I first want to express Ventura Audubon's deepest gratitude to our many supporters who donated to our October Birdathon Fundraiser! The response exceeded our expectations in this time of COVID19 and uncertainty. We are humbled by the generosity of our membership and supporters.

For our November programs, after a successful 2 month trial period of our new COVID safety measures, we will continue our monthly field trips. Our November speaker will present on the implications of a logging and chaparral removal plan for the Las Padres Forest, presented by Las Padres Forest Watch. We have also provided information on educational programs offered by our neighboring central coast Audubon chapters, which we know will be of interest to bird lovers.

This month we also bring news about the Christmas Bird Count, we celebrate birds through art and photography, and we have brought back David Pereksta's "Notes from the Field" column. We hope to inspire you to think about native plants and birds, and for those of you who want to do more, we invite you to help our conservation committee build a bird friendly gardening committee to inspire our community.

Finally, our newest board member, and talented photographer, has created a 2020 Shorebird Calendarto benefit our Shorebird Recovery Program. It is available for sale. So be sure to get your copy, and one for the birder on your Christmas list!
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VAS Christmas Bird Count - Save the Date

Saturday January 2, 2021

Yes, we are on!

Just like our field trips, we will hold our annual Christmas Bird Count this year, but with COVID safety modifications. Unfortunately we will not be holding the annual post count pot-luck. This year we're going virtual, stay tuned for the details.

Watch for a complete article in the December newsletter with detailed information.

Contact our CBC compiler Frank DeMartino if you want to reserve your spot on count day or would like more information. You can visit him at his store, Wild Birds Unlimited Ventura, or email Frank at frank@colynx.com

This year is the 122nd Christmas Bird Count (CBC). It is the oldest known community science project, starting Christmas of 1900. Data from this project has informed climate change models, something the CBC founders never envisioned. CBC is a great way for birders to be a part of history and make important contributions to avian science. History of the Christmas Bird Count

Get your 2021 Shorebird Calendar!

This beautiful calendar features the Recovery Program, AND these images were photographed on Ventura County beaches. This is a great way to support the VAS Shorebird Recovery Program, and enjoy Ventura County shorebirds year round.

Thank you Alecia for conceptualizing this project and making our program the beneficiary!
November Field Trips

It has been a joy to be in the field again to share our mutual love of birding with everyone, and our field trips have filled each time. Thanks to universal compliance with our safety measures, everyone has felt comfortable and safe. Our board of directors endorsed the continuation of our COVID modified field trip schedule. See our new November schedule below. We hope to see you in the field.

Field Trip Safety Requirements

All attendees must pre-register

No Drop-Ins on field trips, no exceptions

To ensure the safety of our field trip leader and attendees, the following restrictions are in place:

- We are limiting trips to 4 people per 1 leader
- Advanced sign-up required click to sign up
- Participants will read, understand and adhere to our COVID policy
- Registration includes a pre-trip COVID questionnaire

For more details about the trips listed below, or to sign up, please visit our Field Trips page on our website https://www.venturaaudubon.org/field-trips

Arroyo Verde Park

Google Maps

photo credit: Alecia Smith

Sat 11/14/20, 8:30am

Leaders: David Wappler and Adele Fergusson

Ormond Beach

Google Maps

photo credit: Alecia Smith

Sat 11/29/20, 8:30am

Leaders: Tevin Schmitt and David Torfeh

Bird Lists from our October Field Trips

- Satwiwa: Oct 10, 2020 - 35 species bird list & ebird
- Ventura Settling Ponds: Oct 24, 2020 - 34 species bird list & ebird
Save Pine Mountain From Logging

Speaker: BRYANT BAKER, M.S.
Title: Conservation Director, Las Padres Forest Watch
Time and Date: 7 PM - Tuesday Nov 10, 2020
Zoom Meeting Link
Meeting ID: 870 3360 2385
Passcode: 357495
VAS website - more info

Bryant will discuss the Trump administration’s attempt to push through a logging and chaparral removal plan along 6 miles of a prominent ridge known as Pine Mountain, deep in Ventura County’s backcountry, using a loophole that will allow it to skip environmental review normally required for projects of similar breadth and scope. This is part of a concerted, nationwide effort to increase logging on public lands and dismantle environmental protections. Bryant will also talk about the Los Padres Forest Watch and its efforts to protect the Los Padres Forest, Carrizo Plain National Monument, Hopper Mountain and Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuges.

