

The **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **December 2018** Volume 47, Number 4
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubon.org



CALL NOTES...Frank DeMartino

VENTURA AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Audubon Invites You to Join the 119th Annual Christmas Bird

Our Christmas Bird Count is **Saturday, January 5th, 2019**. 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 119th Christmas Bird Count conducted by National Audubon. On the Ventura Audubon count last year, we recorded 175 species and more than 23,000 individual birds in spite of the challenges that the Thomas Fire presented.

Frank DeMartino is Organizer and Compiler. Please contact Frank at (frank@colynx.com) or (856) 906-8733. (Yes, 856 is the correct area code!) or, you may call the Section Leader with whom you have counted previously or may wish to work with this year. We will update you on the availability of the online registration once we know if it will be active.

Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. The more participants we have, the more areas we can cover and we can cover them more thoroughly. Sector Leaders usually start at 8:00 or 8:30 although some of the more ambitious leaders may start earlier! Those looking for owls need to be out early or stay late! Most counts end by noon; however, it is not necessary to stop at noon. If you have the energy and stamina, go back in the afternoon to search out birds you should have seen but, didn't.

CALL NOTES...(Continued on Page 2)

DECEMBER PROGRAM

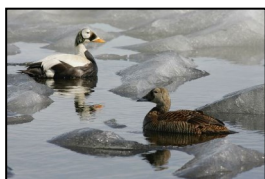
Sea of Grass, Sea of Ice:

How Will 2 Iconic Arctic Birds Navigate a Warming Climate ...Karen Laing

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 11th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura

We will explore the natural history and conservation status of the emperor goose and spectacled eider, two birds that live year-round in Alaska and Siberia. How will their dependence on high latitudes affect their ability to thrive as the Arctic rapidly warms?

Karen Laing grew up in Ventura and Santa Barbara. She was a wildlife biologist in Alaska for more than 30 years, working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. Since returning to Ventura Karen has been active in VAS by leading field trips among other things.



Spectacled Eider - Ted Swem



Spectacled Eider - Ted Swem

CALL NOTES...(Continued from Page 1)

Volunteer counters are assigned to one of the sector 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, directly. He/she will give you the start time, meeting place and other details.

Section	Location	Section Leader	Section Leader Email Address	Telephone #
Section 1	Ventura River	Kay Regester	kayregester@gmail.com	258-1025
Section 2	Lake Casitas	Jesse Grantham	ojaiswimmer@gmail.com	746-0975
Section 3	Ojai	Rick Burgess	burgess1312@aol.com	449-2326
Section 4	Cañada Larga	Linda Easter	Dleaster17@gmail.com	818-519-2833
Section 5	Wheeler Canyon	Sandy Hedrick	Valley.view@verizon.net	643-2408
Section 6	Ventura City	Frank DeMartino	frank@colynx.com	856-906-8733
Section 7	SCRE & Coast	Alexis Frangis	alexisraehamilton@gmail.com	217-4833
Section 8	Ocean	David Pereksta	pereksta@pacbell.net	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.

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.

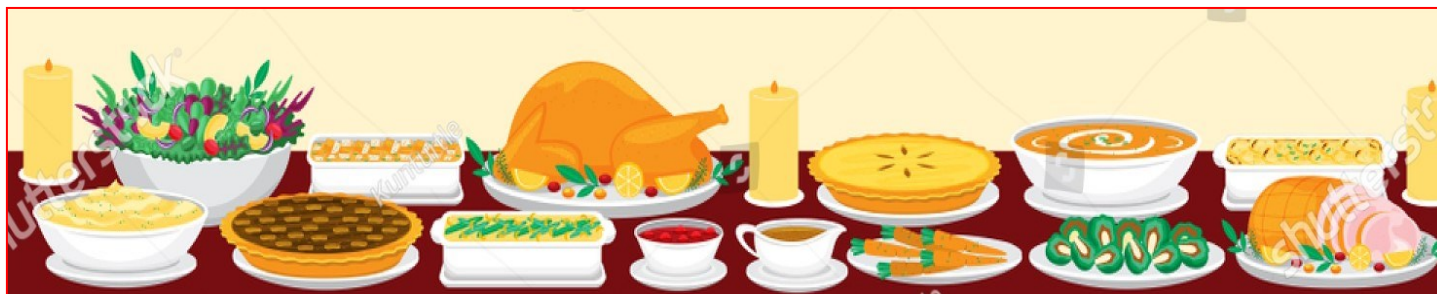
Main Dish: A - J Salad: S - Z Dessert: K - R

