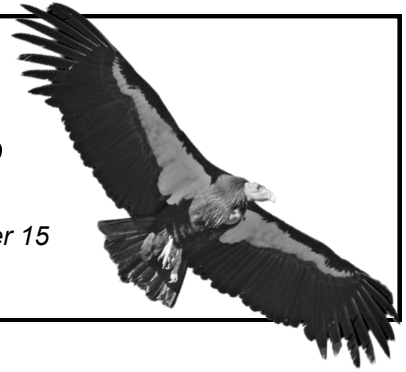


The **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **FEBRUARY 2020** Volume 58, Number 15
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubon.org



2020 SALTON SEA UPDATE...Andrea Jones

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 4th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura



To learn more about the threats facing the Salton Sea, as well as about efforts that have and are currently being taken to conserve it, come hear Andrea Jones' talk. Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon California, Jones will highlight why the Salton Sea is critically important to over 400 species of birds, describe which of those species are most threatened, and explain how Audubon is engaging in new solutions that will benefit both birds and people.

The Salton Sea, a saline inland lake covering 330 square miles in southern California, is a critically endangered Important Bird Area that hosts two-thirds of California's bird species. For years, runoff from the Imperial Valley has fed the Sea. Since 2003, under an agreement to

minimize California's use of water from the Colorado River, water formerly used for agriculture has been steadily diverted to

water-strapped urban areas like San Diego. At the same time, irrigation techniques have become more efficient, reducing the amount of water lost as runoff.

As a consequence of these developments, the Salton Sea is shrinking. By 2033, with 40 percent of its supply predicted to be cut off, the Salton Sea's water level will likely drop by 20 feet, exposing miles of dry, dusty lake bottom, much of it contaminated with chemicals from pesticides and fertilizers. These chemicals can then be picked up by strong winds, and, in a region already prone to bad air quality, cause serious health problems in communities as far away as Mexicali.

For the Salton Sea's wildlife, too, the future looks grim. Salinity is predicted to triple in the next 14 years, eliminating the Salton Sea's fishery and most of the invertebrates that provide food for its many bird species.

Andrea Jones, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon California

Since 2006, Andrea has led our coastal programs and worked with staff and the network of Audubon chapters across the state to implement conservation projects at high priority Important Bird Areas (IBAs). She has been responsible for implementing science and conservation planning projects at coastal estuaries and saline lakes across California. She also oversees our efforts to protect and advocate for priority bird species and serves as a spokeswoman for bird conservation across California.

Prior to California, Andrea worked at Massachusetts Audubon where she served as the Director of the Coastal Waterbird Program and Grassland Conservation Program. Andrea received her M.S. in Wildlife Conservation/Ornithology and her B.S. in Wildlife Biology and Management from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, with her research focused on grassland birds.



FEBRUARY 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. If you have any questions you may contact me at fieldtrips@venturaaudubon.org Adele Fergusson

Saturday, Feb 1, 2020 8:00 a.m., Restoration 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. Restoration 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

Saturday February 8, 2020 8:30 a.m., Soule Park

Leader: David Wappler (805) 620-2676 / Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

Situated in east Ojai, this large park offers grasslands, large deciduous trees and riparian habitat that bring out winter feeding flocks of sparrows, bluebirds, & warblers and year-round habitat for thrashers, woodpeckers, raptors and more. A section of Thatcher Creek that serves as the north border of the park will be enjoyed. Join us for an easy, flat walk around one of our most scenic birding spots.

Directions: From Ventura, go north on Hwy 150 through Ojai, turn right on Boardman Rd, and turn right at park entrance. Meet at lot just inside the gate -\$4 per vehicle. Parking along Boardman Road to avoid the \$4 per vehicle fee is prohibited so please do not park along Boardman Road. To car pool, meet at 7:45 a.m. behind the 'former' Carrows restaurant located in the Vons Shopping Center at the corner of Harbor and Seaward.

Saturday February 15 9 a.m., Ventura Settling Ponds

Leader: Frank DeMartino / 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, February 22, 2020 8 a.m., Emma Wood State Beach

Leader: Tevin Schmitt (661) 904-1563

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.

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 northbound 101 freeway. Emma Wood 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.

