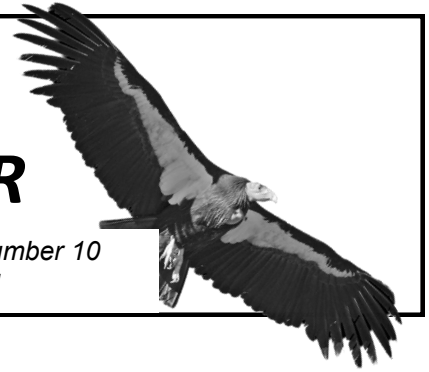


The **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **SEPTEMBER 2019** Volume 53, Number 10
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CALL NOTES...*Cynthia Hartley*

Welcome to the 2019-2020 Ventura Audubon Society (VAS) season! September marks the beginning of our new year, and this year brings with it some changes to our board of directors. After 10 years of dedicated service, our president Bruce Schoppe will be changing roles. He is looking forward to shifting gears to focus more on his passion for conservation, so will now serve as our vice-president and senior advisor. I am honored to have been elected by our VAS Board to follow in his footsteps as the new president, and to continue working as a team with Bruce.

For those of you whom I haven't yet met, I have been on the VAS board for the past 3 years and have served as the vice-president for the past 2 years. I have a long history working with snowy plovers and least terns at Ormond Beach. In fact, I began my VAS affiliation 3 decades ago when I first monitored winter snowy plover populations, then later trained to monitor nesting plovers and least terns under our former Conservation Chair Reed Smith. More recently I've helped build our Shorebird Recovery Program to ensure ongoing protection and tracking of these listed birds on the two Ventura County nesting beaches that do not have a stewardship program, Ormond and Hollywood beaches.

As we turn our sights to the coming year, we face multiple challenges to laws that protect birds and the wild places they require for survival. Over one hundred years ago the Audubon Society was founded to fight the slaughter of birds for the feather trade and as a result helped pass the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Now this very legislation is at risk of being weakened (refer to page 6 of this newsletter regarding the lawsuit and click [here](#) for information on MBTA). Other legislation under attack is the Endangered Species Act which was targeted in the past couple weeks (click [here](#) for info on weakening of the ESA). These are just two of many (83) [hard-fought environmental regulations](#) achievements that have been eliminated or diminished or soon may meet one of these fates.

This can be very overwhelming; however, the best response is to join together and build our birding community. It gives us strength as individuals and demonstrates our cumulative power. As we start our new year, I challenge our members, and potential members, to take an extra step and become more involved with our VAS community. For our part, in the next year VAS will work harder to expand our volunteer base. You don't have to attend demonstrations or public protests to make a difference. If you've never been to a VAS activity, take a small step and join one of our many bird walks. We would love to have you join us and learn new birds, and we welcome beginning birders. If you have a little experience, lead or co-lead a bird walk and spread your love of birds to beginners. We have committees that need new members, a volunteer naturalist program that conducts outreach, and we can always use help expanding our chapter infrastructure. For those of you who want to get involved politically, we have Advocacy Day in the late spring where we send Audubon members to Sacramento to meet with our representatives to educate them on legislation that impacts birds. We also meet with local politicians and need members to attend public meetings and speak on behalf of birds. If you are unsure how to start and would like to explore the possibilities, take our online volunteer survey ([link](#)). We will follow up with you and help you connect with the right group/activity in our chapter.

Watch our newsletter for opportunities and updates on our many programs, events and news items. Like us on our [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date on issues, activities and action alerts and visit our website at www.venturaaudubon.org. In the coming months we will have updates on snowy plover and least tern nesting, a regular article on the CSUCI Audubon club and their activities, conservation committee updates and of course bird news and information. So, in the next year please come out and join us and make new birding friends. We can't wait to meet you and build our birding community.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

VENTURAWATERPURE...Lauren Bueling

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



Lauren Bueling will be giving an overview of VenturaWaterPure which is a Ventura City potable reuse project where tertiary effluent is run through an advanced water purification facility. It can then be added back to the drinking water portfolio for the facility. She will also highlight how this project will affect the existing Water Treatment Plant Wildlife Ponds where a large number of coastal gulls, terns, ducks, egrets, herons, hawks, and other species roost.

Lauren is a Management Analyst for Ventura City in the Wastewater Division. She is heavily involved with Ventura Cities progress in Potable Reuse and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Science from Eastern Connecticut State University.



