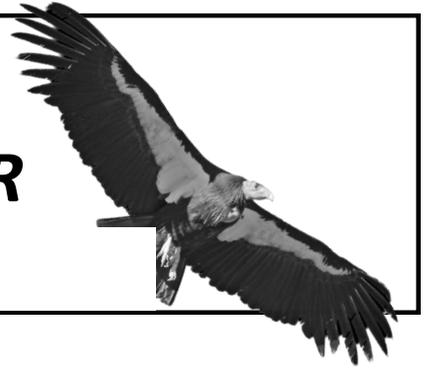


The **CALIFORNIA CONDOR**

Ventura Audubon Society **March 2019** Volume 50, Number 7
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CALL NOTES...Garrison Frost **Speaking Up for Birds Amid Water Debate**

As the Trump Administration seeks to revamp how water is managed in the Central Valley, we're keeping birds in the conversation.

Garrison Frost – Director of Advocacy and Communication, Audubon California

With the Trump Administration looking to reshape how water is distributed across the Central Valley, Audubon California is making sure that the concerns of birds and habitat are not overlooked.

While President Trump made a number of criticisms about how Central Valley water is used during his 2016 campaign, it really wasn't until this year that he began to set in motion a number of potentially significant changes, ones that Audubon California contends could jeopardize birds and habitat.

In the first week of January, the Administration [directed the Bureau of Reclamation to “maximize water deliveries”](#) from the northern part of the state to the southern Central Valley.

Commenting on the proposal in February, Audubon California stated, “As currently described has the potential to threaten an already fragmented system of habitat areas that receive less than the mandated share of water needed to create habitat and are frequently underfunded, limiting the ability to sustain habitat and wildlife populations.” This is a reference to the recurring failure of the federal government to deliver water to Central Valley refuges identified in the Central Valley Improvement Act.

“Even though the Central Valley has lost roughly 90 percent of its wetland habitat, it remains a crucial stopover on the Pacific Flyway for millions of birds,” says Mike Lynes, Audubon California’s director of public policy. “These types of changes have the potential to impact birds up and down the flyway.”

Since January, the Administration has taken further steps to reshape water deliveries in the Central Valley. In August, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke echoed the president’s call for more pumping, and [suggested that the federal government may alter its agreement](#) to coordinate delta pumping with the state in order to facilitate that. In October, Trump [directed federal agencies](#) to speed up environmental reviews of major water projects in California and to develop plans to suspend or revise regulations that hamper water deliveries.

“With all these proposals, our mission will be to make sure that the interests of birds and habitat are represented,” says Lynes. “The birds of the Central Valley are one of California’s great natural treasures, and we need to make sure that they’re provided for.”





MARCH 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.

Sunday March 3, 2019 8:00 am 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.

Sunday, March 10 2019, 8:30 am Port Hueneme Exploration/Bubbling Springs

Walter B. Miranda Park, and J Street Canal to the Port Hueneme Beach

Leader: Kay Regester 805-258-1025

Bubbling Springs is a fantastic place to view many gulls and ducks up close such as Mallards and Widgeons, warblers and hummers. Then we will check out J St Canal and walk the Hueneme Beach to the East, towards the estuary, and then to the West toward the pier where we will see a variety of gulls, grebes and shorebirds.

Directions: Take Ventura Rd south, make a left on Hueneme Rd. Make a right onto Surfside Drive. Go several 100 feet and you will see the stream on the right, park on the street or the parking for Walter B. Miranda Park.

Saturday March 16, 2019 8:00 am Carpinteria Salt Marsh

Leader: Tevin Schmitt 661-904-1563

The Salt Marsh Reserve 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 White-tailed Kite. Several species of heron are often seen at once.

Directions: To car pool meet at the Museum of Ventura Co. back lot at 8:00. Take HWY 101 North to Carpinteria, exit Casitas Pass Rd., rt. on Carpinteria Ave., left on Linden & rt. On Sandy Lane Rd. to Ash. Park along Ash.

Sunday March 17, 2019, 8:30-10:30 am Camino Real

Leader: Reann Koener 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.

FIELD TRIPS...(Continued on Page 3)

MARCH PROGRAM

Seabird Restoration on the California Islands.....with Annie Little USFWS

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 12th, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura

The presentation will highlight restoration efforts for seabirds on the Channel Islands and Baja California Pacific Islands, including invasive species removal, habitat restoration, and social attraction. The Western Gull chicks seen here, the Scripp's Murrelet, and Cassin's Auklet are some of the bird species we'll discuss.