FIELD TRIPS..(Continued from Page 2)

Saturday February 29, 2020 8 a.m., Lake Sherwood

Leader: Mary Hansen (805) 390-4586 or marye.hansen@gmail.com

We will walk the lake, target species are Purple Finches, California Thrasher, ducks of various kinds during the winter, Coopers Hawks and Red-shouldered Hawks breed here as do Common Ravens. If we are lucky, we may see a Least or American Bittern. Wear comfortable closed toed shoes and long pants. We will walk about 1.5 miles depending on the birds we see and the terrain is pretty level. Scopes are helpful when we are checking out the lake, otherwise binoculars are just fine.

Directions: To get to Lake Sherwood, exit 101 at Westlake Blvd. Go south to Potrero Road (there's an elementary school on the right at the stop light), turn right on Potrero Road, go approx. 1.5 miles to the Stafford Road entrance, the lake is now on your left. If you miss that gate you will be in Hidden Valley and will have gone too far. Meet at the parking lot just inside the STAFFORD gate which is an immediate left after coming in the gate and then another left to turn into the parking lot.

Please contact me no later than February 27 as I do need everyone's name so that I can put you on a list for the gate. The walk is limited to 15 as we are walking on the road...we have no sidewalks. Thanks!

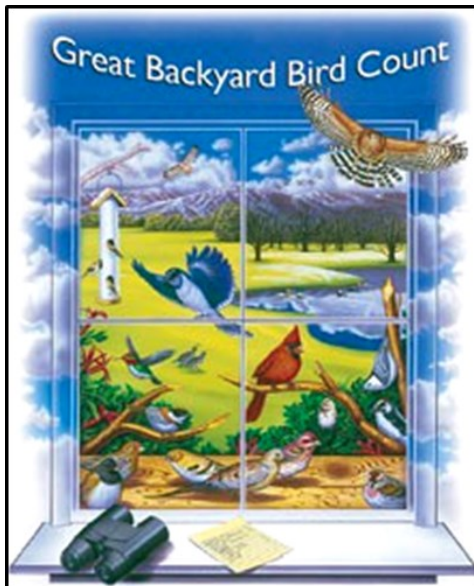
23rd ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRCOUNT

February 14, through Monday, February 17, 2020

Saturday, February 15, 2020

VAS will Conduct a 9am Walk at the Treatment Ponds

Led by Frank DeMartino and Adele Fergusson



The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations.

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world. Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are.

In 2019, Great Backyard Bird Count participants in more than 100 countries counted more than 6,800 species of birds on more than 200,000 checklists! More than 160,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded.

Please visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website at birdcount.org for more information and be sure to check out the latest [educational and promotional resources](#).

The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by generous support from Wild Birds Unlimited



NOTES FROM THE FIELD ...David Pereksta

A trio of rare passerines highlighted an interesting December locally. The most exciting find of the month was an **American Tree Sparrow** in a Ventura backyard 18-31 Dec (DP). This is the first documented record of the species in the county in 40 years. The other surprise was a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** that was frequenting fruiting trees in a grocery store parking lot in Camarillo 14-24 Dec (DB). Records of this species in Ventura County have generally been spring or fall migrants, or a recent summering bird. This is the first winter record locally. The **Painted Redstart** remained at Arroyo Verde Park throughout December where it thrilled numbers of birders.

Redheads included three at Point Mugu 13-22 Dec (M. Obs.), one in the Rose Valley on 13 Dec (DP), and two at Bard Lake on 16 Dec (M. Obs.). **Common Goldeneyes** continued at Lake Piru through 31 Dec and Mugu Lagoon through 22 Dec. Eighty-six **Blue-winged Teal** at Point Mugu 6-22 Dec was an unusually high number locally (DP et al.). Three **Red Knots** continued at Mugu Lagoon through 22 Dec.

A **White-winged Dove** was at a historically reliable wintering location in Camarillo 10-22 Dec (DP) and another visited a different backyard in Camarillo 24-31 Dec (LE). Individual **Lewis's Woodpeckers** continued at Canada Larga Road through 25 Dec and at Lake Casitas through 31 Dec. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** continued in a yard in Fillmore through 9 Dec. Individual **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were reported from several locations including the Steelhead Preserve along the Ventura River on 14 Dec (JG), the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden on 21 Dec (KR & SR), Westlake 23-24 Dec (NB), and Cal State Channel Islands 22-31 Dec (JB). The **Tropical Kingbird** at Cal State Channel Islands continued through 22 Dec. Several wintering (?) vireos were seen including the continuing **Plumbeous Vireo** at Mission Oaks Park on 22 Dec, another **Plumbeous Vireo** at Deerhill Park on 6 Dec (DC), and a continuing **Cassin's Vireo** at Mae Boyer Park through 1 Dec. As many as two **Mountain Bluebirds** were at Point Mugu 6-23 Dec (MR et al.). **Green-tailed Towhees** are summer residents in our local mountains, but wintering birds are rare so individuals at Wildwood Park 19-31 Dec (BCB & SB) and Calleguas Creek on 22 Dec (LH, JG et al.) were notable. A **Summer Tanager** was in the Kimball Barranca 24-31 Dec (NA).