Our October speaker, Bryant Baker, as the Conservation Director of Los Padres Forest Watch, analyzes technical documents, writes comments on projects undergoing environmental review, pens articles in local news publications, monitors the latest scientific literature on ecology and land management, develops and coordinates volunteer field projects, and gives community presentations on topics such as wildfire mitigation.
Other Audubon Chapter Programs

Program: Trans-Pacific Migrations
Speaker: Peter Pyle, ornithologist and marine biologist
Time and Date: 7 PM on Mon Nov 16, 2020
Zoom Meeting Link
Meeting ID: 835 6924 8860
Passcode: 526317
Website link

Discover the amazing movement patterns of albatross, sharks, and other open ocean creatures as Peter Pyle, Institute for Bird Populations wildlife biologist, presents his research on Transpacific Migration.

Program: Plants for Birds - Using Native California Plants to Create Habitat at Home
Speaker: Scot Pipkin, Director of Education and Engagement at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden
Time and Date: 7:30 - 9 PM on Wed Nov 18, 2020
Zoom Meeting Link
Meeting ID: 831 4412 2457
Passcode: 124690
Website link

Plants are the foundation of most ecosystems on earth. If we want to create rich, diverse, and resilient habitats in our yards and communities, we have to start with the appropriate plants. In this program, we will explore the importance of native plants to our local birds as sources of food, roosting, nesting, and more. We’ll take a closer look at your habitat goals and identify specific California native plants that can help you maintain bird-friendly habitat year-round.
Building Bird-friendly Communities

by Jan Stevens, VAS Conservation Committee
photo and video credits: Cynthia Hartley

Bird-friendly communities are places where birds can find food, shelter, safe passage and surroundings to hatch and fledge their young. With development, natural disasters and climate change destroying natural habitat, they’re needed more than ever. That’s why Audubon and like-minded groups want to inspire people to step up and make a difference.

Conservation at Home

National Audubon is advocating bird-friendly garden demonstration projects across the country to motivate the public. Audubon’s Plants for Birds program is a starting point for individuals and communities. Type your zipcode into their online form to generate a list of native plants to consider for your yard or civic project.

The California Native Plant Society’s website, has an even more extensive database. Home gardeners and professional landscapers alike use it to pick plants for their projects.

Meanwhile, there are financial incentives for tearing out water-guzzling lawns and turning them into bird magnets. Besides savings on your water bill, there are rebates to lessen the cost of conversion. Applicants can get $2 or more per square foot for up to 5,000 square feet of lawn converted, though some of that may be counted as income on your income taxes. For details, check out the BeWaterWise link.
Conservation in our Community
Volunteers Needed!

VAS is looking for volunteers to help build a Bird-Friendly Community. We are looking for leaders and helpers in this effort. Potential tasks include helping to plan garden tours in this part of the county, educate the public about reducing bird strikes to windows & buildings and speaking to local government and school leaders about landscaping to attract birds. These are just a few ways you can help. Bring your passion and we will build a committee. Audubon national supplies an engagement and outreach toolkit, including sample proclamations, resolutions and ordinances to show local government support for the initiative.

We are inviting anyone who is interested in being a part of this team to join our next conservation committee meeting in early December. To join or to offer other ideas, please contact us at vpconservation@venturaudubon.org.

