

The CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Ventura Audubon Society **APRIL 2014** Volume 34 Number 8
A Chapter of the National Audubon www.VenturaAudubon.org



CALL NOTES ...Bruce Schoppe, President

Birdathon!



Birdathon is Ventura Audubon's only major fundraiser of the year. With your generous response, VAS can continue to provide outstanding monthly programs and schedule regular field trips. We can also continue to develop educational outreach programs, fund local conservation and environmental projects and help inform the public on important birding and wildlife issues.

Any scheduled trip during the month of **APRIL** may be used as the basis for your pledge of an amount per species seen. Or, if you prefer, you may make a donation in any amount. All contributions are tax deductible.

We are trying something different this year. You will receive a mailing with a pledge form and an envelope in which to return your pledge or donation. Depending on electronic delivery we have found wasn't very successful! Send your pledge or donation to P.O. Box 24198, Ventura, CA 93002. Or, even easier, go to our website (www.venturaaudubon.org) and make a donation using PayPal. A separate spot is available for this purpose.

Thank you for your continued generosity.

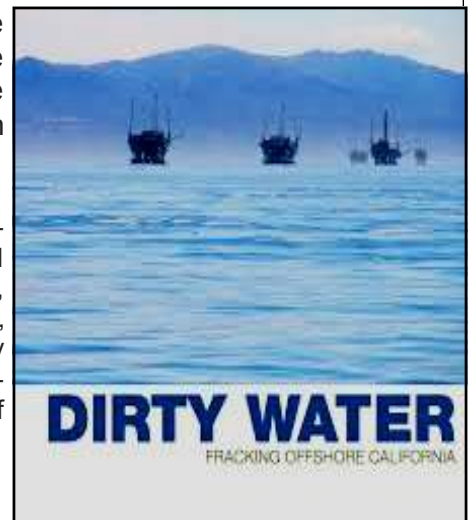
APRIL PROGRAM - 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 8th
Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura

"FRACKING and the Next Generation of Oil" with Brian Segee

Brian's topic, "The Next Generation of Oil", will bring us up to date on the use of hydraulic fracturing and acidizing from offshore platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel. The Santa Barbara Channel and Islands have long been known for their abundance and diversity of wildlife. EDC is in the forefront to safeguard this prime habitat.

Brian Segee, Senior Attorney with the Ventura office of the Environmental Defense Center, has more than 15 years of experience in environmental law, and works on litigation, policy, and legislation for EDC. Prior to joining EDC in 2009, Brian worked as a Staff Attorney with Defenders of Wildlife in Washington, D.C., and as the Southwest Public Lands Director for the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, Arizona. Brian earned a Bachelor of Arts from U.C. San Diego in Political Science and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Colorado School of Law.

...Margaret Wilson, Program Committee



Climate Change Is For The Birds

It is just another early February afternoon and I am out birding on the Oxnard Plain, but this day is anything but normal. The familiar chirps of Cliff Swallows greet me overhead and the three birds I watch are my first of the year for the species; a full 5 weeks before they traditionally arrive in San Juan Capistrano 100 miles to the south. I also check one of my secret spots and find a stunning adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron roosting quietly before its evening foraging routine. Prior to 2000, there were only three records of the species from the county; now they are breeding at Point Mugu and steadily increasing their local population. Events like these are becoming more frequent, and the status and distribution of our local birds are changing right in front of our eyes, which is likely the result of a changing climate.



I understand that climate change, or its misleading synonym “global warming,” is a hot button topic that can divide a conversation just as quickly as religion or politics. Whether you believe it is occurring or not, there is an overwhelming body of scientific evidence that climate change is occurring all over the world as a result of increased CO₂ emissions since the Industrial Revolution. Its effects range from rising temperatures and sea levels, more extreme weather events, ocean acidification, and a disappearing polar ice cap. These are all scientific facts and the projections are that there will be significant habitat changes as well as the redistribution or extinction of many species. We do not need to look beyond our local birds in Ventura County to see how these changes are affecting them right in front of our eyes.

There have been some dramatic changes in the habits and patterns of local birds in the last few decades including changes in breeding and wintering distributions and migration patterns. We have seen an expansion of breeding ranges of some species into the county from points further south; none as dramatic as the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. This species expanded its range northward from western Mexico, and after an adult and juvenile arrived at Point Mugu in 2009, it is now breeding there with its numbers increasing annually at its northernmost breeding site on the Pacific coast of North America. Other species are wintering further north, including the Barn Swallow. While it would have been unheard of to have this species on our local Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) 20 or 30 years ago, they have been recorded near annually on both counts during the last decade and are now an expected species. Conversely, a review of CBC data has revealed that the winter range of the Rough-legged Hawk has retreated northward, which is consistent with many other North American birds. Other species migratory patterns have shifted and many of our Neotropical migrants are arriving earlier each spring; most of which have to do so to survive because their food sources are flowering or emerging earlier than they did historically.