SEPTEMBER 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. **Questions/suggestions** about an organized trip? E-mail Adele Fergusson at adelefergusson@yahoo.com"

Sunday, September 8, 8:30 a.m. Emma Wood State Beach
Leader: Adele Fergusson 805 415-4304

At the entrance to Emma Wood State Beach, we will be 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.

FIELD TRIPS...(Continued on Page 3)

FIELD TRIPS...(Continued from Page 2)

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 north-bound 101 freeway. Emma Wood Group Camp 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.

Saturday, September 14, 8:30 a.m.. Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust
Leader: David Torfeh 805-794-5334 and Tevin Schmitt 661-904-1563

Walk limited to 20 participants, you must sign up ahead of time. Schedule at <https://ranchoventura.com/events/>. The walk will be close to 3 miles, rolling hills, the walk will be of moderate difficulty.

Directions: You will be going to Rancho Ventura Office, 2977 Sexton Canyon Road, Ventura, CA 93003. From 101 Freeway, exit Victoria Avenue and go right onto Victoria Avenue – take Victoria all the way through town towards the hillsides. Make a left onto Foothill Road. As soon as you make the turn and see the houses on your right, be ready to make a sharp right onto our private road – that is Sexton Canyon Road. You will see a sign that says Firewood and RA Atmore & Sons. The yellow gate will be open. Drive Up Sexton Canyon for 2 ½ miles up the road. You will see the office on your left that is marked with signs. Park in the lot. We will be on site to meet you. If you get turned around: contact Bonnie Atmore : 805-814-2503 mobile 805-644-6851 ranch office 805-644-6854 home office.

<https://rancho-san-buenaventura-conservation-trust.networkforgood.com/events/15042-ventura-audubon-tour>

Saturday, September 21, 2019, 8:30 AM Santa Clara River Estuary/Surfers Knoll
Leader: Cody Swanson 805-304-2505

We hope to see a variety of shorebirds including Snowy Plovers, Ruddy and Black Turnstones and hopefully Surfbirds which are always an exciting treat. We will also tackle some gull and tern identification, so bring your field guides!

Directions: Take Harbor Blvd to Spinnaker and enter Ventura Harbor. Follow Spinnaker as it curves around to the right. Surfers' Knoll is on the left. Please bring scopes if you have them. We will be walking a good distance on sand, so please wear appropriate footwear and plan on dressing in layers.

Saturday September 28, 2019, 8:30 a.m. Carpinteria Salt Marsh
Leader: Rocky Ludes 805-208-9648

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: Take HWY 101 North to Carpinteria, exit Casitas Pass Rd., rt. on Carpinteria Ave. left on Linden & rt. on Sandyland Rd. to Ash. Park along Ash. Meet at the entrance, Ash & Sandyland.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD ...David Pereksta

Welcome back for another year of my monthly summary of bird sightings from Ventura County in "Notes From the Field." The most exciting find of the period was the discovery of **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** in Ventura County! After slowly expanding their range southward along the coast for many years, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** have finally arrived in Ventura County with as many as 12 individuals being seen along Rincon Creek 11-31 Jul (MH & DH). This is now the farthest south the species is known to occur along the Pacific Coast.

A **Snow Goose** was at the Santa Clara River Estuary 24 May-28 Jun (JB). **Common Mergansers** are breeding in low numbers throughout the foothills of the local mountains and near some of our larger lakes. This year summering and likely breeding birds included as many as three at Matilija Lake 20 Apr-9 May (JG, PG), one at Lake Piru on 20 Apr (TS), as many as four at Lake Casitas 23-26 Apr (JG), and one at Foster Park on 23 May (AS). A **Red-necked Grebe** in alternate plumage was an unexpected late season find in the Ventura Harbor 19 May-26 Jun (JB). A **Common Gallinule** continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 28 Apr. April to July captures the late part of northbound spring shorebird migration and the early part of the southbound fall migration. During this period there were some uncommon species found in wetlands on the Oxnard Plain including a **Pacific Golden-Plover** 27 Jun-3 Jul (LS), as many as three **Red Knots** 20-27 May (LS), and individual **Semipalmated Sandpipers** 20-25 May (LS) and on 21 Jul (DP). An **American Bittern** was at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant 15-27 Apr (SC). A **Least Bittern** found near Point Mugu on 25 May was found again later in July feeding recently fledged young (DP). Individual **Cattle Egrets** were at Lake Casitas 11-13 Apr (KK) and the Oxnard Plain 20 Apr-2 Jul (DP). **Reddish Egrets** continued in the Mugu Lagoon Vicinity throughout the spring and summer, and one was at the Santa Clara River Estuary on 2 Jul (SK).