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But the best payoff isn’t saving dollars on irrigation, having the prettiest garden on the block, or even doing an environmental good deed. It’s seeing dozens of birds cheerfully singing, foraging, feeding, bathing, nesting, and fledging their young in your yard - and knowing you made this wonderful expression of life possible.
Board Member Spotlight

Meet Alecia Smith
VAS Board Member, Shorebird Recovery Program Photographer and Lead Naturalist

Where are you originally from? And where are you currently based? Oklahoma. I reside in North Hollywood.

How long have you been associated with Ventura Audubon, and what motivated you to get involved? In what capacity have you worked for VAS?
I’ve been volunteer naturalist and photographer since 2018. I wanted to learn more about birds so I could figure out how to help them.

What is your educational and/or professional background?
I work in quality assurance for a tech company based in Silicon Valley. In the past, I've studied photography and sociology.

How would you best describe the joy of bird watching to someone who has never bird watched before? It’s like discovering a secret universe that’s been right outside your window all along. Once you see it, you can’t unsee it, and it’s pretty much always there for you if you approach it with patience and an open mind. I learned the joy of birding when I stopped expecting to find the rarest birds in my guide and started appreciating what was in front of me.

If you had to come back in this life as your favorite bird or bird family, which bird are you most in love with you would want to be, and why?
I would come back as a Western Snowy Plover. They are some of the bravest birds I know, and I’d love to know what it feels like to have that much courage.

Share a tip or two on what you feel makes an ideal, respectful birder?
I try to go unseen and unheard by birds as much as possible. They’re pretty much always going to know you’re there, but with careful movements and a quiet voice, I believe we can reduce their stress levels and enjoy ourselves at the same time.

Please share 2 fun facts about yourself!
I collect 1.) vinyl records & 2.) enamel bird pins
Our very own CSUCI Audubon chapter, Channel Islands Audubon, held a “Birdtober” art event in October to bring awareness to their members about birds facing extinction due to habitat loss from climate change. Drawing a bird brings an intimacy you don’t get from reading a list of species names. So president Clara McNamara asked her members to draw birds on the list of Climate Vulnerable Birds from the Pacific Flyway. Here are some examples submitted by these talented artists and bird lovers.
Hi! My name is Aaron Gomperts, and I’m a 14-year-old birder and bird photographer from Los Angeles. My interest in birds started when I was about seven years old, watching weaver birds build their nests at my grandmother’s home in South Africa. When I came home from the trip, I started trying to identify the birds that I saw in my yard.

I soon discovered that I was far from alone in my interest in birds. I joined the young birder club at a nearby Audubon society, where I was able to go on incredible birding trips and learn with other young birders. In fact the very first young birder trip I went on was an owling trip! I think I’m a little unusual among birders in that I’m not as much of an obsessive life-list keeper (though I do keep one now) - I just love being outside birding. Since I first went on a proper birding trip, I have been privileged to bird many parts of the world and meet amazing birders and ornithologists.
Eared Grebe

Tasmanian spotted owl

Tennessee Warbler

Sanderling

Bush Tit
It is rare to find a first county record locally, but we were rewarded with two first Ventura County records within a month of each other. Ventura County’s first White-eyed Vireo was in the riparian forest along Matilija Creek above the lake 27 Aug-22 Sep (JG, PL, BS & RR), which may have been there from 9 Jul. Hot on the heels of that, Ventura’s first Blue-winged Warbler was found at Pitts Ranch Park in Camarillo 26-27 Sep (JMu).

Many other rarities were sighted during this time period! See the list below. Click here to read the full report for dates, locations of sightings, and to see who reported the sightings. Enjoy!

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>

Thank you to our supporters!

Financial contributions to our chapter allow us to continue our work protecting birds and their habitat.

**Grants**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife and United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Act Section 6 Grant
National Foundation of Fish and Wildlife (NFWF)
National Audubon Society, Audubon in Action Grant

We still have donations and new memberships coming in from our October fundraiser! A complete thank you to all donors will be published in our December newsletter.

Support Ventura Audubon Society

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[amazon smile]

[Volunteer: Fill out this SURVEY FORM]

Contact Us