

The CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Ventura Audubon Society **October 2018** Volume 45, Number 2
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CALL NOTES ...Cynthia Hartley Vice President, Conservation Committee Corner

This year marks the 100-year anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), passed in an era when the slaughter of wild birds drove several species to extinction, and many other to the brink of extinction. This legislation is especially significant to the Audubon Society because our organization's founders worked for over 20 years to promote and pass the MBTA. Ironically, we find ourselves facing an assault on the same legislation a full century later, as well as rollbacks and the weakening of many other protections put in place to conserve our nation's wildlife and wild places. One wonders what our Audubon predecessors who fought for these protections for the past 100 years would think about this now?



In keeping with our history as an Audubon organization, VAS has been engaged in many local conservation issues over the years. These efforts have always been driven by our members who care deeply about protecting birds and conserving bird habitat. Over the past six years in particular, we have taken on multiple projects that require funding, public comment and networking. So, as we began to plan for the 2018-19 year, our board decided we could improve on our efforts by organizing a formal conservation committee.



CALL NOTES ...(Continued Pg 2)

OCTOBER PROGRAM

Birds – People – More Birds ...Dennis Ringer

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 2nd, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura



The presentation will give an overview of our birding experience, in the context of Cuban culture, as our group experienced it during March of 2017. There will be plenty of birds but we will also a look at selected aspects of Cuban culture to give a more holistic view of the trip.

While in Cuba, the group saw 24 of the 26 Cuban endemics (not all were photographed) in addition there were a number of West Indian endemics.

Along the way we also picked up quite a few migrants heading to North America.

Dennis Ringer is an Emeritus Professor of Anthropology and Native American Studies at Santa Barbara City College. He retired from SBCC in 2006 after 36 years of teaching.

He started birding in 2007 by taking Joan Lentz' birding class in Santa Barbara. In 2008 a good friend gave him a camera and 400 mm lens and his world of birding changed. However, Dennis is always a birder first and a photographer second.



CALL NOTES...(Continued from Page 1)

Below is the summary of our 2018-19 Kick off meeting. We have lots of opportunities for VAS members who would like to become involved! See our "Conservation Wishlist" below. We also need help with our ongoing activities. The next Conservation Committee meeting will be October 9th at Ventura County Brewing Company at 6pm, or email us at contact@venturaaudubon.org

August 23, Conservation Committee Summary

Committee members: Cynthia Hartley, Sandy Hedrick, Kaitlyn O'Dea (Channel Islands Audubon), Jason Suddith (Channel Islands Audubon), Jim Susha, Jackie Warden

At Large: Debra Barringer, Alexis Frangis

Committee Goals:

- Provide opportunities for Audubon members to participate in local conservation issues that impact birds
- Provide an opportunity for those actively engaged in conservation issues to come together for support and discussion and to benefit from our collective experience
- Give public testimony and submit opinions on conservation issues that impact birds
- Budget planning and identification of grant opportunities for priority projects requiring funding
- Organize meeting attendance and public comments
- Committee members will provide updates on their activities at the meetings, and an update of conservation committee activities and status will be given at VAS Board meetings

Current active conservation areas:

- Ventura River: Least Bell's vireo conservation
- Santa Clara River: Habitat restoration
- Santa Clara River Estuary
- Ormond Beach: Restoration and California least tern/western snowy plover conservation
- Hollywood Beach: California least tern/western snowy plover conservation
- Volunteer Naturalist Program
- Coastal Areas (Local Coastal Plan)



Conservation Wishlist!

VAS is currently focused on coastal and river areas, leaving inland areas underserved by chapter conservation efforts. The following areas, listed by species, represent great opportunities for VAS members who wish to become involved in local conservation issue:

- Burrowing Owl (region: beaches, adjacent to ag fields)
- California Knapcatcher (region: inland, coastal sage scrub)
- Nesting Grebes (region: Lake Casitas)
- Bald Eagles (region: Lake Casitas)
- ??? Your species here

Additional wish list items:

- Monthly summary of legislation relevant to bird issue in Ventura County
- Grant Searching
- Build partnerships with other like-minded non-profits

Channel Islands Audubon (CIA) Club:

In order to foster a relationship between VAS and CIA, we will have members of CIA on our conservation committee. Currently Channel Islands Audubon club is represented by Kat O'Dea and Jason Suddith. Channel Islands Audubon board members will be required to attend at least one VAS conservation meeting a year, other CIA members will be encouraged to attend meetings and to help with conservation issues. CIA will take on a variety of conservation projects during the year, the first one will be a beach cleanup at Ormond, followed by invasive plant removal and habitat fence repair.

