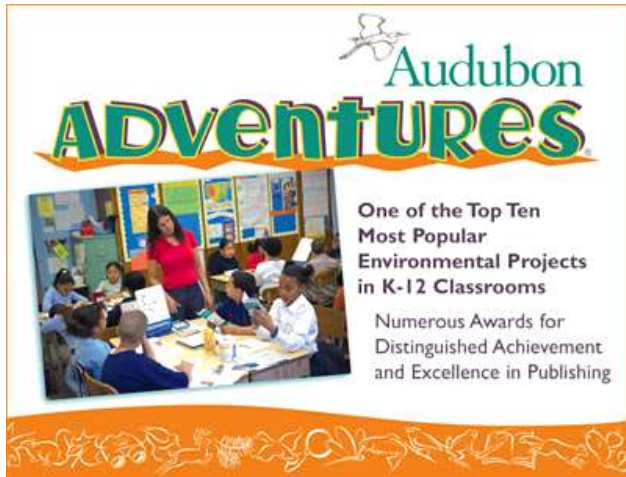


The CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Ventura Audubon Society **OCTOBER 2013** Volume 34 Number 2
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubon.org



CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President



ATTENTION! Teachers... Grades 3 – 5

The new *Audubon Adventures* is available. Ventura Audubon covers the cost; so, it is free to teachers.

Designed for teachers and students in grades 3 – 5, *Audubon Adventures* offers top quality nonfiction material from the environmental experts at the National Audubon Society. The classroom kit is correlated to Common Core Language Arts and Next Generation Science Standards.

Audubon Adventures Classroom Kits introduce students to the essential principles that determine how the natural world operates and features compelling examples that show these principles at work. The Classroom Kit includes a Student Magazine (4 separate magazine sets, 32 of each) and Educator Resource Materials. This year's titles include:

Raptors – The Birds of Prey
Hooray for Hummingbirds
Seabirds – Feathered Ocean Travelers
Caring for our Planet – Kids are Taking Action!

Audubon Adventures has been used successfully in many classrooms in Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula and Ojai. And, as noted, there is no cost. Generous donors to Ventura Audubon make it possible for us to cover the cost. If you are a teacher or know a teacher and are interested in learning more, please contact me or any VAS Board member. Teachers who subscribe also get a free gift of membership in the National Audubon Society including a full year of *Audubon* magazine. Membership in National Audubon also includes membership in Ventura Audubon. And, if you provide your email, you will receive the monthly VAS newsletter.

Audubon Adventures is also used by home schoolers and for extracurricular or after school programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl & Boy Scouts, etc.

OCTOBER PROGRAM ...“RAPTORS” with Ed MacKerrow

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 8th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura
...Laura Gulovsen, Program Co-Chair

Ed MacKerrow will present a slide show in movie format, with music. After the show he will answer any questions we may have. He has lived in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of Northern New Mexico for the past 30 years. His photos are published by Mountain Horizon Photography. His pictures are very unique and you will remember this show long after the lights have faded. Please make an effort to attend-you won't be sorry.

BEYOND BASICS ...Article and Photos by David Pereksta

Why So Many Sooty Shearwaters This Year; Short-term Rebound or Long-term Recovery?

During August of 2013, local birders stood in awe along the Ventura coastline watching tens of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters gathering in feeding frenzies offshore with a minority mix of other local seabirds and marine mammals. Many of us have never seen anything like this along the Ventura County coastline; however, this was not an uncommon sight several decades ago leaving questions about the species' status locally and globally.

Sooty Shearwaters breed on sub-Antarctic islands off Cape Horn and New Zealand, and then range north to the North Atlantic and North Pacific during the Austral winter. They arrive in the North Pacific when productivity exceeds that of the Southern Pacific, creating an abundance of prey including fish, squid, and krill. Sooty Shearwaters spend up to 90 percent of their lives on the open ocean and have the longest known annual migration of any species on Earth; 40,000 miles/year in a huge figure 8 through the Pacific that is facilitated by global wind circulation patterns and the Coriolis effect. They traverse the entire Pacific Ocean while integrating oceanic productivity over a global scale throughout the year and experience a perpetual cycle of spring, summer, and autumn (an endless summer). Their movements are likely a strategy that evolved as a mechanism to buffer the birds from inter-annual variability in Pacific-wide biological productivity, in particular during El Nino Southern Oscillation events.