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

CBC POTLUCK

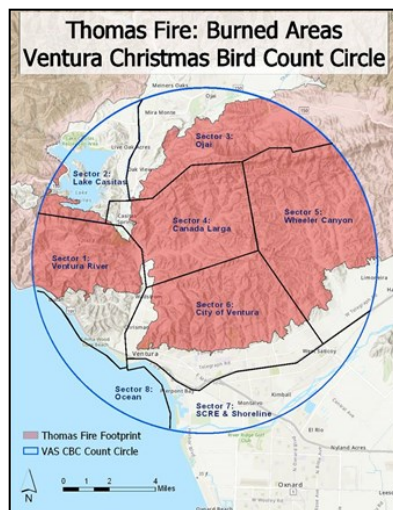
For the CBC potluck at Church of the Foothills on January 5, 2018, please contribute your favorite dish according to the list below...thank you...and hope we see you there!

- * Main Dish A-J
- * Salad S-Z
- * Dessert K-R



CBC 2017 Summary

Hi Birders! Before we get to the count summary and highlights, I just want to thank everyone who was involved with the Christmas Bird Count this past year. It takes a lot of people to make this count such a success especially in the face of such adversity. Participating this year, we had 100 people out scouring for birds, eight hard working sector leaders, several local organizations that allowed us access to private property, and several reporters who helped spread the news of our important citizen science. We also had over a dozen first time counters and backyard counters this year. Thank you all!



Obviously last year's Thomas Fire devastated our region and much of our CBC circle was burned and inaccessible. The birds were still mostly around by the time we did our counting, over three weeks after the start of the fire. We ended up with 175 species for the count day, plus another 1 bird (Western Tanager) for the count week. That puts us at just about average for the count area. In total, we recorded 23,750 bird sightings.

Our count total was also boosted by some uncommon wintering species found on count day including: Baltimore Oriole, Clay-Colored Sparrow, and Bullock's Oriole. We didn't have a boat for the Ocean Sector, but a White-winged Scoter was close enough to shore to be identified. Joining the count for the first time this year was a trio of Yellow-Crowned Night Herons seen at the Ventura Settling Ponds. Hopefully they will become regulars for future counts!

Even some of the expected species were notable this year as we set record highs for Hairy Woodpeckers (8) and Wild Turkeys (41). This marks the second consecutive year that we have set a high count for Hairy Woodpeckers.

You just never know what you're going to find (or not find) during these types of bird counts. With this year's count I will be especially interested to see how the birds have moved back into burn areas. We will need all the eyes we can get! Come join us for a walk or count your backyard if you live within the circle.

Frank DeMartino
Ventura CBC Compiler

Ventura CA CBC Results by Sector December 30th, 2017		
Sector	Number of Species	Total Number of Birds
1 Ventura River	83	1455
2 Lake Casitas	117	4785
3 Ojai	83	2351
4 Cañada Larga	58	1485
5 Wheeler Canyon	55	818
6 Ventura	66	1494
7 Santa Clara River Estuary	138	4780
8 Pacific Ocean	25	6582



NOTES FROM THE FIELD ...David Pereksta

Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at River Ridge Golf Course on 18 Oct (GP). Two **Cackling Geese** were at Lake Sherwood on 2 Oct (MH). **Snow Geese** included one over Camarillo on 15 Oct (JM), one over the Oxnard Plain on 26 Oct (DP), and one near Point Mugu 30-31 Oct (DM). Seven **Blue-winged Teal** were at Ormond Beach on 29 Oct (DK). A **Long-tailed Duck** was a surprise inland at Lake Casitas on 27 Oct (ABA et al.). An apparent **American Golden-Plover** was on the sod along Hueneme Road on 23 Oct (NA) and a continuing **Pacific Golden-Plover** was reported from several of the sod fields 5-23 Oct. The **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** continued along Arnold Road through 5 Oct. Rare boobies continued to be found offshore in October including a **Red-footed Booby** south of Anacapa Island on 6 Oct (NL et al.) and the continuing **Masked Booby** at Anacapa Island through 21 Oct. A **Tricolored Heron** was at Mugu Lagoon 18-31 Oct (MR) and two **Reddish Egrets** continued there through 31 Oct.

