

# *The* **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **DECEMBER 2014** Volume 35 Number 4  
A Chapter of the National Audubon [www.VenturaAudubon.org](http://www.VenturaAudubon.org)



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

### ***The Christmas Bird Count***

As noted last month, the Christmas Bird Count will be January 3, 2015. Co-compilers Alexis Frangis and Frank DeMartino hope to improve both the count and the number of participants. If you haven't signed up to join us, please see the details on Page 5.

### ***Ormond Beach Development Concept***

A "concept proposal" for development of a portion of the Ormond Beach site was presented to the Oxnard City Council in October. It was created through the efforts of the California Coastal Commission which hired consultants to work with the members of the Ormond Beach Task Force to brainstorm ideas and create the concept. It describes how a 235 acre parcel on Hueneme Road between Edison and Arnold Roads could be developed. What is unique and interesting is the inclusion of a University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources research and education center. Two-thirds of the space would be "open space" containing research and demonstration plots for local crops and a master gardener program.

Some commercial development would be included on Hueneme Road to make the concept economically feasible. This could, potentially, include a hotel/conference center, restaurants and shops and a community park.

But, what is important to us is that it provides a way forward towards restoration of the 1000+ acres of wetlands we have sought for years. The concept of a world class wildlife refuge, even, perhaps, an National Wildlife Refuge is intriguing. The design envisions boardwalks and an education/visitor center, perhaps, -- in my dreams -- the Audubon Center at Ormond Beach! Joyce and I were, recently, in Texas for the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival. We visited the South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center which includes boardwalks through wetlands and I thought it was a perfect model of what should happen at Ormond Beach.

VAS is supportive of the concept. None of this is yet certain and the specifics may turn out to be very different than what the concept envisions. The University of California is not yet committed to the project. The Council was supportive and Oxnard Planning must take the steps necessary to make it possible. We shall need to carefully evaluate the specific development projects that do come forward. BUT, it is progress -- at last!

## ***DECEMBER PROGRAM ...Laura Gulovsen***

***7:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 9th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura***

### ***Uganda's Forests... A Rapidly Declining Biodiversity "Hot Spot," and Endangered Chimpanzees with Dr. Nancy Merrick***

Uganda's remarkable avian diversity includes 1,008 species recorded in an area to that of Great Britain. It is a real concern to see these forests being lost at a rapid rate because of unchecked population explosion. We will experience a double treat as we also learn of endangered Chimpanzees and efforts to stop the loss of forests.

Dr. Merrick is a recognized leader in the battle to save Great Apes. This year she has authored the acclaimed book, ***Among Chimpanzees***, with the Foreword by colleague Jane Goodall, and she is the creator of ChimpSaver.org, a website enabling users to advocate on behalf of chimps. Following the program she is available for book signing while you savor some ***coffee, tea, and cookies!*** Don't miss it!



## *NOTES FROM THE FIELD*

*...David Pereksta*

*SEPTEMBER 2014*

As is expected in October, vagrant passerines from the eastern U.S. or Mexico are what draw birders out to tamarisk rows and other local migrant traps. The Laguna Road tamarisks produced a number of uncommon and rare species including a continuing **American Redstart** through 2 Oct and later an adult male 9-23 Oct (FD), a continuing **Blackpoll Warbler** through 5 Oct with possibly another there from 9-16 Oct (JB), a **Black-and-White Warbler** on 2 Oct (RL) and likely a different bird 9-18 Oct (JB), and a **Magnolia Warbler** 12-23 Oct (DP). Two warblers that were seen briefly and gone (but both documented well with photos) included a **Lucy's Warbler** on 1 Oct (JM) and a **Worm-eating Warbler** on 15 Oct (JB). Another bird at Laguna that was only seen by a few people was a **Yellow-green Vireo** on 9 Oct (FD). The most intriguing bird there in October was a warbler initially thought to be a **Mourning Warbler** found on 8 Oct (FD) that was later determined to be a hybrid; possibly a **Common Yellowthroat x Mourning Warbler** hybrid. Away from Laguna Road, **Palm Warblers** were reported widely including one near the Ventura Harbor on 17 Oct (SO), one at Hailes Road 28-29 Oct (JB & FD), and one along Calleguas Creek on 31 Oct (JB). Elsewhere a **Philadelphia Vireo** was at Bob Kildee Community Park in Camarillo on 12 Oct (JMu), a **Northern Waterthrush** was at the Harmon Barranca 4-7 Oct (MT), and an **American Redstart** was in Newbury Park on 1 Oct (RA).