The Sooty Shearwater is the most numerous bird off the Pacific Coast at its peak abundance. It concentrates at cold food-rich locations in the California Current during Apr-Oct. Its numbers peak in southern California in May before it moves north to colder waters. Recent warming trends in the California Current since about 1990 have resulted in a 90 percent decline in numbers off western North America. Birds are presumed to have shifted to more pelagic waters of the West and Central North Pacific where there has been a compensatory cooling; however, population declines in the Pacific have been documented due to climate change and fishery interactions where as many as 350,000/year were formerly killed in driftnets. Declines at breeding grounds and wintering areas were associated with concomitant increases in ocean temperatures, which may have limited regional biological productivity. The decline has been most pronounced off southern California where it has been noted that few changes in bird distribution have been as sudden and dramatic as the Sooty Shearwater.



The resurgence of Sooty Shearwaters this year has raised a number of questions about this species' status off southern California. Is this an indicator that the species is on the increase after a long period of down-trending populations? Have they shifted from other parts of the North Pacific due to colder water and abundant northern anchovies along the southern California coast? Is this a "one-off" event that we will not see again? What we do know is that the waters off our coast have been cooler this year due to the current La Nina event, which has favored the

abundance of northern anchovies that the Sooty Shearwaters and other marine species have been feasting on. We will not know the answers to these questions, and understand the status of the species, until we observe how this bird reacts to a changing environment where warming oceans impact the processes that generate the biological productivity it needs to survive.



OCTOBER 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.

Just a few reminders about birding etiquette: Stay behind the leader, move quietly, ask questions, and listen to what people are pointing out. When socializing, stay behind the group. Questions/suggestions about an organized trip? E-mail Karin Kersteter at venturabirding@yahoo.com.

Tuesday, Oct 1, 8:30 a.m. Canada Larga. Adele Fergusson (415-4304). Take Hwy 33 toward Ojai. Exit Canada Larga Rd. Meet near the beginning of the road. We will walk and drive the canyon. Always a great walk! Some birds we may see are Western Bluebirds, Roadrunners, sparrows, swallows, Red-tailed Hawks & perhaps a Ferruginous Hawk.

Saturday, Oct 5, Restoration Work Day, Santa Paula. Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Restoration Program. Sandy Hedrick: (340-0478). Arrive at 8:00 for birding which usually yields some interesting birds. We will be reviewing progress made from previous years' efforts and setting goals for the 2013/2014 work program. **Long pants and boots or closed shoes are required.** Bring water, gloves & sun protection. 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).

****NEW DATE**Saturday, Oct 12, 8:30 a.m. Beginners' Bird Walk. Ojai Meadow. Leader: Allen Bertke (640-9037).** Directions: To carpool, meet at the Museum of Ventura Co., 100 E. Main St. (side parking lot) at 8:00 a.m. Take Hwy 33 toward Ojai and turn left at the Y. The preserve is on the left side. Parking is available in front of the entrance and also at Nordoff High School. We will meet at the entrance. There is usually a large variety of birds, such as raptors, kinglets, meadowlarks, kites, warblers, sparrows, egrets, Red-Winged Blackbirds, and bluebirds.

Saturday, Oct 19, 8:30 a.m. Camino Real Park. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304. Note directions: Meet outside the park. In Ventura take Telegraph

Road toward Ventura College. Across from VC 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. We will start birding along the barranca and go into the park. We will be looking for a variety of birds including fall warblers, nuthatches, scrub jays, juncos, woodpeckers & raptors.