Future Meetings:

Committee agreed to meet once every other month, on the month between board meetings. Typically, meetings will be held on the 1st Tuesday of the month, except for October when we will meet on October 9th instead. Upcoming meeting months are December, February, April, June. Additional meetings will be held as needed.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta



Continuing an unprecedented movement of **Nazca Boobies** into southern California since December, a **Nazca Booby** was on County Line Beach on 6 Aug (DG). Another **Nazca/Masked Booby** was seen briefly near Anacapa Island on 20 Aug (JL). This species, unrecorded in the U.S. prior to 2013, has been found a number of times along the coast and offshore of California in the last year. **Red-footed Boobies** also invaded southern California in August and Ventura County sightings included one that landed on a boat off Port Hueneme on 16 Aug (fide JB), one off Point Mugu on 17 Aug (DVP, LH, AS), and one seen further offshore from a boat on 17 Aug (SD & SiD). These sightings could all be of the same bird. A **Magnificent Frigatebird** was off Emma Wood State Beach on 16 Aug (fide JB). Other seabirds of note included a **Buller's Shearwater** at Anacapa Island and a **South Polar Skua** south of the Island on 29 Aug (DP et al.), and a **Craveri's Murrelet** found nearshore at County Line Beach on Aug 6 (DS & CD). As many as two **Black Terns** were at the Santa Clara River Estuary 16-21 Aug (SK). **Reddish Egrets** continued at Mugu Lagoon through 30 Aug with a high of four on 27 Aug (MR).

August is always an exciting time for shorebird migration through Ventura County and this month did not disappoint. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** is a rare migrant along the California coast and it is very rare to find more than one together. Therefore, two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** found on the sod fields along Casper Road 28-30 Aug (RT) that were then joined by a third bird on 31 Aug (BH et al.) was extraordinary. Multiple **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were found in several other places around the state in August. A **Red Knot** was at the Santa Clara River Estuary 21-29 Aug (DP) and another was at Mugu Lagoon 23-30 Aug (JP). A **Ruff** was found on the Oxnard Plain in late July and continued through August (DDJ). Two **Baird's Sandpipers** were also seen on the sod fields 28-30 Aug (RT) and as many as four were elsewhere on the Oxnard Plain 19-31 Aug (LS). A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was on the Oxnard Plain 3-5 Aug (DDJ). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was along Casper Road 11-12 Aug (DP) and as many as four were on the Oxnard Plain 11-19 Aug (DP, DDJ). **Red Phalaropes** are common pelagic migrants far offshore, but not many are seen along the coast in migration so one near the Ventura Pier on 19 Aug (MB), as many as four in the lagoon at the Santa Clara River estuary 16-31 Aug (SK et al.), one at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 23 Aug (GL), and one at Point Mugu 22-27 Aug (AP) were notable.



While we can expect the peak migration of passerines in September and October, a few early migrants and uncommon local breeders were found in August. A recently fledged **Vermilion Flycatcher** was on the Oxnard Plain on 5 Aug (DP & SP) demonstrating that this species is continuing to reproduce locally after recently establishing nesting in Ventura County. A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** visited a feeder in Thousand Oaks on 6 Aug (AD), which could have been a summering bird. The **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** that visited a feeder in Ventura during July was replaced with two recently fledged birds 30 Jul-12 Aug (ETG). It is very likely that they bred locally. A **Bobolink** was an early migrant at Point Mugu on 17-24 Aug (AP) as vagrants normally occur later in the fall.

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, Marc Better, Chris Dean, Don DesJardin, Angela Dowling, Scott Downes, Sierra Downes, Davis Garner, Lauren Harter, Bruce Henderson, Sangeet Khalsa, Jacquelynn Lockhart, Andrew Partin, David Pereksta, Sandy Pereksta, Jeremiah Psiropoulos, Martin Ruane, Larry Sansone, Adam Searcy, Dessi Sieburth, Elisa Taylor-Godwin, Ryan Terrill, David Vander Pluym



OCOTOBER 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.

