

# *The CALIFORNIA CONDOR*

Ventura Audubon Society **JANUARY 2015** Volume 35 Number 5  
A Chapter of the National Audubon [www.VenturaAudubon.org](http://www.VenturaAudubon.org)



*CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President*

***HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

The New Year is the traditional time for resolutions. We would like to remind you that Ventura Audubon depends upon volunteers and that a resolution to volunteer for VAS in the New Year would be wonderful! There are many ways to volunteer and the level of commitment is up to you. But, in the hope of perhaps stimulating your interest, here, in broad outline, is where there are opportunities to help.

**Laura Gulovsen** and her Program Committee are always looking for new ideas for programs. If you have thoughts or contacts, please call or email Laura. **Karin Kersteter** is the Field Trip Committee but she depends upon volunteer leaders. If you have suggestions for new destinations or would like to volunteer to lead a trip, please contact Karin. The **Education Committee** has gained new energy from five members who have volunteered to help with the programs that Michael Glenn of the USFWS does at several elementary schools in Ventura, Oxnard and Port Hueneme. The program is a continuation of our Share the Shore program that we sponsored in 2010 with a stronger educational component. We believe it is really important to teach children at an early age to appreciate the environment and to learn about habitat, climate change and other issues that will have a significant impact upon their lives. In Michael's program, a lesson on plovers and terns is followed by a visit to beaches where they nest. The children also have the opportunity to draw pictures that can become signs hanging on the fencing that identifies nesting areas. Volunteers can participate in any part of the program. And, if you are a **teacher in Grades 3 – 5**, Audubon Adventures is available at no cost to you. Volunteers can also help with classroom presentations or schoolyard bird walks. Conservation is a big part of what we do. **Sandy Hedrick** is the Conservation Chair and has guided the restoration of the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area aided by a cadre of volunteers. Now they are working on the adjacent property owned by The Nature Conservancy. Usually, one field trip each month is a "work day" at Hedrick Ranch or the TNC property.

Another ongoing project is the protection and monitoring of nesting snowy plovers and least terns on our beaches. For years, until his passing in 2012, this was the passion of Reed Smith. He inspired and trained several other people who, today, continue his work with equal passion. VAS seeks grants every year to pay for fencing materials, signs, and, most importantly, to contract with qualified biologists to do the monitoring. **Volunteer docents are needed throughout the nesting season** to help educate beachgoers at Ormond, Hollywood, Mandalay, McGrath and San Buenaventura. The leader of this effort is **Alexis Frangis**, Science Chair and webmaster.

As noted at the outset, the level of commitment is up to you. We appreciate that many people have jobs and families but, every little bit helps. We invite you to join us by calling any Board member. We hope 2015 will provide everyone with more "Good Birding"!

***JANUARY PROGRAM ...DEBS PARK and The AUDUBON CENTER***  
***7:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 13, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura***



**Jill Sourial**, Interim Director, and **Marcos Trinidad**, Operations and Volunteer Manager of the Audubon Center at Debs Park, are delighted to share some of the past, present and future of Debs Park and the Audubon Center at Debs Park. This beautiful center serves as a hub for environmental education and stewardship in the urban area of Northeast Los Angeles. Jill and Marcos will explain how unique this center is to the Audubon Society as a whole and the importance it has to the community it serves. Please join us!