****NEW DATE**Saturday and Sunday Oct 26-27, Big Morongo and Whitewater Preserve. Leaders: Dee and Betty Zeller (caretaker guides).** Our fall weekend birding trip will begin at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve on Saturday. We will look for Scott's and Bullock's Orioles, Verdin, warblers, vireos, thrashers and roadrunners, as well as a variety of sparrows. On Sunday we will visit Whitewater Preserve where we may see a variety of raptors and wildlife, including bighorn sheep! RSVP is required to venturabirding@yahoo.com by Sept 15. Detailed instructions, including lodging info, will be e-mailed to those who RSVP.

Saturday, Oct. 26, Reservations for Friday, Nov 15, Pt Mugu Trip Due.

Reservations and a \$10 deposit are required. Limit 25 – VAS members only unless there is space available after the deadline. Call Karin (805)901-2203 or email venturabirding@yahoo.com to reserve. Then send a \$10 non-refundable check made out to Ventura Audubon to hold your place to: Karin Kersteter, 238 Blackfoot Ln, Ventura, CA 93001. If you do not attend, your deposit is forfeited. Also include with the check your last name, first name, middle name, last 4 digits SS#, address, telephone, date of birth, DL# w/state, & citizenship. **Checks must be received by Oct 26** to hold a spot.

Upcoming NEW trip! Sat Nov 2, 8 a.m. Arroyo Hondo, Santa Barbara. Join us as we explore a beautiful, private reserve. A docent-led hike will begin at 10am until noon. We are encouraged to bring our lunches and spend the rest of the afternoon exploring if desired. We should see a wide variety of birds due to the riparian habitat (lagoons, canyons, streams and oaks). RSVP to venturabirding@yahoo.com required by **Wed Oct 23** (no exceptions). Carpooling will be strongly encouraged to minimize cars. To carpool, meet at the Museum of Ventura Co., 100 E. Main St. (side parking lot) at 8:00 a.m. We will caravan to the preserve (about an 1 ½ hour drive).
(continued on Page 5)



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

Due to a shift in our deadlines for the newsletter, "Notes From the Field" will now highlight bird sightings from the entire prior month (first day to last) as opposed to the 13th of one month to the 12th of the next. As a result, this month's column will cover the second half of August 2013 and next month's will include the entire month of September. Hopefully, this short column will be followed by a longer one that is full of reports of uncommon and rare migrants next month.

A lot of excitement was generated when a massive flock of **Sooty Shearwaters** was spotted just off the coast north of Ventura on 10 Aug and continued in varying numbers for several weeks (DP, JB et al.). There were several large feeding frenzies off Ventura and there was nearly an endless stream of them just offshore from Santa Barbara to Ventura. Numbers were difficult to estimate, but there were likely 50,000-100,000 birds or more. For further information on Sooty Shearwaters please read this month's "Beyond Basics" column.

The find of the month was a **Brown Booby** roosting on a channel marker at the mouth of the Ventura Harbor 23-27 Aug (LH & DVP). A booby has been seen several times just offshore of Ventura since 27 Aug, which is likely the same bird, so it is worth checking the harbor occasionally to see if it is still roosting there.

Southbound shorebird migration continued through late August with several uncommon species being found. An apparent **American Oystercatcher** was on Anacapa Island on 11 Aug (JB). While most **American Oystercatchers** seen in southern California have experienced some degree of hybridization with **Black Oystercatchers** where their ranges overlap in northwestern Baja California (as discussed in last month's "Beyond Basics"), this bird would likely score out as an **American Oystercatcher** using the Jehl Scale. The hybrid **American x Black Oystercatcher** continued at the Ventura Harbor through 30 Aug. **Solitary Sandpipers** included one at McGrath State Beach on 21 Aug (AF), one near Point Mugu on 29 Aug (DP), and two near Point Mugu on 31 Aug (DP & SP). A **Red Knot** was at Mugu Lagoon on 15 Aug (DP). Single **Baird's Sandpipers** were at the Santa Clara River estuary 21-24 Aug (JB) and near Point Mugu on 29 Aug (DP). A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was near Point Mugu on 31 Aug (DP & SP).

