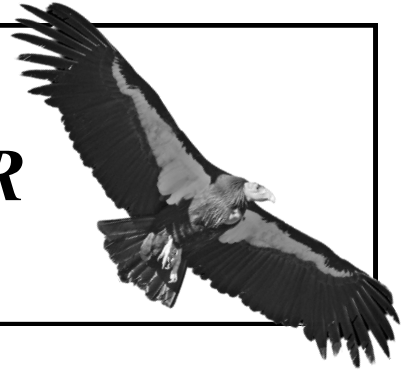


# *The* **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **March 2017** Volume 38, Number 7  
A Chapter of the National Audubon [www.VenturaAudubon.org](http://www.VenturaAudubon.org)



## ***CALL NOTES ..Bruce Schoppe, President***

### **Looking Ahead**

March. Spring ahead to Daylight Savings Time. The start of Western Snowy Plover breeding season on our beaches. And, Spring, a new beginning! All things to look forward to.

Speaking of looking forward, your board is also looking to the future. In May, we will have our Annual Meeting at which the membership will elect board members for the 2017-2018 program year. Some of our board members and chairs have indicated a desire to retire. As I mentioned last month, Jackie Worden will step down as Membership Chair. Dee Press will retire as Newsletter Editor after 15 years and Debby Burns will retire as Program Chair. Our most sincere thanks to all for their efforts on behalf of VAS. This is my eighth year as president and I have told the Board that next year will be my last although I will likely stay on the board. Marianne Slaughter has been Treasurer during my time as president (after serving as president herself) and she, too, has said she would like to step down at the end of the 2017 to 2018 Program Year.

So, we have a challenge. In addition to the Programs and Field Trips, Ventura Audubon has several important and ongoing conservation projects. Our efforts are recognized and respected by political leadership in the County and by other conservation organizations. We have upped our game substantially in recent years. Our projects include the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area and adjacent The Nature Conservancy properties, restoration of a Least Bell's Vireo population to the lower Ventura River and monitoring and protecting the Western Snowy Plovers and California Least Terns for which most of our beaches are critical habitat.

For these programs to continue to be successful, we need new people to engage!

*(Continued on Page 4...)*

## ***MARCH PROGRAM ...submitted by Debby Burns***

***7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 14h Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura***

## ***UCSB SANTA CLARA RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM and THE CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR TAMARISK CONTROL***

Ventura Audubon's March Program will be an informative presentation of two essential restoration and conservation projects that serve to protect and develop habitat in our area. Scientists from the Riparian Invasion Research Lab (RIVRLab) at UCSB are conducting large scale restoration on over 200 acres of riparian habitat in the Santa Clara River in Santa Paula and Fillmore. The goals of this project are to remove the invasive giant reed *Arundo* and reestablish native woodland and scrub habitat to benefit wildlife, including the Least Bell's Vireo and the Southwest Willow Flycatcher. The Hedrick Ranch Nature Area, a special interest of Ventura Audubon, is part of the restoration project.

Presenters from UCSB include Adam Lambert, Director of RIVRLab; Sean Carey is Field Site Manager for the Santa Clara restoration program; Mickie Tang graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in Ecology and Evolution and conducts restoration and research; Nicole Norelli is the coordinator of California Alliance for Tamarisk Biocontrol, and Mary Hardin-Baylor in Organismal Biology.



## ***NOTES FROM THE FIELD***

***...David Pereksta***

### ***MARCH 2017***

With a wet winter in full swing and our local CBCs put to bed in December, January can often be a slower month for local birding but this month was hardly that. One of the highlights that a number of local birders enjoyed was a yard with several fruiting persimmon trees in Ventura that attracted a variety of rare or seasonally rare species. The two rare species were a **Harris's Sparrow** 5-15 Jan (DM) and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** 2-18 Jan (DPen). In addition to them, species that are locally rare in the winter included as many as three **Black-headed Grosbeaks** 2-18 Jan (DPen), three **Western Tanagers** 2-28 Jan (DPen & DP), and two **Bullock's Orioles** 2-24 Jan (MT, DP).

