Act](#)

2. KEEP CATS INDOORS

The challenge: Cats are estimated to kill more than 2.6 billion birds annually in the U.S. and Canada (source). This is the #1 human-caused reason for the loss of birds, aside from habitat loss.

The cause: Cats can make great pets, but more than 110 million feral and pet cats now roam in the United States and Canada ([American Bird Conservancy/Avian Conservation & Ecology](#)). These nonnative predators instinctively hunt and kill birds even when well fed.

Solutions that are good for cats and birds: Save birds and keep cats healthy by keeping cats indoors or creating an outdoor “[catio](#)”. You can also train your cat to walk on a leash.

CONSERVATION NOTES..(Continued from Page 4

Take it further: Speak out about the impacts of feral cat colonies in your neighborhood and on public lands. Unowned cats' lives may be as short as two years because of disease and hardship, and they are responsible for more than two-thirds of birds killed by cats in North America ([The Cornell Lab/Avian Conservation & Ecology](#)).

Get started today: [Six ways to keep your indoor cats happy](#)

3. REDUCE LAWN, PLANT NATIVES

The challenge: Birds have fewer places to safely rest during migration and to raise their young: More than 10 million acres of land in the United States were converted to developed land from 1982 to 1997 ([US Department of Agriculture](#)).

The cause: Lawns and pavement don't offer enough food or shelter for many birds and other wildlife. With more than 40 million acres of lawn in the U.S. alone ([source](#)), there's huge potential to support wildlife by replacing lawns with native plantings.

Take it further: Add native plants and watch birds come in. Native plants add interest and beauty to your yard and neighborhood, and provide shelter and nesting areas for birds. The nectar, seeds, berries, and insects will sustain birds and diverse wildlife.

Get started today: [Find out which native plants are best for your area](#)

4. AVOID PESTICIDES

The challenge: More than 1 billion pounds of pesticides are applied in the United States each year ([source](#)). The continent's most widely used insecticides, called neonicotinoids or "neonics," are lethal to birds and to the insects that birds consume. Common weed killers used around homes, such as 2, 4-D and glyphosate (used in Roundup), can be toxic to wildlife, and glyphosate has been declared a probable human carcinogen. ([American Bird Conservancy](#)).

The cause: Pesticides that are toxic to birds can harm them directly through contact, or if they eat contaminated seeds or prey. Pesticides can also harm birds indirectly by reducing the number of insects that birds need to survive.

A healthy choice for you, your family, and birds: Consider purchasing organic food. Nearly 70% of produce sold in the U.S. contains pesticides ([American Bird Conservancy](#)). Reduce pesticides around your home and garden.

Take it further: Urge U.S. Representatives to cosponsor the Saving America's Pollinators Act. The bill, [H.R. 1337](#), requires the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) to suspend registration of neonics.

Get started today:

- [Check out the Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce](#)
- [Send a message to protect birds and bees from toxic neonicotinoids](#)

5. DRINK COFFEE THAT'S GOOD FOR BIRDS

The challenge: Three-quarters of the world's coffee farms grow their plants in the sun (source), destroying forests that birds and other wildlife need for food and shelter. Sun-grown coffee also often requires using environmentally harmful pesticides and fertilizers. On the other hand, shade-grown coffee preserves a forest canopy that helps migratory birds survive the winter.

The cause: Too few consumers are aware of the problems of sun coffee. Those who are aware may be reluctant to pay more for environmentally sustainable coffee.

Insist on shade-grown coffee that's good for birds: It's a win-win-win: it's delicious, economically beneficial to coffee farmers, and helps more than 42 species of North American migratory songbirds that winter in coffee plantations, including orioles, warblers, and thrushes.

Take it further: Look for Bird Friendly coffee, a certification from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center that also includes organic standards. Educate coffee shops and grocery stores about shade-grown coffee.

Get started today: [Find out where to buy Bird-Friendly coffee in the U.S. and Canada](#)

6. PROTECT OUR PLANET FROM PLASTICS

The challenge: It's estimated that 4,900 million metric tons of plastic have accumulated in landfills and in our environment worldwide ([Science Advances](#)), polluting our oceans and harming wildlife such as seabirds, whales, and turtles that mistakenly eat plastic, or become entangled in it.