A few unseasonal or uncommon waterbirds were found or continued in late August. One **Brant** continued at Mugu Lagoon through 15 Aug and three continued at the Santa Clara River estuary through 16 Aug. A **Common Gallinule** was at the Santa Clara River estuary on 25 Aug (KZ). Two **Royal Terns**, uncommon to rare along the coast in summer, continued at the Santa Clara River estuary through 16 Aug and three were at Mugu Lagoon on 15 Aug (DP). Forty-seven **Black Skimmers** were at Mugu Lagoon on 15 Aug (DP).

Passerine migration is starting to build and a few early or notable species were seen in late August. A **Willow Flycatcher** on 25 Aug and a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** 25-29 Aug were both early at the Laguna Road tamarisks (LH & DVP). A juvenile **Vermilion Flycatcher** near Point Mugu on 31 Aug was still showing a fleshy gape on the mouth and could have been fledged locally, which would be unprecedented (DP & SP). **Purple Martins** are rare locally in migration so one at RiverPark on 26 Aug was notable (JB). **Bank Swallows** are also rare migrants; one was near Point Mugu 29-31 Aug (DP).

While it is still early for raptor migration, a **Burrowing Owl** at Ormond Beach on 13 Aug was likely an early migrant (LE & CB).

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 nuisance bird calls), email or call David Pereksta at pereksta@pacbell.net or 659-5740.

Good birding,
David Pereksta

Observers: Corine Barksdale, Joel Barrett, Linda Easter, Alexis Frangis, Lauren Harter, David Pereksta, Sandy Pereksta, David Vander Pluym, Karen Zumwalt

FIELD TRIPS (continued from Page 3)

Mark your calendar:

Tues, Nov 5 – Ventura Ponds
Sat, Nov 9 – Carpinteria Salt Marsh
Fri, Nov 15 – Pt Mugu (limited to VAS members only)
Sat, Nov 23 – Soule Park
Sat, Nov 30 – Beginners' Bird Walk – Lake Piru/Fillmore Fish Hatchery

VAS ON FACEBOOK!

Ventura Audubon has a Facebook page put together by Board member, Alexis Frangis. The page is at www.Facebook.com/VenturaAudubonSociety.

For an organization like VAS, it is a great way to promote our conservation efforts and connect with our members. Since it seems to be a phenomenon that the younger generation has adopted almost universally, it is also a great way to connect with those generations.

Alexis has created a calendar of events including field trips and meetings. There are links to other organizations including National Audubon, Audubon California, the California State Parks Foundation and others. Anyone who "likes" us can post to our page. If you have original content you would like to see posted to the page, please contact Alexis (alexisraehamilton@gmail.com).

VAS OFFICERS AND CHAIRS

President	Bruce Schoppe	658-2396
Vice-President	Neil Zeigler	983-7207
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
At Large:	Adele Fergusson	415-4304
	Jack Gillooly	646-3867
	John Connor	654-1805
	Nancy Schorsch	643-5825
	Janice Susha	983-3929
	Judy Dugan	642-0842
Membership	Jackie Worden	652-0577
Newsletter Editor	Dee Press	484-8415
Program Committee:	Laura Gulovsen	642-6544
	Margaret Wilson	647-7962
	Audrey Vincent	525-5826



**720 N. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand oaks, CA**



NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING

The next **bi-monthly** Board of Directors meeting will be held on November 5th at the home of Neil Ziegler, 1921 Holly Avenue, at 7:15 p.m. Call 805-983-7207 for more information. Any VAS member is welcome.

THE VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY holds its regular meeting on the second Tuesday of the month at the Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd. in Ventura 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 our 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 **1st** of the month preceding the next issue.* E-mail to: deepress2@gmail.com. Call Editor Dee Press at 484-8415 for more information.

VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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