

The **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **May 2018** Volume 43, Number 8
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubon.org



CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President

Our program year runs from July through June; so, our 2017-18 year will soon end. This newsletter (May 2018) will be the last until September. Please join us for our Annual Meeting and Picnic on Saturday, May 19, 2018 at Church of the Foothills, 6279 Foothill Road, Ventura. The meeting will begin at 11:00 AM with a taco lunch (\$11.00 per person) at 11:30. Prior to the meeting, there will be a bird walk at Arroyo Verde Park at 9:00 AM, led by Frank DeMartino. Make your reservation and send your check to Marianne or call us and “pay at the door.”

Thank you to all who have contributed to Birdathon. At this writing, I do not yet know the final tally but, we are off to a strong start! Thank you very much.

Several current board members will step down from the board when their term ends in June. Marianne Slaughter has been board member since 2002, publicity chair, president and treasurer; John Connor has been a board member since 2009; Joyce Schoppe has been a board member since 2007 and secretary since 2008. Our sincere thanks to all of them for their service to VAS and an equally sincere thank you to all our board members who contribute their time and talent.

With the end of the program year, I, too, will step down after nine years as president. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your president. I have enjoyed the enthusiastic support of our board and membership. I have learned a lot and become a committed conservationist! Together, we have advanced our mission to protect and restore bird populations and their habitat for the benefit of all of us. Following the direction set by the late Reed Smith, we greatly expanded our role as protectors of beach habitat for Western Snowy Plovers and California Least Terns. We began a program to restore the Least Bell's Vireo to the lower Ventura River, building on the success enjoyed at Hedrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA) on the Santa Clara River. And, restoration work continued at HRNA and, now, adjacent areas.

Volunteer-based organizations such as VAS depend upon members to populate the board and manage the organization. The “pay” is low – in fact, non-existent; however, the satisfaction is huge. Many of our officers have served for extended periods, making it more difficult to recruit new people. People fear becoming president (or, treasurer or secretary) for life! We could be so much more successful if we were able to tap into the talents and skills of more members for a fixed and predictable period of time – longer only if they choose. The board has often discussed “term limits” but, the concern has been we might end up with no one to succeed the outgoing officer. That is a problem still in need of a solution! I plan to stay on the board and will, likely, become treasurer – but, not for life! We need a president, secretary and program chair. The board meets just five times per year; between meetings, we handle “business” via email. Yes, it takes time and energy but, it is very rewarding because we do have an impact.

A great deal of work remains to be done. The administration in Washington has greatly increased the challenges we face as conservationists and made our work even more essential. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act has been gutted and many environmental regulations rolled back. Many previously protected areas including National Monuments and offshore areas have been opened to the potential for oil and gas and/or mining exploitation. The list grows longer every week.

It is more important than ever that we/you be involved. Please join us.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

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 **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 15) or take a trip to the Channel Islands to see some of the seabirds found off our coast.



A **Snow Goose**, **Ross's Goose**, and **Greater White-fronted Goose** were at Lake Casitas 23-26 Mar (LF). Individual **Cackling Geese** were at the Ventura River Estuary on 16 Mar (KL), Lake Sherwood on 24 Mar (RZ), and Lake Casitas on 26 Mar (DP). The pair of **Wood Ducks** were at Simi Hills Golf Course through 31 Mar. **American White Pelicans** continued from several locations with notable numbers at Mugu Lagoon through 27 Mar with a high of 40 there on 16 Mar (JM & DKB) and the Santa Clara River Estuary through 28 Mar with a high of 30 there on 11 Mar (AS et al.). A **Reddish Egret** continued at Mugu Lagoon through 9 Mar and another was nearby through 4 Mar. As many as 2 **Yel-**

low-crowned Night-Herons continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 24 Mar. A **Common Gallinule** remained at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 31 Mar with a second one found on 15-29 Mar (AS). Exceptional was a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** on the Oxnard Plain 4-27 Mar (LS & DP), which constituted one of very few spring records for the species in California. Two **Stilt Sandpipers** also continued on the Oxnard Plain through 31 Mar. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was offshore Ventura on 16 Mar (JB).