What drove the effects of climate change home to me was a sobering birding experience on a recent visit to Waimea Canyon on the island of Kauai. Avian Malaria is now present on the Hawaiian Islands resulting from the introduction of mosquitos. Due to deforestation and disease, most of the native forest birds are now restricted to higher altitudes where the cooler temperatures inhibit the spread of the disease and populations of mosquitos... the birds are surviving above the “mosquito line.” However, due to warming climates, the mosquitos are creeping up the mountains and the native birds are declining precipitously. One example is the Akekee, which is restricted to 34 square miles of forest on Kauai. The species has declined from 7,800 individuals in 2000 to perhaps less than 1,000 in 2012. I was fortunate enough to see and photograph one, but this species and others on the Hawaiian Islands will likely go extinct in our lifetime.



While the forecast for the future is not encouraging, there are actions we can take to conserve birds in a changing climate. Protecting, managing, and restoring habitat for now and the future, with an emphasis on areas that birds can shift into, will ensure they will have sufficient habitat to breed, refuel during migration, and survive the non-breeding season. We can also take actions as individuals including calculating and reducing our own carbon footprints and demanding that politicians take immediate action on climate change. It will take significant action and responsible climate policy to ensure that birds, and the rest of us, have a future in our rapidly changing world



APRIL 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.

Tuesday, April 1, 8:30 a.m. Fillmore/Lake Piru.

Leader: Adele Fergusson (805) 415-4304. The Fish Hatchery usually produces several good species of herons, egrets and other birds that come to feed on the leftovers from the fish feeding, as well as several other species of birds. We will then go to Lake Piru and possibly see a condor. Remember to bring binoculars, a field guide, and water. **Directions:** Meet at the fish hatchery which is located to the right off Hwy 126 just 1.2 miles east of Fillmore and 26 miles from Ventura. **Note:** There is a \$2 entrance fee for Lake Piru.

Saturday, April 5, 8:00 a.m. Restoration Work Day, Santa Paula. Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Restoration Program. Sandy Hedrick: (340-0478). Arrive at 8:00 for 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. 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).

Saturday, April 12, 8:30 a.m. Nature Conservancy, Hansen Property (Santa Clara River West), Santa Paula. Leader: David Torfeh (805)794-5334. The Nature Conservancy is an important conservation organization that preserves land for humans and animals alike. Join us on a new trip to a privately-owned property in Santa Paula. Please note the hike is moderately strenuous and includes a river crossing. Wear appropriate footwear. Bring hats, water, sunscreen and your field guide. **Directions:** From CA-126 in Santa Paula, exit and Briggs Rd and go south. Turn right on Pinkerton Rd. Turn left on Mission Rock Rd. Proceed to dead-end and park near the gate. **To car pool,** meet at 7:50 a.m. at the Pacific View Mall in Ventura. Take Coastal View Dr. off Mills & park in the lot directly across from the parking garage entrance.

Saturday, April 19, 8:30 a.m. Nature Conservancy, Ormond Beach West, Pt Hueneme. Leader: David Torfeh (805)794-5334. Join a volunteer naturalist who will discuss important conservation efforts by The Nature

Conservancy as we bird one of our favorite locations. This is a new walk on privately-owned land (please note different driving directions). **Directions:** From US-101 in Oxnard, exit Oxnard Blvd and go south. Continue straight onto Saviers Rd. Turn left on Hueneme Rd. Turn right on Arcturus Rd. Turn right on McWane Blvd. Continue to dead-end and park near gate. **To car pool,** meet at 7:45 a.m. at the Pacific View Mall in Ventura. Take Coastal View Dr. off Mills & park in the lot directly across from the parking garage entrance.

Saturday, April 26, 8:30 a.m. Beginner's Bird Walk. Persimmon Hill, Ojai. Leader: Allen Bertke (805)640-9037. Join us at Allen's place. We should see Hooded & Bullock's Orioles, nesting Western Bluebirds, Black-Chinned, Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, and many more. Bring binoculars, a field guide, hat and plenty of water. From Ventura, take Hwy 33 to Creek Rd. Turn right and follow Creek Rd. for about 5 miles. Just past the 10mph left hand curve, take 1st right onto Saddle Lane (Look for Persimmon Hill sign; Saddle Lane sign is difficult to see.) Once on Saddle, go straight at the stop sign. 481 Saddle will be the 4th house on the right past the stop sign.