There were not many reports from the Oxnard Plain in October, but a few notable species were found. As many as six **Red-throated Pipits** were on sod fields on the Oxnard Plain 5-6 Oct (AS & GJ, RN, TB et al.). Three **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were also there on 5 Oct (TB et al.). A **Tropical Kingbird** was at Ormond Beach on 20 Oct (M. Obs.) and a **White-winged Dove** was at the end of Arnold Road on 9 Oct (J&RB). Thirteen **Greater White-fronted Geese** (likely continuing from last month) and two **Snow Geese** were on the Oxnard Plain on 20 Oct.

Our local mountains produced a number of exciting birds in October with an apparent irruption of several uncommon to rare birds starting to develop. **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were on the move and showing up much earlier than normally expected including individuals on Frazier Mountain on 11 Oct (SB) and 24 Oct (DP), three on Mount Pinos on 24 Oct (DP), and 10 on Pine Mountain on 28 Oct (KK), and three continuing in the Lake Sherwood area through 31 Oct. **Williamson's Sapsucker** reports from Mount Pinos included one on 15 Oct (CH) and two on 24 Oct (DP). A **Pacific Wren** was in Ojai 29-30 Oct (JG). An apparent irruption of **Varied Thrushes** started in October with two on Frazier Mountain 24-28 Oct (DP), as many as eight on Mount Pinos on 15-30 Oct (CH & DP), one on Pine Mountain on 28 Oct (KK), one in Ojai 26-29 Oct (JG), four in Ozena 29-31 Oct (JB), and six at Valle Vista Campground on 27 Oct (EE). **Townsend's Solitaires** included one on Frazier Mountain on 11 Oct (SB) and one on Mount Pinos on 24 Oct (DP). **Evening Grosbeaks** are a rare visitor to the Ventura County mountains so five on Mount Pinos on 24 Oct (DP) growing to 25 on 29 Oct (JB), and 4 still there through 30 Oct may be the sign of an impending irruption into our area. Numbers are being seen north of us so perhaps more are on their way.

A pelagic trip and other trips to the Channel Islands produced some notable seabirds. Two **Brown Boobies** continued on Anacapa Island through 18 Oct, and a **Blue-footed Booby** continued at Anacapa Island through 25 Oct which was joined by another on 5 Oct (JB). Two **American Oystercatchers** were on Anacapa Island on 18 Oct (M. Obs.) and 4 **Long-tailed Jaegers** were south of there on the same day (M. Obs.). One of the only **Sabine's Gull** reports of the year was an individual in the Santa Barbara Channel on 3 Oct (JB). A pair of **Bald Eagles** on Anacapa Island on 18 Oct was an unexpected bonus during a pelagic trip (M. Obs.).

Twenty-seven **American White Pelicans** were at the Santa Clara River Estuary on 16 Oct (AF), 18 were flying over the Ventura Settling Ponds on 28 Oct (DM), and 5 were over Montalvo Hill Park on 29 Oct (RM). A **Ferruginous Hawk** was over Ventura on 7 Oct (BS). A **Red-naped Sapsucker** and four **Blue-winged Teal** at Rancho Simi Park on 1-14 Oct (JMu & DK), and as many as seven **Blue-winged Teal** were in the Arroyo Simi 6-28 Oct (DK) and a **Hooded Merganser** continued there through 13 Oct. As many as 12 **Blue-winged Teal** were in Ormond Beach 20-31 Oct (M. Obs.; JB) and two continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 31 Oct.

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 <pereksta@pacbell.net> 659-5740

Observers: Richard Armerding, Joel Barrett, Joe and Rita Beck, Tom Benson, Stacy Bergman, Frank DeMartino, Elias Elias, Alexis Frangis, Jesse Grantham, Chris Hiatt, Gareth Jones, Don Klabunde, Karl Krause, Ron Lucas, Dan Maxwell, Robert McMorran, Jim Moore, John Mueller, Richard Norton, Scott Olmstead, David Pereksta, Adam Searcy, Brad Sillasen, and Michelle Townsley



## *DECEMBER 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. For all trips, please wear appropriate clothing (layers are suggested), comfortable shoes, and bring snacks, water, hats, sunscreen, binoculars and field guides.**

**Saturday, Dec 6, 8:00 a.m. Restoration Work Day, Santa Paula. Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Restoration Program. Leader: Sandy Hedrick: (805)340-0478.** Arrive at **8:00 for 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. 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).