For the past 22 years, Annie Little has worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Based out of the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office in southern California, she initially worked on endangered species conservation in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. Since 2002, Annie has been the lead avian biologist for the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program.



Scripp's Murrelet



Cassin's Auklet



Western Gull

FIELD TRIPS...(Continued from Page 2)

Tuesday March 19, 2019 8:30 am Lake Casitas

Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

Join us for a walk by the lake. We will be looking for hummingbirds, western bluebirds, blackbirds, grosbeaks, gnatcatchers as well as ducks, geese and waterfowl.

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.

For carpooling: 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 March 23, 2019 8:30 am Lake Los Carneros and Santa Barbara Hot Spots

Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

We will walk around this lovely lake, we should see a variety of shorebirds and possibly some rails, blackbirds, munia, white tailed kites, etc. Afterwards we will stop at a park in downtown Santa Barbara to see if there are any migrating vagrants. Bring your lunch and if we have time we will stop at the creek in Carpinteria on the way back to Ventura.

Directions: take 101 North and exit at Lake Los Carneros road, make a right, go straight through the roundabout. You will make a right after the Stowe House and before the fire station. Park in the lot, we will meet here

For Carpooling: Meet at 7:30 AM behind Carrows on Harbor Blvd near the gas station.

Sunday March 31, 2019 8:30 AM Canada Larga

Leader: Linda Easter 818-519-2833

Meet near the beginning of the road off Hwy 33. We will carpool from that location as we walk and drive this long county road. Target species will include Barn Owl, Western Bluebirds, Lark Sparrow, Roadrunner, Phainopepla and various species of swallows.

Directions: Take Hwy. 33 toward Ojai. Exit Canada Larga Rd, make a right. Meet near the beginning of the road. Bring binoculars, a field guide, hat & water.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD ...David Pereksta

Winter is the best time for species diversity and numbers of waterfowl, and January did not disappoint. Geese of note included a **Snow Goose** at the Santa Clara River Estuary on 5 Jan (MR et al.) and eight at Point Mugu 15-17 Jan (JP); a **Ross's Goose** at the Victoria Lakes Golf Course 1-22 Jan (JM); as many as 30 **Greater White-fronted Geese** at the Victoria Lakes Golf Course 1-22 Jan (JM, MR) and another at the Satcoy Spreading Ponds on 18 Jan (KK). **Wood Ducks** were reported widely including a female in Oak Park on 13-20 Jan (DC), a male at Rancho Simi Park on 20 Jan (m. obs), another male (or the same?) at Simi Hills Park 20-24 Jan (BH), two at Conejo Creek North Park on 25 Jan (JH), a female at Lake Sherwood through 27 Jan (MH), and one at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 26 Jan (CR). Individual **Eurasian Wigeons** were at Point Mugu on 24 Jan (JP) and Rancho Simi Park 20-26 Jan (m. obs.). Three **Redheads** continued at Point Mugu through 22 Jan and two were at the Ventura Settling Ponds 24-26 Jan (JB). A **Long-tailed Duck** was with a flock of scoters off Oxnard 28-30 Jan (JB). That flock had as many as two **White-winged Scoters** and three **Black Scoters** (JB). A **White-winged Scoter** continued off Point Mugu through 4 Jan and another was offshore of the Ventura Harbor 5-19 Jan (DP). **Black Scoters** included one off Point Mugu 4-27 Jan (DP), five off of Ormond Beach on 28 Jan (JB), and three off the Navy Base on 29 Jan (MR). **Common Goldeneyes** included one at the Ventura Settling Ponds on 10 Jan (BH, CD, JB), as many as nine continuing at Lake Piru through 26 Jan, and two near Callegas Creek on 28 Jan (SC).

The wintering **Red-necked Grebe** at Point Mugu continued through 29 Jan. A **Common Gallinule** continued at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 27 Jan. Shorebirds of note included an **American Oystercatcher** on Anacapa Island on 5 Jan (JB), a continuing **Ruff** on the Oxnard Plain through 14 Jan, and six **Red Knots** in Mugu Lagoon through 1 Jan. A **Tricolored Heron**, as many as 6 **Reddish Egrets**, and **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** continued at Mugu Lagoon through 25 Jan. The high count of **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** was of 51 on 1 Jan (DP). Four **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** remained at the Ventura Settling Ponds through 30 Jan.