Northbound migrating **Swainson's Hawks** were unusually abundant this spring with Individuals on the Oxnard Plain on 4 Mar (DP et al.), 9 Mar (MR & DP), and 20 Mar (DP); an amazing 47 in Fillmore on 12 Mar (JB); 1 at Lake Piru on 13 Mar (BH), 1 in Piru on 27 Mar (DM), 1 in Thousand Oaks on 28 Mar (TB), and 7 at Lake Piru on 28 Mar (JBe). **California Condors** included 11 at Hopper Mountain on 31 Mar (M. Obs.) and as many as two continuing at Lake Piru through 28 Mar. Two **Bald Eagles** continued at Lake Piru through 28 Mar and the pair was seen at Lake Casitas through 26 Mar.

A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was in Thousand Oaks 10-19 Mar (SC). A **Red-naped Sapsucker** continued at Canada Larga through 9 Mar and the **Lewis's Woodpecker** near Lake Sherwood was seen through 25 Mar. A **Purple Martin** over the Ventura Settling Ponds on 25 Mar (SK & MT) is a rare spring migrant through the county. Pitts Ranch Park in Camarillo still hosted two **Clay-colored Sparrows** through 31 Mar, and a **Plumbeous Vireo** was found there 20-31 Mar

(KR, CL et al.). The equivocal **Winter/Pacific Wren** continued at Rincon Creek through 19 Mar. The **Black-and-white Warbler** reappeared at Valle Lindo Park and remained through 23 Mar. Two **Brewer's Sparrows** were uncommon migrants along the coast at Point Mugu 26-28 Mar (JM). A **White-throated Sparrow** continued in Ojai through 18 Mar.

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NOTES FROM THE FIELD...(Continued from Page 2)

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, Thea Benson, Sammy Cowell, Bruce Henderson, Linda Frazier, Deven Kammerichs-Berke, Sangeet Khalsa, Karen Laing, Carol Langford, Dan Maxwell, John Mueller, David Pereksta, Kay Regeister, Martin Ruane, Larry Sansone, Adam Searcy, Mary Trombley, and Robert Zweigler

Sandy Hedrick and Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Honored



The Ventura County Board of Supervisors honored Sandy Hedrick and the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA) with an Earth Day Award. At the Supervisor's meeting on April 17, 2018, Sandy received one of five Earth Day Awards for the Restoration Project at HRNA.

Each year, in recognition of Earth Day, each supervisor nominates a recipient from their district. Sandy and HRNA were nominated by Supervisor Kelly Long, District 3 Supervisor. In accepting the award, Sandy noted the long-time support of Ventura Audubon Society (VAS) and Friends of the Santa Clara River (FSCR).

Pictured above, with Sandy are: Andy Prokopow and Lynn Plambeck (FSCR Board members) Bruce Schoppe (VAS President), Sandy Hedrick, Supervisor Kelly Long and Jim Susha (VAS Board member).

The other award recipients are:

District 1: The Thacher School

District 2: Ventura County Watershed Protection District – Raptor Pilot Study

District 4: Rustic Canyon Golf Course Water Reclamation Project

District 5: Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation



MAY and SUMMER 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, April 29 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust (the hills behind Arroyo Verde)

Leaders: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304 and Tevin Schmitt

This walk is limited to 20 people, you need to sign up ahead of time, schedule at <https://rancho-san-buenaventura-conservation-trust.networkforgood.com/events/6430-bird-watching-at-rancho-ventura-conservation-trust-april-29th>. The walk will be close to 3 miles, rolling hills, the walk will be of moderate difficulty.

Sunday, May 6, 2018 8:30 - 10:30 a.m., Hedrick Ranch Nature Area

Leader: Sandy Hedrick (805) 340-0478

This is **not** a work day. We should see some interesting birds, possibly blue grosbeak, hairy woodpecker walking through the riparian area near the Santa Clara River.

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, May 12, 2018 8:30 a.m., Foster Park/Ventura River

Leader: David Torfeh (805) 794-5334

The Ventura River flows through this green park with lots of shade trees. With winter rains, we may see some interesting species at the river, such as Green Heron or mergansers. Inside the park, we will see oak woodland species such as quail, bluebirds and woodpeckers.