The cause: Plastic takes more than 400 years to degrade, and 91% of plastics created are not recycled ([National Geographic](#)). Studies show that at least 80 seabird species ingest plastic ([PNAS](#)), mistaking it for food. Cigarette lighters, toothbrushes, and other trash have been found in the stomachs of dead albatrosses.

Reduce your use of plastics: Avoid single-use plastics including bags, bottles, wraps, and disposable utensils. It's far better to choose reusable items, but if you do have disposable plastic, be sure to recycle.

Take it further: Advocate for bans of plastic bags, styrofoam, and straws. Encourage stores to offer incentives for reusable bags, and ask restaurants and other businesses to phase out single-use plastics.

Get started today: [Eight easy ways to reduce your plastic waste](#)

7. WATCH BIRDS, SHARE WHAT YOU SEE

The challenge: The world's most abundant bird, the Passenger Pigeon, went extinct, and people didn't realize how quickly it was vanishing until it was too late. Monitoring birds is essential to help protect them, but tracking the health of the world's 10,000 bird species is an immense challenge.

The cause: To understand how birds are faring, scientists need hundreds of thousands of people to report what they're seeing in backyards, neighborhoods, and wild places around the world. Without this information, scientists will not have enough timely data to show where and when birds are declining around the world.

CONSERVATION NOTES..(Continued from Page 6

Enjoy birds while helping science and conservation: Join a project such as eBird, Project FeederWatch, a Christmas Bird Count, or a Breeding Bird Survey to record your bird observations. Your contributions will provide valuable information to show where birds are thriving—and where they need our help. Note: If you don't yet know how to use eBird, there's [a free course](#) to help you get the most out of the project and its tools.

Take it further: Mobilize others in your community by organizing school groups or leading bird walks and submitting your counts to [eBird](#). Support organizations that coordinate monitoring projects.

Get started today: [Find a project that matches your interests](#)

VOLUNTEER NATURALISTS NEEDED



Ventura Audubon is seeking Volunteer Naturalists to assist with educational efforts on the Ormond and Hollywood beaches in Ventura County where Western Snowy Plovers and California Least Terns begin nesting this month. Training will be provided (see below) and naturalists are asked to commit to a minimum of two hours per week through June 2020. The most critical times are early mornings, early evenings and weekends, and especially holiday weekends.

Please join us for naturalist training on March 7 at the Smith Decision Center at CSUCI from 9:00 am to 1:00pm. Please contact Kat O'Dea at volunteer@venturaaudubon.org if you have an interest and can help. The following topics will be covered but not limited to: History of Audubon, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Endangered Species Act, Local Ordinances, Dune Ecology, Western Snowy Plover and California Least Tern (biology, ecology), Site descriptions (maps, data), and Interactions with the public.

VAS OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS 2019-2020		
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Conservation/Ventura River, Least Bell's Vireo	Jackie Worden	
At Large	Tom Black	
Chairs & Committee Members		
Webmaster	Jim Susha	
Education	Betsy Bachman	

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION: If you are not sure whether your membership has expired, please **email** Deborah at debburns38@gmail.com and she will check it out for you.

BOARD MEETING: The next Board of Directors meeting will be on Tuesday **March 3rd, 2020**. Our meetings are held at Wild Birds Unlimited located at 4020 E. Main Street, Ventura, 805-765-4594. Because the store will be closed, parking is available. VAS members are welcome to attend.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING: The next meeting will be in **TBD**. Our meetings are held in the meeting room at the back of the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf on E. Main Street and Telephone Road in Ventura. Meetings begin at 6:30 PM and go until 8:30 PM. Anyone interested in helping VAS' conservation effort is invited to join us.

THE VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY holds its monthly program on the second Tuesday of the month at the Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd. in Ventura at 7:30 p.m., September through April. Board Meetings are held bimonthly on the first Tuesday of the month. A membership form is available on the VAS web site. Our May meeting is a barbecue.

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 15th of the month preceding the month of publishing.

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