Bald Eagles continued at several locations including one at Point Mugu through 17 Jan, two at Lake Casitas through 26 Jan, and as many as four at Lake Piru through 13 Jan. Two **Ferruginous Hawks** were at Canada Larga Road 17-21 Jan (LE & CB).



A **White-winged Dove** was at a backyard feeder in Ventura on 13 Jan (TB). The **Lewis's Woodpecker** at Lake Sherwood continued through 24 Jan. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was along Canada Larga Road 19-25 Jan (SK) and a **Red-naped Sapsucker** was at Lake Casitas 3-24 Jan (KK). As many as two **Vermilion Flycatchers** were at the River Ridge Golf Course 17-31 Jan (JB) and at least two continued at Point Mugu through 25 Jan. A **Plumbeous Vireo** was in Thousand Oaks on 22 Jan (TM), a **Pacific Wren** was at Rincon Creek on 24 Jan (DP), and eight **Mountain Bluebirds** were near Thousand Oaks on 5 Jan (DC). Rarely recorded locally during the winter, two **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** were

at Point Mugu on 2 Jan (AP). Likely returning from last winter, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at Pitts Ranch Park in Camarillo 10-11 Jan (DP). **White-throated Sparrows** included individuals at Camino Real Park 2-5 Jan (DP), Rancho Matilija on 5 Jan (JG, BS, RR), and a continuing bird in Newbury Park through 15 Jan. **Vesper Sparrows** included two at Rancho Sierra Vista on 16 Jan (RA) and a continuing bird at Rancho Potrero through 21 Jan.

The only local **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in January was at the end of Arnold Road 14-16 Jan (JB). A **Black-and-white Warbler** was in Port Hueneme on 7 Jan (FF et al.) and another continued at Rancho Simi Park through 21 Jan. A **Painted Redstart** was at a private residence in Santa Paula on 13 Jan (JB). A **Summer Tanager** was in Port Hueneme on 6 Jan (JB) and another was continuing in Santa Paula through 17 Jan.



Good birding,
David Pereksta

Observers: Richard Armerding, Joel Barrett, Catherine Bourne, Peter Gaede, Jesse Grantham, Sangeet Khalsa, Peter Larramendy, Dan Maxwell, Eddie Monson, Kris Ohlenkamp, Jon Patzlaff, Tom Patzlaff, Andrew Partin, David Pereksta, Conor Scotland, Julie Scotland, Adam Searcy, and Cody Swanson

Notes from the Field...Adele Fergusson Meher Mount



Meher Mount is a 172-acre universal spiritual center dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba. Visitors come to Meher Mount in Ojai, California, for pilgrimage, for celebrating Divine Love and Oneness, for loving God through nature, and for service.

Meher Mount sits at the 2,500-foot level atop Sulphur Mountain. It overlooks the beautiful Ojai Valley on the north, the Pacific Ocean and Channel Islands to southwest, and the Topa Topa Bluffs in the Los Padres National Forest to the northeast. Avatar Meher Baba sanctified the property when He visited Meher Mount on August 2, 1956.

In January, VAS board member Adele Fergusson, Karen Laing, David Torfeh and Fred Chase were invited to a “scouting” trip to Meher Mount with the current hosts Robert Turnage and Kristina Somma. We had a great morning birding and looking at the views. There were many juncos, spotted towhees and other sparrows, oaktitmouse, hawks and the highlight of the day was the white-throated swifts.

Meher Mount Family Bird Day **Saturday, April 6th**

VAS is supporting this event. The particulars are below.

- 8:00 a.m. Gate opens and visitor sign-in
- 8:30 to 10:30. Early birding walk, led by Rick Burgess
- 9:30 to 11:00. Second birding walk leader to be determined
- 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Ambassador birds presentation by Ojai Raptor Center
- 12:30 to 1:30. Lunch (bring your own) on Topa Topa Patio
- 1:30 to 3:00. Afternoon birding walk

- Activities throughout the day:
 - Bird art—for kids of all ages
 - Hummingbird watching
 - Quiet time seeing the views

Meher Mount is located at 9902 Sulphur Mountain Road, Ojai. This event is open to the public.

VAS OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS 2018-2019		
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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
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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 **March 5th, 2019**. 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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