October is still a great time for migrant landbirds at local migrant traps and while this year was slower than past years, a number of uncommon to rare birds were found locally. Warblers at Bob Kildee Park included a **Bay-breasted Warbler** on 6 Oct (DB) and a **Blackburnian Warbler** 21-22 Oct (MB). The Laguna Road Tamarisks hosted individual **Palm Warblers** 6-10 Oct (LK) and 22-30 Oct (NA), a **Black-and-white Warbler** on 9 Oct (FD), and an **American Redstart** 17-22 Oct (M. Obs.) and perhaps a different one on 27 Oct (JM). Riparian habitat along Matilija creek produced a **Northern Parula** on 8 Oct (JG et al.), **Varied Thrush** on 17 Oct (JG & BS), **Swamp Sparrow** on 19 Oct (JG & BS), and a **White-throated Sparrow** on 24 Oct (JG). Other notable warblers included a **Blackburnian Warbler** on Anacapa Island on 10 Oct (JH), a **Prothonotary Warbler** at Lake Sherwood on 23 Oct (MH), and a continuing **Northern Waterthrush** at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 1 Oct. Individual **Palm Warblers** were found in Camarillo on 13 Oct (CS), Hailes Road on 23 Oct (NA), Point Mugu on 24 Oct (AP), and Arnold Road 26 Oct (BH).

A number of other uncommon to rare landbirds were found at scattered locations around the county. A **White-winged Dove** was in a Ventura backyard on 31 Oct (DP). A **Tropical Kingbird** was in Port Hueneme on 30 Oct (DM) and the **Least Flycatcher** continued at Sycamore Canyon through 5 Oct. A **Varied Thrush** was at Point Mugu on 17 Oct (AP) and a **Swamp Sparrow** was there on 30 Oct (MR). The only longspurs of the season were near the runways at Point Mugu and included a **McCown's Longspur** 17-19 Oct (JP), a **Chestnut-collared Longspur** on 19 Oct (DP & JP), and a **Lapland Longspur** 19-22 Oct (AP). Three **Red-throated Pipits** continued on the sod along Arnold Road through 1 Oct. A **Brewer's Sparrow** was in Ventura on 2 Oct (DVP & LH) and a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at Conejo Community Park 30-31 Oct (RS). A **White-throated Sparrow** was in Fillmore on 22 Oct (KO). Rare in migration locally, a **Scott's Oriole** was in Oak Park on 1 Oct (DC).

San Nicolas Island provided a number of noteworthy sightings during October including 59 **Greater White-fronted Geese** on 2 Oct (AP & JP) with one there through 23 Oct, a **Cackling Goose** 2-4 Oct (AP & JP), two continuing **White-winged Doves** through 2 Oct, a **Sage Thrasher** 2-17 Oct (AP & JP), as many as four **White-throated Sparrows** 16-23 Oct (JP), and a **Summer Tanager** on 4 Oct (DP & MR).

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: Noah Arthur, Marc Better, Angela Bonfiglio Allen, David Buettner, Dan Cooper, Frank DeMartino, Mary Hansen, Lauren Harter, Bruce Henderson, Jim Howard, Logan Kahle, Dexter Kelly, Nick Lethaby, Dan Maxwell, John Mueller, Kris Ohlenkamp, Andrew Partin, David Pereksta, Giles Pettifor, Jeremiah Psiropoulos, Martin Ruane, Bill Shanbrom, Roger Swanson, Cayenne Sweeney, and David Vander Pluym



DECEMBER 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 delefergusson@yahoo.com, subject: VAS trip questions. We are looking for leaders for bird hikes so please contact me if you are interested.

Saturday, December 1, 2018 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 condition

Friday, December 7, 2018 7:30 a.m. – noon. Pt Mugu Naval Base. *The trip is full and no new applications can be accepted.*

Leaders: Mugu Staff and David Pereksta

For those attending, please note you must have picture ID cards with names matching the names on the list. Vehicles, articles and personnel are subject to search. Cameras and video equipment are not allowed. Please bring a scope if you have one.

Directions: From Hwy 101, travel south on Las Posas Rd, west on Hueneme Rd, south on Wood Rd, crossing over PCH. Meet at the main entrance at Naval Air Rd. and Mugu Rd. near Buildings 112 & 116. Drive to gate 1 at Frontage Rd.

Sunday, December 9, 2018 8:30 a.m. Lake Casitas

Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

Join us for a walk by the lake, we will be looking for hummingbirds, grosbeaks, gnatcatchers as well as ducks, geese and waterfowl. Hopefully we will see a Bald Eagle.