***...Laura Gulovsen, Program Committee***



## *NOTES FROM THE FIELD*

*...David Pereksta*

While fall migration tapered off for vagrant warblers from the eastern U.S. during November, uncommon passerines and other landbirds continued to be found throughout the county. Warblers of note included a **Black-and-white Warbler** at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 15 Nov (FD et al.), individual **Palm Warblers** at the Wolff Road Tamarisks 1-5 Nov (BCB) and at Lake Casitas on 5 Nov (JG), and a **Prairie Warbler** at the Ventura River Estuary on 4 Nov (AB et al.). As many as five **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were on Pine Mountain through 25 Nov (KK) and three continued at Lake Sherwood through 26 Nov. A **Tropical Kingbird** was at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant 8-30 Nov (KK, LE, et al.), which is likely the same individual that wintered there last year. **Varied Thrushes** continued to be reported in numbers throughout November, primarily in the mountains and foothills, including flocks on Mount Pinos, Pine Mountain, Wheeler Gorge, Taft Ranch, and Lake Sherwood (m. obs). **Mountain Bluebirds** also appear to be on the move with eight in Quatal Canyon on 28 Nov (DP) and as many as 7 along Canada Larga Road 10-30 Nov (m. obs.). A **Summer Tanager** was at the Santa Paula Cemetery 22-30 Nov (ETG). A migrant **Scott's Oriole** was in Ojai on 2 Nov (PAL), a species rarely seen in the county away from their local breeding grounds in the mountains. A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** and two **Evening Grosbeaks** were on Pine Mountain on 25 Nov (KK) and another **Evening Grosbeak** was in Ojai on 18 Nov (JGr).

Migrant waterfowl and other water birds continued to appear for the winter season. Uncommon and difficult to find in recent years, **Wood Ducks** turned up in several places including one at the Camrosa Water Treatment Plant on 11 Nov (AS, DP & DDJ), one near Point Mugu on 14 Nov (DP), and three at Conejo Creek Park 21-23 Nov (BCB) with one remaining through 27 Nov. Three **Cackling Geese** were at Lake Casitas 9-15 Nov (DP), and seven were on the Oxnard Plain on 21 Nov (AS & DM). Two **Cackling Geese**, four **Redheads**, a **Common Merganser** were at Lake Piru on 11 Nov (DP, AS & DDJ). **American White Pelicans** were reported widely including a flock of 17 at the Saticoy Spreading Ponds on 16 Nov (RM), a flock of 12 (same birds?) flying over east Ventura on 30 Nov (AF), as many as 12 at Lake Sherwood 11-30 Nov (MH), and as many as 15 continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds and Santa Clara River Estuary through 22 Nov. A **Common Gallinule** continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 20 Nov and three **Pacific Golden-Plovers** continued on the Oxnard Plain through 30 Nov.

Raptors of note included two **California Condors** at Lake Piru on 11 Nov (DP, AS & DDJ), a **Zone-tailed Hawk** near Lake Casitas on 9 Nov (DP), a **Bald Eagle** in the Lockwood Valley on 25 Nov (KKr et al.), and a **Prairie Falcon** near Round Mountain on 29 Nov (LVS).

The warm waters off our coast continued through November and likely contributed to a few uncommon seabirds visiting the area including a **Red-billed Tropicbird** off Ventura on 13 Nov (JB) and a continuing **Brown Booby** on Anacapa Island through 29 Nov. Not here for warm water, a **Marbled Murrelet** was off the mouth of the Ventura Harbor on 1 Nov (TD).

The Point Mugu area hosted a number of uncommon and rare species including a **Snow Goose** (DP), a **Eurasian Wigeon** (DP), a **Greater Scaup** (MR), and a **White-winged Scoter** (JB) on 14 Nov; 40 **Blue-winged Teal** 5-14 Nov (DP); an **American White Pelican** 7-21 Nov (MR); at least two **Reddish Egrets** continuing through 30 Nov; 15 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** continuing through 30 Nov; 5 **Red Knots** 7-14 Nov increasing to 16 on 21 Nov (MR & DP); 2 **Burrowing Owls** 7-30 Nov (MR); 2 **Vermilion Flycatchers** continuing through 30 Nov; and a **Prairie Falcon** 7-30 Nov (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), e-mail or call David Pereksta at <pereksta@pacbell.net> or 659-5740.

Good birding,  
David Pereksta

Observers: Patty Albert-Leis, Joel Barrett, Allen Bertke, Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin, Frank DeMartino, Don DesJardin, Tim Dillingham, Linda Easter, Alexis Frangis, Jack Gillooly, Jesse Grantham, Karin Kersteter, Karl Krause, Dan Maxwell, David Pereksta, Martin Ruane, Adam Searcy, Elisa Taylor-Godwin, Laurie Van Stee



## ***JANUARY 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, Jan 3 – VAS Christmas Bird Count! See newsletter for details and sign up information!**

**Sunday, Jan 4, 8:00 a.m. Work Day Hedrick Ranch. Leader: Sandy Hedrick (805) 340-0478.** Arrive at **8:00 for birding** which should produce 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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).