The Thousand Oaks Christmas Count was held on 22 Dec and despite an intense storm that moved in during the afternoon, the count tallied 194 species! Highlights included several firsts for the circle; the **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** and **Plumbeous Vireo** in Camarillo, and a **Gray Flycatcher** on the Navy Base at Point Mugu that was there 22-31 Dec (MR, GP, TM). The two **Green-tailed Towhees** mentioned earlier were the first recorded on the count in 45 years. Other rare species for the circle not mentioned already included the continuing **Red-necked Grebe** and a **Swainson's Hawk** on the Navy Base (MR et al.) and **American** and **Least Bitterns** at Lake Sherwood (MH et al.). Also of note were the increasing numbers of some formerly rare/uncommon species including 7 **Vermilion Flycatchers**, 5 **Reddish Egrets**, and an amazing 63 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** on the Navy Base.

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 805-659-5740 or <pereksta@pacbell.net>.

Good birding,
David Pereksta

Observers: Noah Arthur, Nathan Barkley, Joel Barrett, David Buettner, Stephen Bylin, Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin, Linda Easter, Jesse Grantham, Linnea Hall, Mary Hansen, Teodelina Martelli, David Pereksta, Giles Pettifor, Martin Ruane, Karen Rusch, Steve Rusch.



2019-2020 Conservation Committee Goals

Bruce Schoppe, VP Conservation

VAS formalized a Conservation Committee in the last program year and held several meetings. Our conservation agenda is broad and ambitious. We encourage more people to become involved to whatever extent they chose. Below are the goals established for the Committee in the current program year.

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Thursday evening, February 6, 2020 at 6:30 – 8:30 PM in the meeting room at Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, 4360 E. Main St., Ventura (telephone and East Main Street). We invite you to join us.

General

- Expand committee participation
 - * Invite volunteers from volunteer survey participants
 - * Increase committee visibility - Newsletter articles, calendar, post the meeting date/location with an RSVP email address in the newsletter
- Assess conservation topics as they arise and advise the Board of Directors

Santa Clara River

- Encourage and support further acquisition and restoration along the Santa Clara River
- Partner with other conservation organizations on Santa Clara River
- Recruit volunteers to maintain the Reed Smith trail
- Communicate important issues to chapter membership and the board
- Lead guided bird walk in the spring

Ventura River – Least Bell's Vireo Recovery

- Determine next step or steps with regard to restoring LBVI to the lower Ventura River
 - * Schedule meeting with USFWS, WFWZ

Shorebird Recovery

- Working with Ventura Harbor Department, resolve enforcement issues and develop a plan for dune restoration at Hollywood Beach
- Work with landowners and others on Ormond Beach "restoration plan"
- Develop a plan to sustain the Shorebird Restoration Program on Ormond and Hollywood beaches

VAS OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS 2019-2020		
Officers		Email Addresses
President	Cynthia Hartley	President@venturaaudubon.org
Vice President	Kat O'Dea	VicePresident@venturaaudubon.org
Treasurer	Sherry Dorris	Treasurer@venturaaudubon.org
Secretary	Alexis Frangis	
Board Members		
Conservation	Sandy Hedrick	
Publicity	Jim Susha	Contact@venturaaudubon.org
Field Trips	Adele Fergusson	FieldTrips@venturaaudubon.org
Membership	Deborah Burns	
Newsletter	Janice Susha	
Christmas Bird Count	Frank DeMartino	
At Large/Conservation	Debra Barringer	
At Large	Jackie Worden	
At Large/CSUCI Audubon Club	Alissa Goldberg	
Chairs & Committee Members		
Webmaster	Christi Lester	
Education	Betsy Bachman	
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 **February 4th, 2020**. 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.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING: The next meeting will be in **March 3, 2020**. Our meetings are held in the meeting room at the back of the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf on E. Main Street and Telephone Road in Ventura. Meetings begin at 6:30 PM and go until 8:30 PM. Anyone interested in helping VAS' conservation effort is invited to join us.

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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