A number of other uncommon or rare landbirds were reported widely during January. Two **White-winged Doves** continued in Camarillo through 31 Jan for their second consecutive winter at that location. Individual **Red-naped Sapsuckers** continued along Canada Larga Road through 21 Jan, Lake Casitas through 31 Jan, and Fillmore through 31 Jan. The **Eastern Phoebe** found during the CBC in December continued in Ventura through 21 Jan. Likely a returning bird from previous winters, a **Plumbeous Vireo** was at Rancho Simi Park on 8 Jan (MP). A **Sage Thrasher** was at Lake Casitas 24-31 Jan (KK) during the window when northbound birds are passing through on migration. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was at Thille Park on 24 Jan (FD) and another was at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 27 Jan (PD). A **Palm Warbler** and **Northern Waterthrush** continued at Point Mugu through 1 Jan when a second **Northern Waterthrush** was also found (DP). A **White-throated Sparrow** was in the Harmon Barranca on 9 Jan (AS) and another continued in a Ventura yard through 31 Jan. As many as six **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were at the end of Arnold Road 11-29 Jan (LE, LK et al.) as well as a continuing **Tricolored Blackbird** through 17 Jan. A **Baltimore Oriole** continued at Chumash Park through 9 Jan.

Geese were reported from several areas including three **Snow Geese** at Rancho Simi Park 31 Dec-29 Jan (DK), five **Greater White-fronted Geese** at Rancho Simi Park 3-11 Jan (KO) and one continuing at Camarillo Springs Golf Course through 29 Jan. **Cackling Geese** included one at the Satcoy Ponds on 21 Jan (KO) and two at Rancho Simi Park 6-11 Jan (AW) with one continuing there through 29 Jan. A **Eurasian Wigeon**, 15 **Blue-winged Teal**, and 5 **Greater Scaup** continued at Point Mugu through 1 Jan. A **Black Scoter** was near the Ventura Harbor on 31 Jan (JB) and **Common Goldeneyes** continued at Lake Piru through 25 Jan with a high of thirty birds on 8 Jan (DP). A **Red-necked Grebe** continued at Point Mugu through 1 Jan. A **Short-tailed Shearwater** was near Anacapa Island on 7 Jan (JB) and a **Brown Booby** was there on 10 Jan (JH). **American White Pelicans** continued at numerous locations throughout Jan. A **Common Gallinule** continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 29 Jan. Continuing birds at Point Mugu included two **Reddish Egrets** through 31 Jan, three **Red Knots** and two **Thayer's Gulls** through 1 Jan, and as many as four **Black Skimmers** through 23 Jan.

**Bald Eagles** continued at several locations including a pair at Lake Casitas through 31 Jan and two at Lake Piru through 21 Jan with three seen there on 28 Jan (JBe). Two **Ferruginous Hawks** were near Piru on 8 Jan (DP) and another continued at Point Mugu through 1 Jan. Uncommon away from the Cuyama and Lockwood Valleys, a **Prairie Falcon** was in Ojai on 19 Jan (JG & BS). A **Short-eared Owl** was at Lake Casitas on 31 Jan (KK & CR).

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, Joe Beck, Frank DeMartino, Preston Duncan, Linda Easter, Jesse Grantham, Jim Howard, Logan Kahle, Don Klabunde, Karl Krause, Dan Maxwell, Matthew Page, Kris Ohlenkamp, Don Pendleton, David Pereksta, Craig Rudolph, Adam Searcy, Bill Shanbrom, Michelle Townsley, and Amy Worell



## ***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, sun-screen, 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.

**Saturday March 4, 2017 8:30 AM Hill Canyon, Camarillo**

**Leader: Linda Easter 805-482-7537.**

Hill Canyon has several habitats including chaparral, oak woodland, and riparian. We will look for woodpeckers, towhees, sparrows, hawks, swifts, and as many as five species of wrens, i.e. House, Bewick's, Rock, Canyon, and Cactus.