Directions: Take Hwy 33 towards Ojai; exit Casitas Vista Rd. Turn right twice and go under freeway past Foster Park to first right, Santa Ana Rd. Follow to park, on left. Or take Hwy 33 to Hwy 150, turn left and follow signs to the lake. Park out front and we will walk into the park. There will be lots of walking, so wear comfortable shoes and bring snacks and water. Bring scopes if you have them! Target birds will include: the resident Bald Eagles, Green Heron, Chipping and Lark Sparrows, Common Merganser and Spotted Sandpiper.

To Carpool from Ventura, meet at 7:50 am at the parking lot behind Carrows (next to the Chevron station) at the intersection of Harbor and Seaward (Von's Shopping Center).

Thursday, December 13, 2018 8:30 a.m. Ventura Settling Ponds

Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

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.

Saturday, December 22, 8:30 a.m. Camino Real

Leader: Raeann Koerner 805-701-1919

Camino Real is a grassy park surrounded by pines and eucalyptus and is an excellent place to see birds. Target birds will include Red Shouldered Hawk, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and Townsend's Warbler.

Directions: We will meet outside the park and walk in. Take Telegraph Road toward Ventura College. Across from Ventura College, 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

Saturday, December 29, 2018 8:30 a.m. Carpinteria Salt Marsh

Leader: Corine Barksdale 805-535-5173

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.



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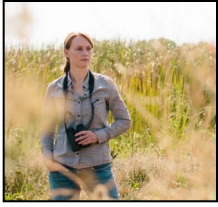
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Making sure that Water under the Ground Helps Birds Above Ground



"It's clear that the ramifications of our decisions on groundwater are going to stretch decades into the future, and what we do now will really matter."

Audubon California's Samantha Arthur

Spending a lot of time in the San Joaquin Valley in recent years, Audubon California's Samantha Arthur has seen the toll that drought and the subsequent California water wars have taken on the few remaining wetlands.

"It's tough to see a place that should be full of water, teeming with ducks and geese, just dry as a bone, lifeless," she says.

Although the plight of California's public and private Central Valley wetlands has many causes, one of them has been the massive overdrafting of groundwater in recent years. Many refuges – cut off from natural rivers – rely on groundwater pumping, and yet can't compete with neighbors with the resources to drill deeper or pay the high costs to run the pumps. Moreover, the incredible subsidence of the valley floor in recent years has upset the flow of many canals that refuges depend on to deliver water.

Thankfully, in 2014, the state of California finally passed a law requiring the local watersheds to start using groundwater sustainably. But Arthur and the rest of the Working Lands team are realizing that this has big implications for birds and habitat.

"We knew the law was a big deal, but I don't think we understood the implications for our work right away," Arthur recalls. "Now it's clear that the ramifications of this are going to stretch decades into the future, and what we do now will really matter."

Arthur is working closely with our partners on the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership -- Point Blue Conservation Science and The Nature Conservancy -- to ensure that discussions around groundwater take into account the need for bird habitat.

State law requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies that will allocate groundwater use, and if wetlands and habitat-friendly crops are left out of this discussion, birds could suffer. These Agencies could eliminate or severely limit the amount of water that these habitats receive – water that is needed to create the food, nesting and resting areas these birds rely on. The flip side of this threat is that there may also be opportunities to benefit birds, as these local agencies plan for winter flooding to recharge groundwater, that could create new habitat opportunities if done right.

"This is not unlike the situation with renewable energy," where the overall goal of the program makes a lot of sense, but that it's incredibly important that someone represent the voice of birds."

The challenge for Audubon California and its partners is that these Groundwater Sustainability Agencies don't meet in Sacramento. Instead, they're scattered throughout the Valley, meaning that engagement is time-intensive and highly individualized for each agency. Audubon California is currently targeting groundwater basins in the San Joaquin Valley where overdraft is most severe and wetlands are most at-risk. The state also requires these critical overdraft basins to complete sustainability plans two years earlier than the rest of the basins.

"There could come a time when the issues boil up to Sacramento and are addressed by the Administration or a new bill, but right now, we've got to speak up for birds, one agency at a time," Arthur says.

Arthur's experience with groundwater embodies the approach of Audubon California's Working Lands Program, which is to work locally within the community of farmers and ranchers to create and protect habitat opportunities for birds.

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At Large	Debra Barringer	303-880-0308
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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 **January 3, 2019 (Thursday)**. 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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