Exceptional for spring was a migrating **Broad-winged Hawk** over the Santa Clara River on 23 Apr (DM). Migrant **Swainson's Hawks** were reported widely again this spring with one over Ojai on 4 Apr (JG), one over the Ventura River Preserve on 26 Apr (EH), individuals over the Santa Clara River on 11 and 23 Apr (DM) and 27 Apr (KK, DP & SP), one over Ventura on 13 May (GP), and one over Fillmore on 20 May (KO). The wintering **Zone-tailed Hawk** continued in the Ojai area through 1 Apr, which may be an all-time late date for a wintering Zone-tailed locally. The nesting **Bald Eagles** continued at Lake Casitas through 29 Jun and four were at Lake Piru on 4 Jun (JB).

A **White-winged Dove** was in a Ventura Yard on 9 Jun (CH). **Calliope Hummingbirds** were scarce this spring with only two reports; one in Bell Canyon on 4 Apr (ST) and one at Tule Creek on 3 May (DP). The only **Black Swift** reported this spring was over east Ventura on 20 May (DP). **Lewis's Woodpeckers** included one near Lake Casitas on 23 Apr (RR et al.) and a continuing individual at Lake Sherwood through 28 Apr.

While birders actively search locally for eastern vagrant passerines during September and October, late May and early June can be just as productive; however, very few people are out searching for them at this time. Several singing **Red-eyed Vireos** were found in late spring including one in a Ventura backyard on 27 May (DP) and another at Sycamore Canyon 5-7 Jun (AS). A **Hooded Warbler** was singing at Emma Wood State Beach 4-10 Jun (AS), which furnished the first record in the county in more than a few years. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was at Sycamore Canyon on 5 Jun (AS), an **American Redstart** was at Matilija Lake on 18 Jun (LBr), and a **Palm Warbler** was on the Oxnard Plain on 20 Apr, which may have wintered locally (DP). A **Summer Tanager** was in Camino Real Park on 9 May (EI) and a presumed different individual was there on 4 Jul (LBa). Another **Summer Tanager** was found at a riparian bird workshop near the Ventura River on 8 Jun (M. Obs.). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** returned to a Ventura yard again this summer and was seen several times in June and July (ETG).

NOTES FROM THE FIELD...(Continued on Page 5)

NOTES FROM THE FIELD...(Continued from Page 4)

Hammond's Flycatchers were reported from several places during spring migration including Matilija Lake 7-16 Apr (JG et al.), Wheeler Gorge on 13 Apr (CM), Tule Creek on 14 Apr (DP), Rose Valley on 6 May (AP), the Ventura Settling Ponds on 9 May (JF), and Camarillo Regional Park on 11 May (MB). **Gray Flycatchers** were on territory in Quatal Canyon 19 Apr-6 May (DP & SP) and in the Lockwood Valley on 8 Jun (AS, DM & SM). **Gray Flycatchers** are rarely seen locally in migration so one at Matilija Lake 12-14 Apr was notable (PG). The wintering **Tropical Kingbird** continued near Calleguas Creek through 9 Apr. Individual **Bank Swallows** were over the Oxnard Plain on 5 May, 27 May, and 9 Jun (DP). **Townsend's Solitaires** were reported from scattered locations in the mountains including two on Pine Mountain on 4 Jun (TM), individuals on Mount Pinos on 14 Jun (DP) and 20 Jun (JV), and one on Frazier Mountain on 6 Jul (JP). **Red Crossbills** were reported in several locations on Pine Mountain on 13 Jul (M. Obs). The wintering **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Pitts Ranch Park continued through 9 Apr. A **Baltimore Oriole** was in Port Hueneme on 23 Apr (JB) and **Scott's Orioles** were in breeding habitat in Dry Canyon 5 Apr-6 May (DP), Quatal Canyon on 19 Apr (DP & SP), and Ballinger Canyon on 15 Jul (LK).

Seabird reports were few, but a **Red-billed Tropicbird** thrilled some of Island Packers riders off Ventura on 28 May (SK). A pelagic birding trip on 14 Jul found a **Manx Shearwater** south of Anacapa Island, and a **South Polar Skua** and two **Townsend's Storm-Petrels** north of San Nicolas Island (M. Obs).