**Directions** from Ventura exit the 101 Freeway at Pleasant Valley/Santa Rosa Roads. Head east on Santa Rosa Road for maybe 2-3 miles to a small road on the right with a sign for Santa Rosa County Park. You will need to park in the Santa Rosa County Park area, where the charge is \$2 per vehicle. There are restrooms available in this parking area.

**Sunday March 5, 2017 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.

**Saturday, March 11, 8:30 a.m., The Nature Conservancy Hanson Property**

**Leader: Karl Krause, krausefamily836@msn.com, 805-415-0188.**

This walk will be limited to 15 people. Participants will need to complete a TNC Liability Release and Waiver form prior to the trip. Please contact Karl Krause at the email address above to reserve a space and obtain a blank release form.

This is an opportunity to visit the TNC Hanson Property along the Santa Clara River and see the habitat restoration work being done by the Nature Conservancy. Since we are going during the transition period between winter and spring, we will mostly see resident Ventura County birds. With very good luck, we may see and hear some of the spring males beginning their courtship ritual.

**Directions:** Take Hwy 126 to the Briggs Road exit. Turn southeast toward the river and turn right on Pinkerton Road. Pinkerton Road turns left and becomes Mission Rock Road. Continue straight on Mission Rock Road to the Nature Conservancy gate at the end of the road. Park on Mission Rock Road before reaching the gate. (Mission Rock Road continues to the right at the gate but it is a private road at this point!!)

**Saturday March 18, 8:30 Foster Park**

**Leader: David Lee: 805-451-3504**

We will meet inside the entrance to the park and bird in the park and possibly along the bike path to the north or south. There will be a good opportunity to see riparian species such as great blue and other herons, forest accipiters, neotropical migrants and various sparrows. It will be chilly until the sun hits us.

**Directions:** Take Hwy 33 toward Ojai, exit at Casitas Vista Rd, go right and park under the freeway bridge. (Parking is also available inside Foster Park for \$4.)

(Continued on Page 4...)

### **...CALL NOTES** *(Continued from Page 1)*

I don't want to kid you. These "jobs" require effort and energy but, none are overwhelming. The fact that many of us have been in our jobs for a long time may discourage some but, there are no chains! We welcome board members and chairs for as long as they wish to serve. Fortunately, members willing to share a bit of their lives with Ventura Audubon have been there when needed.

We are in immediate need of a membership chair, a program chair and a newsletter editor. It would be helpful if the person willing to take on the role of treasurer could get a head start by working with Marianne next year. Many of these positions could be "job shared." We need new people for the board, too. The board meets every other month except in the summer (five times per year) and board meetings last no more than two hours. And, we always begin with snacks and coffee—or, sometimes, wine!

Feel free to speak with me or any board member to learn more about our needs and how you might be able to help.

### **...FIELD TRIPS** *(Continued from Page 3)*

**Sunday March 19, 8:30 Wheeler Canyon**  
**Leader: Raeanne Koerner 805-701-1919**

This canyon provides good birding opportunities. We will be looking for raptors, ground doves, Western Bluebirds and maybe a Lewis' Woodpecker.

**Directions:** Take Foothill Road from Ventura toward Santa Paula beyond Wells Rd. and past Aliso Canyon Rd. until you come to Wheeler Canyon Rd. on the left. Meet at the beginning of the road where there is parking.

**Tuesday March 21, 2017 8:30 Krotana**  
**Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304**

Krotana Institute is a theosophical study center, with acres of beautiful grounds, including grasslands, pines, oaks, and ornamental plants with lot of water features. Field Sparrow was seen here last winter, but hasn't shown up this year. Also, a good place to discover raptors flying over. We might get lucky with Black Vulture or Zone-tailed Hawk.

**Directions:** Take the Ojai/Hwy 33 exit from Hwy 101 North or South. Drive north-bound 12 miles through the small towns of Casitas Springs, Oak View, and Mira Monte. After passing Villanova School, take the next left (Krotana Hill on the left, Hermosa Rd on the right). Two stone pillars mark the entrance. Drive up the hill to the parking lot by the library. Good to car pool, we will meet at 7:45 behind Carrows on Harbor, next to the Chevron Gas Station. If time permits afterwards we will go to Ojai Meadows Preserve and see what the rain has brought. Park at Nordoff High School or the pull-out area on the west side of 33, just past the high school.