**Saturday, Jan 10, 8:30 a.m. Soule Park. Leader: Allen Bertke (805) 640-9037.** Join us for an easy, flat walk around one of our most scenic birding spots! Tall trees and the rising Topa Topa mountains make for a scenic backdrop while we enjoy flocks of winter birds feeding in the park. **Target birds** will include: Hutton's Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwing, California Thrasher, Chipping Sparrow, Barn Owl and Pine Siskin. **Directions:** From Ventura, go north on Hwy150 through Ojai, turn right on Boardman Rd, and turn right at park entrance. Meet at lot just inside the gate—\$4 per vehicle. There is no outside street parking! **To car pool,** meet at the parking lot behind Carrows at the Vons Shopping Center at Harbor and Seaward at 8:00 a.m.

**Tuesday, Jan 6, 8:30 a.m. Camino Real Park. Leader: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304.** Camino Real is a grassy park surrounded by pines and eucalyptus, excellent for birding and viewing overwintering monarch butterflies. **Note 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. **Target birds** will include: Nuttall's Woodpecker, Merlin, Cassin's Kingbird, Hutton's Vireo, Hermit Warbler, Townsend's Warbler,

Red-breasted Nuthatch, Warbling Vireo, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

**Saturday, Jan 17, 8:30 a.m. Camino Real Park. Leader: Kay Register (805) 652-1073.** Camino Real is a grassy park surrounded by pines and eucalyptus, excellent for birding and viewing overwintering monarch butterflies. **Note 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. **Target birds** will include: Nuttall's Woodpecker, Merlin, Cassin's Kingbird, Hutton's Vireo, Hermit Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Warbling Vireo, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

**Saturday, Jan 24, 8:30 a.m. Beginner's Bird Walk. Leader: Allen Bertke (640-9037). Emma Wood State Beach.** We will begin at Emma Wood State Beach, where we will target Snowy and Semipalmated Plover. We will then walk through willows and sand dunes as we make our way to the Ventura River Estuary. The estuary is always an exciting place to bird, and target birds will include: Black-bellied Plover, Heerman's Gulls, Mew Gulls, Forster's Terns, Marsh Wren, Ruddy and Black Turnstones. There will be a fair amount of walking, so please dress appropriately in layers and comfortable shoes. **Directions:** From US-101, exit California St, turn right and then a quick left onto Thompson Blvd. Follow Thompson and turn left on W. Main St. Follow W. Main St until just before it enters the freeway. Emma Wood is on the left. There is ample street parking along the outside of the park (we must park outside and walk in). Please do not leave valuables in your car, and be sure to lock your vehicle.

**Saturday, Jan 31, 8:30 a.m. Arroyo Simi. Leader: Linda Easter (805)482-7537. Joint trip with CVAS!** A mostly natural bottomed channel in Simi Valley is host to a wide variety of excellent (and sometimes surprising) birds. Recent birding trips to this channel have given excellent views of waterfowl, including Green Herons and Sora, as well as Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers and all three varieties of teals. Sparrows are also seen here, including Lincoln's, Song and Savannah.

(...continued on Page 4)



## *BEGINNERS' BIRD WALK ...Allen Bertke*

The Ventura Settling Ponds were the destination for last month's Beginner's Bird Walk. We were blessed with a warm and calm day, affording some great viewing – 43 species in all. Probably the birds of the day were 25 White Pelicans flying and circling overhead, sometimes spreading out into a V formation, and other times simply forming a loose flock.

There was also a fly-by of a Belted Kingfisher, at least three Green Heron and a Horned Grebe. One juvenile Green Heron perched for us and stretched his neck out in his best imitation of an American Bittern. He seemed to be doing it especially for us, trying to get attention, but I wasn't going for it. No matter how he tried to look like that rarer species, he was still just a Green Heron.