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, Laura Bauer, Joe Beck, Marc Better, Lauren Brock, Sammy Cowell, James Fox, Peter Gaede, Jesse Grantham, Erica Harris, Cynthia Hartley, Dave Haupt, Mark Holmgren, Estelle Ichino, Logan Kahle, Sangeet Khalsa, Karl Krause, Curtis Marantz, Samantha Marois, Dan Maxwell, Tim Miller, Kris Ohlenkamp, Adam Panto, David Pereksta, Sandy Pereksta, Giles Pettifor, Jeremiah Psiropoulos, Rick Ridgeway, Larry Sansone, Tevin Schmitt, Adam Searcy, Elisa Taylor-Godwin, Scott Templeton, and Javier Vazquez.

Audubon, Other Groups Can Continue Lawsuit Against the Federal Government to Protect Birds, Federal Judge Rules

A federal court greenlights a joint lawsuit to defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act despite the administration's efforts to hand industry a blank check for bird deaths.

By National Audubon Society
August 01, 2019



Snowy Egret. Photo: Lindsay Donald/Audubon Photography Awards

NEW YORK – “If the White House expected to gut the most important bird protection law without a fight, then they underestimated the National Audubon Society and America’s 46 million bird-lovers,” said David Yarnold ([@david_yarnold](#)), president and CEO of National Audubon Society, in response to [a decision by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York](#) to allow *Audubon v. Department of the Interior* to proceed, rejecting an effort by the government to dismiss the lawsuit.

“Industries that kill birds have been held accountable for decades, and we’ll fight and win in the courts to protect the birds Americans love,” said Yarnold.

Audubon and other conservation groups [filed suit](#) in May 2018 challenging an opinion by the Department of the Interior’s Solicitor’s Office saying it will no longer enforce the [MBTA](#) in cases of incidental bird deaths, effectively giving a blank check to industry to avoid gruesome and preventable bird deaths. Eight states [filed a similar suit](#) in September 2018. The opinion undermines the Migratory Bird Treaty Act’s (MBTA) prohibition on the killing or “taking” of migratory birds, which has long been understood to include the “incidental” take of birds from industrial activities like birds flying into uncovered oil pits or other predictable and avoidable or negligent killing.

Under the Trump administration’s revised interpretation, the MBTA’s protections apply only to activities that *purposefully* kill birds. Any “incidental” take—no matter how inevitable, avoidable or devastating the impact on birds—becomes immune from enforcement under the law. Additionally, for decades, industry has worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take common sense precautions like covering oil waste pits so birds don’t mistake them for safe ponds; insulating small sections of power lines so raptors don’t get electrocuted; siting wind farms away from bird migration routes and habitats. The law has also provided accountability and recovery after oil spills like the Deepwater Horizon.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 2018 was declared The Year of the Bird. More than 60 cities, counties and states passed proclamations in celebration of the MBTA’s success.

17 former Interior Department officials [wrote a letter](#) asking the administration to suspend the opinion, as did dozens of members of Congress and more than [500 wildlife and environmental groups](#) from all 50 states.

Audubon and its 1.4 million members will mobilize to reverse this policy and oppose any effort that weakens our most important bird protection law.

VAS OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS 2019-2020		
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President	Cynthia Hartley	805-795-4115
Vice President	Bruce Schoppe	805-658-2396
Treasurer	Sherry Dorris	805-985-7273
Secretary	Alexis Frangis	805-217-4833
Board Members		
Conservation	Sandy Hedrick	805-643-2408
Publicity	Jim Susha	805-983-3929
Field Trips	Adele Fergusson	805-415-4304
At Large	Jackie Worden	805-657-2837
Membership	Deborah Burns	805-933-0647
Christmas Bird Count	Frank DeMartino	856-906-8733
Newsletter	Janice Susha	805-983-3929
At Large/Conservation	Debra Barringer	303-880-0308
At Large/CSUCI Audubon Club	Kat O'Dea	818-916-4154
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Education	Betsy Bachman	805-646-4407
Conservation Committee Sandy Hedrick– Interim Chair Shorebird Recovery: Debra Barringer Alexis Frangis Cynthia Hartley Kat O'Dea		
Santa Clara River Issues: Sandy Hedrick Ventura River/Least Bell's Vireo: Jackie Worden Coastal Planning Issues: Debra Barringer		

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 **August 29th, 2019**. 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 15th of the month preceding the month of publishing.

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