Wednesday, October 3, 8:30 a.m. Laguna Tams

Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

The tamarisk trees at Laguna Rd are a migrant hot spot. Migrating birds mostly warblers are attracted to the insects in the trees and a number of uncommon to rare birds often show up at this location. **Directions:** From Hwy 101, take Rice Ave south (towards the ocean), turn left (east) on E Pleasant Valley Rd, turn right on Laguna Rd. Please observe good birding etiquette at this location, as it is a fairly busy road in an agricultural area, please do not park in front of driveways or the tamarisk trees. Carpooling is encouraged to minimize traffic.

Carpool Directions: From Camarillo, meet at 8:10 at Las Posas Park and Ride. From Ventura, meet at 7:50 am at the parking lot behind Carrow's (next to the Chevron station) at the intersection of Harbor and Seaward (Von's Shopping Center).

Saturday, October 6, 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, Oct 13, 8:30 a.m. Canada Larga

Leader : Raeann Koerner 805-701-1919

We will walk and drive the canyon. Always a great walk! Some birds we may see are Western Bluebirds, Road-runners, sparrows, swallows, Red-tailed Hawks & perhaps a barn owl.

Directions: Take Hwy 33 toward Ojai. Exit Canada Larga Rd. Meet near the beginning of the road on the right-hand side in the small parking lot before the avocado trees.

Saturday, October 20, 8:30 a.m. Ventura Settling Ponds

Leader: Rick Vogel 805-388-8047

Enjoy a morning of mostly waterfowl birding. Spotting scopes are always welcome.

Directions: Take Harbor Blvd to Spinnaker and enter Ventura Harbor. The Water Treatment Plant is on Angler before Spinnaker curves to the right. Park either across from the entrance on Angler or if there is not room, park in the lot on the right side of Spinnaker past the Ventura Boat Yard and meet at the gate. Note: Take care in crossing Spinnaker due to the blind curve.

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FIELD TRIPS...(Continued from Page 4)

Saturday, October 27 8:00 a.m. Matilija Riparian Area and Lake

Leader: Kay Register 805-258-1025

This walk is limited to 8 people due to limited parking and rough hiking. People should be sturdy on their feet and comfortable with rough terrain. Possibly followed by trip to Ojai Preserve (by high school). Please contact Kay Register at kaybird@aol.com if you are interested in participating. She would like to include carpooling and will also let you know if there is room on the walk and will provide you with more details.

SAVE THE DATE: Point Mugu trip December 7, 2017 8:00 - Limit 20 People

To get put on the list for the trip, please email Adele Fergusson at adelefergusson@yahoo.com. With a subject of "Point Mugu Trip" by October 16th for me to send the form that has to be completed for clearance on the base by November 7.

A BIG THANK YOU!



A big thanks to the crew of volunteers from the Ventura office of USFWS who worked on the morning of September 7 to remove the seasonal fencing from Hollywood Beach. At Hollywood Beach, the fencing must go up before the start of nesting season and be taken down at the end of the season. This year, a crew from several divisions of USFWS organized by Lena Chang, Sr. Biologist worked with Debra Barringer, VAS contracted biologist and WSP/CLT Monitor at Hollywood Beach to remove and store the fencing. Those in the photo include (l to r) Lena Chang, Amy Duggal, Colleen Grant, Mary Martin, Todd Lemein, Dou-Shuan Yang, Raphaela Ware, Kendra Chan and Debra Barringer.

Thanks also to the Channel Islands Harbor Department and Harbor Master, Gary Hirtensteiner whose maintenance crews help throughout the season.

Ventura Audubon works closely with both USFWS and CI Harbor Department every year to protect nesting Western Snowy Plovers and California Least Terns who, each year, must compete with heavy beach traffic, dogs (on and off leash) and the predators attracted by trash left behind by the human visitors to nest, breed and fledge young.



Brown Pelicans Getting Help from Audubon Network

San Fernando Valley Audubon Conservation Committee Chair Dave Weeshoff with rescued Brown Pelican.

This past spring and summer, unusual numbers of young brown pelicans turned up in parking lots, college graduations ceremonies, and streets from Oregon through California. Does this mean our California brown pelican subspecies is in trouble?