Directions: From Ventura, take 101N to Hwy 33. Exit Casitas Vista Rd. Make two quick right hand turns and park under the freeway bridge. Meet the group there.

Sunday, May 13 2018 8:00 a.m., Wheeler Gorge Campground

Leader: Kay Regester (805) 258-1025.

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.

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.

To car pool from Ventura, meet in the parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward next to the gas station at 7:15 a.m.

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Saturday, May 19 2018 9-10:30 a.m., Arroyo Verde (before our Annual Picnic)

Leader: Frank DeMartino with Corine Barksdale assisting. Arroyo Verde Park was hard hit by the Thomas Fire. We will explore the changes and what is left of the oak woodland, grassy areas, and chaparral in this long, broad canyon. Early spring migrants may include Western Tanager, Rufous Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Phainopepla.

Directions: Take Victoria Ave. north, left on Foothill Rd., right on Day Rd. entrance to the park. Meet at the last parking lot by the restrooms. On Saturdays the fee for the park is \$2 hour.

Sunday, May 27 2018 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust (area behind Arroyo Verde)

Leaders: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304 and Karen Laing

Walk limited to 20 participants, you must sign up ahead of time. Schedule at <https://rancho-san-buenaventura-conservation-trust.networkforgood.com/events/6432-bird-watching-at-rancho-ventura-conservation-trust-may-27th>

The walk will be close to 3 miles, rolling hills and with moderate difficulty.

SUMMER HIKES

Saturday, June 9 2018 8:00 a.m., Pine Mountain

Leader: Tevin Schmitt (661) 904-1563

At Popular request Tevin is again going to lead us on a trip to Pine Mountain. If you have never birded Pine Mountain (not to be confused with Mt Pinos), now is time! Join us as we bird several locations, beginning at Pine Mountain Inn on Hwy 33 and ending at the top of Pine Mountain, at an elevation of 6600 feet. The fields around Pine Mountain Inn (our first stop) are teeming with sparrows and finches, including Lawrence's Goldfinches and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Glowing golden cottonwoods will add to the fall scenery, so bring your camera for some photo ops. Last year we had good looks at violet green swallows and their nests as well as Pygmy Nuthatch and Cassin's Finch, so who knows what we may find? Carpooling is suggested for this trip, due to narrow, winding roads. The majority of the road is paved, but we will encounter some rough, rocky roads on our way to the peak. There are pit restrooms in the campgrounds. This will be a day trip, so bring a lunch and snacks. Dress accordingly, as it may be quite cold in the morning.

Directions: To carpool from Ventura: Meet at 6:45 a.m. at the Casitas Vista exit under the bridge. From Hwy 33, exit Casitas Vista, take two right turns and park under the bridge. If you wish, you may meet the group at Pine Mountain Inn at 8 a.m., located on the right side of the Hwy 33 (it is an abandoned inn/restaurant with a fence around it). If for some reason weather makes Pine Mountain impassable, we will bird Wheeler Gorge as an alternate.

Tuesday June 12 8:30 - 11:00 a.m., Canada Larga

Leader: Linda Easter (818) 519-2833

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 possibly a Lazuli Bunting. **Directions:** Take Hwy. 33 toward Ojai. Exit Canada Larga Rd. Meet near the beginning of the road off Hwy 33. Exit 33 make a right, there is a small parking lot we will meet there, not under the freeway. We will carpool from that location as we walk and drive this long county road. Bring binoculars, a field guide, hat and water.

Tuesday June 19 2018 9:30 -10:30 a.m., Arroyo Verde

Leader: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304

Arroyo Verde Park. Leader: . Enjoy birding the oak woodland, grassy areas, and chaparral in this long, broad canyon. Early spring migrants may include Western Tanager, Rufous Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Phainopepla.

Directions: Take Victoria Ave. north, left on Foothill Rd., right on Day Rd. entrance to the park. Meet at the last parking lot by the restrooms.