**Tuesday, Dec 2, 8:30 a.m. Surfer's Knoll. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304.** We hope to see a variety of shorebirds including Snowy Plovers, grebes, turnstones, Whimbrels, godwits, cormorants and sandpipers, as well as many ducks and gulls. **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 on sand, so please wear appropriate footwear and plan on dressing in layers.

Saturday, Dec. 13, 8:15 a.m. McGrath Campground. Leader: Alexis Frangis (805)217-4833. Limited to 20 people— VAS members only! RSVP required. E-mail Janice Susha at armybrat1@verizon.net by Friday, December 5th. **Join us on a very special trip! The McGrath Campground which is currently closed due to flooding and off limits to the public has become a birders paradise.** Our leader has arranged to take our group into the park. We will begin inside the park entrance, birding the flooded campground, walk through the dunes and end at the estuary. PLEASE NOTE: Carpooling is MANDATORY for this trip. There is no public parking at the campground. Meet at 8:15 at the parking lot behind Carrow's at the intersection of Harbor and Seaward (Von's Shopping Center). Please be punctual. Late arrivals will not be admitted to the campground. Birds in this area are not often exposed to humans and therefore are

quite skittish; please practice good birding etiquette by moving slowly and speaking quietly Please bring scopes if you have them!

**Sunday, Dec 21.** No VAS trip scheduled, but this weekend is an opportunity to participate in a fun day of citizen science for the birds! Join the **CVAS Christmas Bird Count!** You may pre-register at...

<http://birds.audubon.org/get-involved-christmas-bird-count-find-count-near-you>

The count circle covers the area from Cal Lutheran to the north, Leo Carrillo to the south, the Oxnard Plain to the west, and Westlake to the east. Your participation is appreciated!

**Saturday, Dec 27, 8:30 a.m. Arroyo Verde Park, Leader: David Torfeh (805)647-3325.** Enjoy birding the oak woodland, grassy areas, and chaparral in this long, broad canyon. We will be pre-scouting or the VAS Christmas Bird Count (Jan 3), Target birds will include: Sharpshinned Hawk, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Cassin's Kingbird, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. **Directions:** Take Victoria Ave. north, left on Foothill Rd, right on Day Rd. at entrance to the park. Meet at the last parking lot by the restrooms. **NOTE:** There is a \$2 entrance fee for parking on the weekends!

**Upcoming trip announcement: Sunday, Jan 18, 8 a.m. to noon. CVAS trip to Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge.** This is an exciting birding opportunity, and an 8 am high tide should make for excellent birding! Carpooling is available. This trip is limited to only 20 people so please e-mail Michael Zarky asap (mzarky@earthlink.net) if you wish to attend.

Mark your calendar:

**Jan 3 – VAS Christmas Bird Count**

Jan 24 – Beginner's Bird Walk - Emma Wood

Feb 21-22 – Orange County weekend trip



## BEGINNERS' BIRD WALK ...Allen Bertke

Last month's beginners' bird walk occurred at the Ojai Meadow Preserve. Although the Preserve is reestablishing the area into the natural wetlands that it once was, Mother Nature is not currently cooperating. The lake was dry as a bone, and no water was to be found in any of the creeks. I was beginning to think I was going to have to change the walk into a desert survival training class.



American Kestrel

But much to my surprise, we were able to find over 30 species without even seeing any ducks, egrets, herons or other water loving birds. We couldn't even find a Coot, unless you want to count Rod. Our first joy was a very friendly female Yellow Warbler, bouncing and perching from bush to bush and finally landing on the split rail fence on the side of the path in front of us. On the other side of the path, an American Kestrel was perched in a tree, watching us carefully.

Further into the walk we saw Cassin's Kingbirds, Western Bluebirds, Bushtits, Black and Say's Phoebes and got a brief look at a Lawrence's Goldfinch, which I initially mistook as some kind of rare warbler. There was also a gorgeous male Lesser Goldfinch. Upon pointing it out, I was reminded of an earlier walk in which I identified one, when a teenager innocently said "Did you say his name was Lester"? "Yes" I told him. "I know all of the birds here by name."

Toward the end of the walk I heard a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in the thick brush. As I began pishing to bring it forward for the group to see, I was reminded of yet another walk I was leading a couple of years ago. On that walk, I had heard a Wrentit in the bushes in front of us. I started pishing to try to get it to pop up, and sure enough it worked. At that point, what I *meant* to say was that the Wrentit, upon hearing the pishing noise and then seeing all of us, must have thought that we were all some really huge birds. What *came out*, just as one woman in the front was leaning in for a better look, was - and I'm not making this up - "That little bird must be thinking 'Wow, those are the biggest Wrentits I've ever seen.'" I was so embarrassed that I tried to run, but that was impossible since my foot was so far in my mouth that I had to have it surgically removed.