We once again obtained the Teal Trifecta; male Green-winged and Cinnamon and a female Blue-winged. The three beautiful male Cinnamon Teal would alternately duck into a small cove and disappear for a few minutes. It must have been a secret Teal meeting place. They kept coming back out with smiles on their bills, so maybe that red light that I thought I saw over there wasn't my imagination after all! Teal hens of the evening?

Other birds that made the list were Snowy Egrets, who skunked the Great Egrets by a score of 11 – 0, Eared and Pied-billed Grebes, Great Blue Herons, Ruddy Ducks, Gadwalls, Bufflehead, a Red-Breasted Merganser and a Lesser Scaup. The Scaup initially inspired some conversation as to whether it was a lesser or greater. After some good scoped views we were able to determine that it was definitely a Lesser Scaup. After having scored with the scoped scaup we skipped onward.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers seemed to be everywhere, except in the giant swarms of gnats that we kept walking through. There were also Common Yellowthroats, Orange-crowned Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Bushtits, both Towhees, White-crowned Sparrows and Marsh Wrens. Several gulls were present, but they were all Westerns, except for one lone Bonaparte's Gull. I was asked how I could tell it was a Bonaparte's. I replied "Bonaparte's are much smaller than other gulls and they have a black ear spot this time of year. Plus, if you look closely you can often see that they tuck their right wing into their vest."

Later on the walk, among some soaring Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks there was another soaring raptor that no one could get a bead on. I thought I had initially seen a bit of a white rump, but I dismissed it as sun reflection because it was soaring so high that it couldn't possibly be a harrier. They just don't do that, I thought. Wrong! After looking at some pics that I took, it was absolutely a Northern Harrier. Guess I need to learn to expect the unexpected when it comes to birding.

See you next time. Watch for the unexpected.

### ***FIELD TRIPS...*** (continued from Page 3)

Directions: Allow 45 minutes for driving from Ventura. From Hwy 101, take Hwy 23 and exit Tierra Rejada Rd. Turn right on Tierra Rejada. Turn left on Madera. Turn right on Easy St and park along the street near the entrance to the bike path. We will bird the channel on both sides of Madera Rd. Brings scopes if you have them! **To car pool**, meet in the parking lot behind Carrow's in the Von's Shopping Center at the intersection of Harbor and Seaward at **7:45 a.m.**

**UPCOMING WEEKEND TRIP! Feb 21 & 22. Leader: Alexis Frangis.** Mark your calendars and plan on joining us for an amazing weekend of winter birding Orange County! Shorebirds, ducks and geese, rails and sparrows all abound in the wetlands and coastal areas of Orange County during the winter. We will begin the weekend at the beautiful Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Target birds for Bolsa Chica include Reddish Egret, Eurasian Wigeon, Harlequin Duck, Redhead, and Red Knot. We will also take a short drive to San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine, home of Sea & Sage Audubon Society (gift shop!) and see many fabulous birds, such as Green Heron, Osprey, Virginia Rail, Common Gallinule, Bonaparte's Gull, Forster's Tern and Caspian Tern. Our leader will also plan a few surprise destinations! Our lodging will be in the Huntington Beach area to keep drive time to a minimum. **Please RSVP to [venturabirding@yahoo.com](mailto:venturabirding@yahoo.com) by Feb 1. IMPORTANT: When you RSVP, please include your First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, Phone Number, Date of Birth, and Zip Code.** You will be sent all the trip details, including lodging info.

*(Repeated FYI...)* **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!

***BRAVO!***

Our December presenter, **Dr. Nancy Merrick**, has given her VAS honorarium to The Bulindi Chimpanzee and Community Project. They are saving the lives of a community of 20 chimpanzees stranded without a forest. In exchange for protecting and re-planting critical trees, children are sent to school.



## ***VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY***

P.O. Box 24198  
Ventura, CA 93002

### ***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
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Webmaster/Science	Alexis Frangis	217-4833
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	John Connor	654-1805
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	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 of Laura Gulovsen, 157 Madera Ave., Ventura. Phone (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).