Tuesday June 26 2018 8:30 - 10:30 a.m., Emma Woods

Leader: Linda Easter (818) 519-2833

We will begin at the entrance to Emma Wood State Beach, searching the scrub for sparrows and warblers. We will follow the path that leads through the willow forest (often finding wrenit and other secretive birds here) and finally across the sand dunes to the Ventura River Estuary. The estuary is always an exciting place to bird, and target birds will include: Snowy, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Willet, Whimbrel, Black Turnstone, Red-necked Phalarope and Forster's Tern. There will be a fair amount of walking, so please dress appropriately in layers and comfortable shoes.

Directions: From US-101, exit California St, turn right and then make a quick left onto Thompson Blvd. Follow Thompson (becomes Garden St) and turn left on W. Main St. Follow W. Main St until just before it enters the northbound 101

FIELD TRIPS...(Continued from Page 5)

Tuesday June 26 2018 8:30 - 10:30 a.m., Emma Woods (continued)

Leader: Linda Easter (818) 519-2833

freeway. Emma Wood is on the left. There is ample street parking along the outside of the park on W. Main St (we must

park outside and walk in). Please do not leave valuables in your car, and be sure to lock your vehicle.

Tuesday July 10 2018 8:30 a.m., Carpinteria Salt Marsh, afterwards will meet for lunch at a members home on the Rincon

Leader: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304

The Salt Marsh Reserve on Ash Ave. 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 Clapper Rail.

Directions: To car pool, meet behind Carrows on Harbor Blvd next to the gas station at 8:00 a.m. sharp.

Take HWY 101 North, Exit Casitas Pass Rd. and turn left (south). At Carpinteria Ave., turn right, then left on Linden and right on Sandyland Rd to Ash. Park along Ash. Bring your own lunch as we have been graciously invited to join Debby Burns at her ocean front home at Rincon Point. She will provide drinks and dessert. Details to the home will be provided at the walk.



Ventura Audubon Earth Day Events

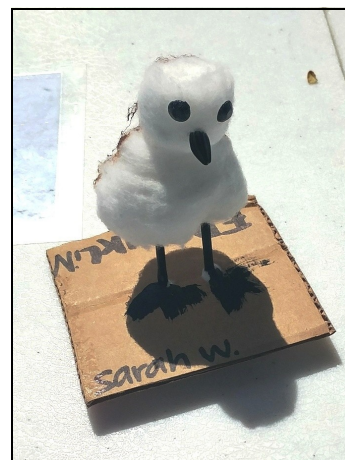
Ventura Audubon participated in two Earth Day related events in April. We had our customary booth at the Oxnard Earth Day event in Plaza Park in Oxnard on April 14th.

The annual event brings several thousand people to the park to see environmental groups educate and entertain. Students from CSUCI under the direction of Cynthia

Hartley helped children make more than 100 "plover pals" who, in the process, learned about the tiny birds that make their nests and raise their chicks on sandy beaches in Ventura County.

On Sunday, our booth was at the Owl Festival at Olivas Adobe in Ventura. The feature attraction of that event was the nesting Great Horned Owl who looked down on the crowds with no apparent concern. A GHO has nested there for several years. Ojai Raptor Center also presented several of their owls. People could get a good look at the nesting owls from the balcony above our booth.

We were able to talk with a lot of people at both events. The weather was good although it got windy and cool Sunday afternoon. Of the people we met, six signed up to attend the upcoming Volunteer Naturalist Training sessions!





Volunteer Naturalists Needed!

Learn about Endangered Shorebirds Share Your Knowledge with Others

3-hour training sessions (select 1):

April 28, 2018

May 20, 2018

June 23, 2018

We will teach you about the western snowy plover and California least tern in Ventura County

- Ventura County beaches: where these birds nest and when
- 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

YOU can make a difference in the lives of these endangered species

SIGN UP TODAY:

Contact: Alexis Frangis
Ca State Parks Docent Coordinator, Ventura County

Email: Alexis.Frangis@parks.ca.gov

Phone: 805-585-1852

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

Time: 9 am – 12 noon

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



Proposition 68

Will Fund Numerous Local and Statewide Conservation Priorities

Ventura Audubon is joining Audubon California and a broad coalition of conservation organizations in supporting Proposition 68 on the June 5 California ballot. These groups have cited numerous potential benefits to California's birds and other natural treasures, as well as the state's residents. Called the California Clean Water & Safe Parks Act, Proposition 68 is a \$4 billion bond measure that will fund a number of important priorities for Californians, including local, regional and state parks, clean drinking water projects, flood protection, and habitat projects that are vital to the state's diverse wildlife.