Our ~150,000 California brown pelicans breed in spring and early summer in northwest Mexico and at the U.S. Channel Islands off of Ventura. After fledging, groups of young birds disperse to the Salton Sea and north along the California, Oregon and Washington coasts. Even in a good year with plenty of forage fish, as many as 60% of fledglings do not survive to breeding age. Yet pelicans would appear to be adapted to these early life stage losses-- with a fossil record extending back about 15 million years, this is a species built to last.

This resilience surely helped brown pelicans recover from dangerously low population levels in the 1960's, caused by decades of impacts from chemicals, habitat destruction and disturbance. All six subspecies were listed as endangered in the U.S. and Mexico and the species responded to actions in the Recovery Plan. By 2009, the last subspecies- our California pelican- was triumphantly removed from the endangered list by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and declared recovered. This was the right decision. However, soon after delisting, California brown pelican nest success in both the U.S. and Mexico plummeted or ceased entirely for multiple years, alarming biologists. The primary driver of these reproductive failures in the U.S. are reduced stocks of forage fish due to climate change impacts, and in Mexico they are climate change impacts as well as over-exploitative commercial fisheries.

While pelicans are hardy and adapted to periodic poor ocean conditions, what worries agency and Audubon biologists is the pulse of red flags in the brown pelican population over the past 10 years. This has included multiple years of skipped breeding or poor breeding success; significant die-offs of adult pelicans and large pulses of starving young pelicans; and unusual behaviors such as pelicans shaking common murrelets seeking regurgitated fish, and pelicans eating the young of other seabirds. Protracted, chronic lack of forage fish in the environment leads to these behaviors and eventually drives down populations.

When a bird species is in trouble, a key step is to ensure adequate monitoring to understand its ongoing status and its response to conservation actions. When Audubon learned in 2012 that federal agencies no longer planned to continue monitoring pelican nesting at the Channel Islands, we teamed up with the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Audubon network to [successfully pressure the agencies](#) to re-commit to this monitoring. We also raised funds from eight chapters in southern and central California – San Fernando Valley, Buena Vista, Pasadena, San Diego, Sea and Sage, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Morro Coast – to ensure there were no lapses in nest monitoring until agency resources could be put into place. The outcome we achieved together is an uninterrupted data set showing a close relationship of nest success with the abundance of forage fish, particularly anchovy and sardine.

Now that we are confident the Channel Islands National Park and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to track nest success at the Channel Islands, we are focusing on helping brown pelicans in four ways. First, we are [fighting hard](#) alongside Pew Trusts, Sea and Sage Audubon, San Diego Audubon and a handful of other west coast partners to bring management of the most important food for brown pelicans- northern anchovy - into compliance with our federal fisheries management framework. With our advocacy, federal fisheries managers went from ignoring anchovy, with a “set it and forget it” harvest quota, to acknowledging anchovy must be actively managed to ensure catch levels are sustainable and that local depletion does not occur. We will continue to work on this effort until these objectives are achieved, which we expect to occur in the next 2-3 years. Audubon Activists have been an essential voice in this effort and we will continue to ask for your participation in this regard.

Second, we have started to [fight Congressional attacks](#) on the Magnuson Stevens Act (“MSA”). The MSA is our effective, hard-working national legal framework for protecting commercial and recreational fish, and seabird forage fish such as anchovy. Third, we collaborate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and numerous Audubon coastal chapters in the [West Coast Brown Pelican Survey](#). This biannual survey tracks the abundance and age distribution of brown pelicans, providing valuable insight into the health of the population. Finally, we are working to understand and reduce the impacts of climate change to the birds and the oceans through our state and national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy sources.

VAS OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS 2018-2019		
Officers		
President	Bruce Schoppe	805-658-2396
Vice President	Tom Black	805-985-2325
Vice President/Conservation	Cynthia Hartley	805-795-4115
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	Debra Barringer	303-880-0308
At Large/CSUCI Audubon Club	Kat O'Dea	818-916-4154
Chairs & Committee Members		
Webmaster	Christi Lester	310-722-9557
Education	Betsy Bachman	805-646-4407
Conservation Committee Cynthia Hartley - 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, **November 6 (election day)!** 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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