Wrentit

Sometimes, being a leader can put me in awkward situations. Of course, it might help if I would just keep my mouth shut. But what fun would that be?

See you on the next walk. Maybe we will see tons of rain between now and then and we will have record numbers of birds by the date of the Christmas Bird Count. One can always hope for those good old days, but I have learned that nostalgia isn't what it used to be.



## *VENTURA AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT*

We will do our Christmas Bird Count on **Saturday, January 3, 2015**. The CBC is the longest running citizen science effort in existence. Bird counts take place all over North America with a few in the Caribbean and Latin America, as well. This will be the 115<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count conducted by National Audubon and, following the change in policy initiated last year, it will again be free! The data collected from citizen scientists like you was an important part of the analysis in National Audubon's most recent Climate Report. On the Ventura Audubon count last year, we recorded 181 species, more than 20,000 individual birds and placed 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation.

Volunteer counters are assigned to one of the section leaders who coordinate the count in each of eight areas within the VAS count circle. If you wish to participate in the count, please contact the section leader of the area where you would like to count. He/she will give you the start time, meeting place and other details. You may contact me if you want to volunteer where needed.

|           |                |                |                                                                              |          |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Section 1 | Ventura River  | Kay Regester   | <a href="mailto:kaybirder@aol.com">kaybirder@aol.com</a>                     | 258-1025 |
| Section 2 | Lake Casitas   | Allen Bertke   | <a href="mailto:bertke@pacbel.net">bertke@pacbel.net</a>                     | 640-9037 |
| Section 3 | Ojai           | Rick Burgess   | <a href="mailto:rburgess@toaks.org">rburgess@toaks.org</a>                   | 449-2326 |
| Section 4 | Canada Larga   | Neil Ziegler   | <a href="mailto:neilziegler@yahoo.com">neilziegler@yahoo.com</a>             | 983-7207 |
| Section 5 | Wheeler Canyon | Gary Tuttle    | <a href="mailto:Gt10k2826@verizon.net">Gt10k2826@verizon.net</a>             | 525-2327 |
| Section 6 | Ventura City   | Eric Waian     | <a href="mailto:dawaians@roadrunner.com">dawaians@roadrunner.com</a>         | 630-0100 |
| Section 7 | SCRE & Coast   | Alexis Frangis | <a href="mailto:alexisraehamilton@gmail.com">alexisraehamilton@gmail.com</a> | 217-4833 |
| Section 8 | Ocean          | David Pereksta | <a href="mailto:pereksta@pacbell.net">pereksta@pacbell.net</a>               | 404-8265 |

We will get together at the end of the day to review the day's highlights and to consolidate the sector counts for a provisional total of species count. Frank DeMartino and Alexis Frangis will serve as Co-Compilers. The end of day review includes a **potluck dinner at the Church of the Foothills, 6279 Foothill Road, Ventura at 6:30 PM**. The potluck is open to members, friends and guests; you do not have to be a field observer to be included. Those attending are requested to bring the following types of dishes based on the first letter of your last name.

Main Dish: S - Z

Salad: K - R

Dessert: A - J

Please bring your own place settings, utensils and beverages (water and hot coffee are provided). See you there!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

# VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 24198  
Ventura, CA 93002



Winter is a **WONDERFUL** time  
to bird in the Klamath Basin

## WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

February 12-15, 2015  
Featuring: **RICHARD CROSSLEY**  
and **JENNIFER WU**

**NEW BIRDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
FIELD TRIPS, WORKS SHOPS,  
AND MINI SESSIONS**  
Many old favorites, too

Registration begins in early December  
at [WinterWingsFest.org](http://WinterWingsFest.org)

## 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 |
| Membership         | Jackie Worden      | 652-0577 |
| At Large:          | Adele Fergusson    | 415-4304 |
|                    | John Connor        | 654-1805 |
|                    | Janice Susha       | 983-3929 |
|                    | Judy Dugan         | 642-0842 |
| Newsletter Editor  | Dee Press          | 484-8415 |
| Program Committee: | Laura Gulovsen     | 642-6544 |
|                    | Margaret Wilson    | 647-7962 |
|                    | Audrey Vincent     | 525-5826 |

If you are not sure if 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, January 6th at the home Laura Gulovsen in Ventura. Call (805) 642-6544 for more information.

**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 **10th** of the month preceding the next issue.* E-mail to: [deepress2@gmail.com](mailto:deepress2@gmail.com).