Audubon California was part of a broad coalition of organizations working closely with lawmakers during the 2017 legislative session to put Prop. 68 on the ballot. This critical opportunity comes at a time when millions of Californians don't have access to safe parks, trails, and recreation areas. Moreover, the cycle of drought and extreme weather is already taking a toll on California's natural treasures and threatens our communities with fires, flooding and mudslides and other ecological degradation.

These same forces have also exposed our state's antiquated water infrastructure, bringing into doubt our ability to provide clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to our residents. Lastly, with most of the bond funding for vital conservation programs running out in the last few years, it is time for Californians to make the next investment in the protection of the natural resources that make California's parks and open spaces destinations for millions of visitors every year.

Included in Prop 68 funding is up to \$60,000,000 in competitive grants "to convert and repurpose properties or parts of properties that served as the site of fossil fuel powerplant that had been retired...". Both the Ormond Beach and Mandalay Beach power plants will be permanently retired later this year. The corporation that owns the plants is bankrupt and nothing in their original permits/licenses requires them to dismantle the plants when they are retired. We could end up with unsightly, rusting hulks on these beaches. This provision of Prop 68 provides the possibility of funding their removal and, in the case of Ormond Beach, the addition of this land to the restored wetlands.

"Audubon California has long fought to protect California's birds and natural landscapes – and make it possible for more people to experience these treasures – and that is why our organization emphatically supports Prop. 68," said Sarah Rose, executive director of Audubon California. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in safe parks, clean water, and the vibrant wildlife that are so important for Californians' quality of life."

For the birds of the Pacific Flyway, and the roughly one million people living around the Salton Sea, Prop. 68 has profound importance. The bond measure includes \$200 million for vitally important dust mitigation and habitat restoration at the Salton Sea, where water diversions are creating a public health disaster and destroying habitat.

Proposition 68 includes funding for a broad array of conservation priorities:

\$2.83 billion for parks and natural resources funding

- Investments in park-poor neighborhoods
- Much-needed maintenance for state parks
- Trails and creek restoration
- Funding for critical restoration at the Salton Sea

\$1.27 billion for water reliability

- Clean drinking water projects
- Groundwater clean-up and sustainability
- Flood protection, including multi-benefit flood projects

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PROPOSITION 68... (Continued from Page 8)

\$767 million for state conservancies

Vital landscape-scale conservation work
Ocean, bay, and coastal protection

\$442 million for climate adaptation

Projects to ensure habitat connectivity
Collaborations on climate-smart farm practices
Rivers and waterways restoration

| VAS Officers and Chairs | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Officers | | |
| President | Bruce Schoppe | (805) 658-2396 |
| Vice President | Cynthia Hartley | (805) 795-4115 |
| Treasurer | Marianne Slaughter | (805) 484-8415 |
| Secretary | Joyce Schoppe | (805) 658-2396 |
| Board Members | | |
| Conservation | Sandy Hedrick | (805) 643-2408 |
| Publicity | Jim Sussha | (805) 983-3929 |
| CBC | Frank DeMartino | (856) 906-8733 |
| Field Trips | Adele Fergusson | (805) 415-4304 |
| Membership | Deborah Burns | (805) 933-0647 |
| Newsletter | Janice Sussha | (805) 983-3929 |
| WSP/CLT Team | Debra Barringer | Unlisted |
| Outreach | Vacant | |
| Programs | Vacant | |
| At Large | John Connor | (805) 654-1805 |
| | Jackie Worden | (805) 657-2837 |
| Chairs | | |
| Webmaster | Christi Lester | (310) 722-9557 |
| Education | Betsy Bachman | (805) 646-4407 |
| Social Media | Rachael Cavanagh | |

ENJOY THE SUMMER!



SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!

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, **April 1**. 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.

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 12th of the month preceding the month of publishing.*

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