**Saturday, March 25, 2017 8:30 a.m. Ventura Hillsides**  
**Leader: Jackie Worden [jbworden7@gmail.com](mailto:jbworden7@gmail.com)**

**AUDUBON MEMBERS ONLY** are invited to visit a private ranch which Ventura Hillsides Conservancy (VHC) is working to purchase and preserve for hiking, biking, and nature loving. Coastal sage scrub, oak woodland and riparian corridors are found within the annual grasslands of this beautiful parcel. To reserve your spot and receive additional event details, RSVP to the Jackie Worden at [jbworden7@gmail.com](mailto:jbworden7@gmail.com) on or before March 15<sup>th</sup>. Space is limited to 25 participants and reservations are on a first come, first served basis. Directions to the meeting site will be provide upon RSVP. Due to limited onsite parking, carpooling will be required!

# *Audubon California Conservation Priorities for 2017*

Audubon California is the state office of National Audubon, focused on issues important to California and the California chapters.

The Audubon California Conservation Team will be using these goals to guide our conservation and policy priorities 2017. These priorities were revised based on input received from chapter leaders at the Chapter Congress at the Audubon California Assembly in November 2016. Our intent is to have statewide conservation goals that we can all work on together, at a statewide and local level that feed into the National Audubon Society Strategic Plan.

## **Goals:**

- Ensuring protection and conservation of key Pacific Flyway species, such as the Tricolored Blackbird, Snowy Plover, and Burrowing Owl.
- Sustaining bird habitat and controlling dust to protect human health at the Salton Sea.
- Securing funding for natural resources in California through legislation and the State budget process. (Possibly, non-bond funding)
- Protecting California's coastal ecosystem, including through advocacy at the California Coastal commission, creation of sustainable fishery management plans, and protection of precious coastal resources like eelgrass and tidal mudflats.
- Advancing habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration with a focus on protecting wetlands and other water dependent ecosystems. (95% of our wetlands have been lost)
- Ensure a healthy climate and clean energy future by promoting responsible renewable energy development through smart-siting and adequate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures, advocating for climate bills and other policy initiatives, and continuing to spread the word about climate-endangered birds and strongholds.
- Engaging all Californians to build resilient bird-friendly communities, particularly through promoting local native landscaping, advising nurseries, and utilizing Audubon's new plants database.
- Audubon advocates for access to nature for every Californian in places across our state including our coasts, wildlife refuges in the Central Valley, parks in Los Angeles, and other places. We protect remaining open spaces in Orange County. We invite and guide people toward experiences in the outdoors that improve quality of life, health, connection to and well-being of communities.



## ***VAS OFFICERS AND CHAIRS***

President	Bruce Schoppe	805-658-2396
Vice-President	Cynthia Hartley	805-795-4115
Secretary	Joyce Schoppe	805-658-2396
Treasurer	Marianne Slaughter	805-484-8415
Conservation	Sandy Hedrick	805-643-2408
Field Trips	Adele Fergusson	805-415-4304
Programs	Deborah Burns	805-933-0647
Publicity	Jim Susha	805-983-3929
Membership	Jackie Worden	805-657-2837
At Large:	John Connor	805-654-1805
	Janice Susha	805-983-3929
WSP/CLT Team:	Cynthia Hartley	805-795-4115
	Debra Barringer	Unlisted
Webmaster	Christie Lester	310-722-9557
Education	Betsy Bachman	805-646-4407
Newsletter Editor	Janice Susha	805-983-3929

**MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION:** If you are not sure whether 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, March 7th, at the home of Bruce and Joyce Schoppe at 4875 Mascagni Street, Ventura, 805-658-2396 for more information. VAS members are welcome to attend.

**THE VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY** holds its monthly program 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 bimonthly 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.*