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, May 3 – Bird walk and Reed Smith Memorial Trail dedication – Hedrick Ranch, Santa Paula

Tuesday, May 6 – Foster Park

Saturday, May 10 – Wheeler Gorge, Ojai

Saturday, May 31 – Beginners' Bird Walk – Canada Larga

Ventura Audubon will honor long-time member **Jan Lewison** by purchasing several feet of trail at the Ventura Botanical Gardens with the memorial donations we received. This beautiful trail winds from Ventura City Hall up the hill to the BBQ area, with spectacular views and many birds along the way. A fitting tribute to Jan, who loved all nature, and Ventura.



BEGINNERS' BIRD WALK ...Allen Bertke

The Saticoy percolation ponds were almost all dry. Only one pond in the front and two in the back had any water, while the rest were percolating only dust. Despite the dry conditions, we were still able to find 37 species, including Tree Swallows inspecting all of the nest boxes, Canvasbacks, Bufflehead, Ruddy Ducks, Green-winged Teal, a Great Egret, Black Phoebe, and a Belted Kingfisher. A family of four Red-tailed Hawks circled above us for several minutes – just as I had trained them. One did an encore performance of about 5 or 6 passes, enabling me to have the group concentrate on different field marks with each pass. First, the black petagials, then watch the next time for the belly band, the third time around, look for the fanned out tail, then the hooded appearance of the head, the broad wings, etc. After that lesson, they will all either be fantastic at identifying Red-tails, or will be overwhelmed with too much information and go home more confused than ever.

We also saw a female Northern Flicker sitting on top of the blade of one of the red windmills. For some reason, she reminded me of an incident that occurred on another walk of mine. We had happened upon a family of Northern Flickers feeding on the ground. The fledgling was being fed alternately by both of the parents. I was explaining the plumage differences between the male and female as we watched the show. Then a little six year old girl blurted out. “Look Mommy! The father flicker is the one with the red on it and he’s feeding the baby. The other one is the mother-flicker.” Innocently f-bombed by a six year old! As her mom’s mouth gaped open, and everyone sheepishly laughed, the little girl looked at me and said “Didn’t I get it right?” I said “Yes sweetie, you got it exactly right. They are just laughing because it sounded like, uh... it reminded them of, uh... Go ask your mom. It’s an adult secret. You’ll understand when you’re older.”

For extra credit, a few of us went on to the back ponds after the official walk was over. They are down about 20 feet! I never knew they were that deep. There we saw Canada Geese, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers, Western Sandpipers, more Green-winged Teal, two Common Mergansers, a Barn Swallow perched on a wire, Northern Rough-winged Swallows and the best bird of the day – a Canyon Wren on the rocky banks of the canal leading from the back ponds to the front. The early defectors missed some good birds.

See you on the next walk. Try not to laugh too hard the next time you see a Flicker. You may have to explain yourself to your cohorts.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting and BBQ is scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2014. This is the official notice of that meeting. It will be held at Soule Park in Ojai in Picnic Area 6, just inside the entrance. There is a \$4 per vehicle parking fee on weekends; so, plan on carpooling! As usual, we shall do some birding beforehand starting around 9:00 am.

The price will again be \$12.00 per person (half price for children under 12). Please send your reservation with check to Marianne Slaughter at P.O. Box 24198, Ventura, CA 93002 by May 10th. Or, you may call Marianne or me with your reservation and pay at the BBQ.



The menu will include chicken, tri-tip, veggie beans, two salads, garlic bread and special steamed vegetables for our vegetarian members. Please bring your own plates and utensils (to reduce trash) and a dessert to share. You may also bring your own beverage including beer and wine. VAS will provide water.

The meeting will start at 11:00 am. This is the meeting at which you, the members, elect the board of directors to lead VAS for the next program year. The Nominating Committee has prepared a slate of nominees which appears elsewhere in this newsletter and will be on the website. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the meeting.

Also, on the Agenda this year will be a recommendation to adopt Revised and Restated Bylaws. California law governing nonprofit organizations has changed and our current bylaws do not meet legal requirements. The Restated Bylaws have been written by an attorney specializing in nonprofit law.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

...David Pereksta

Spring migration is starting and by the time many of you read this, you will have already seen a variety of northbound migrants. However, while there were some early signs of migration in February most of the notable sightings during the period were of wintering waterfowl, waterbirds, and passerines.

Wintering and transient waterfowl and other waterbirds persisted in a variety of places through February. Two **Snow Geese**, a **Ross's Goose**, and four **Cackling Geese** continued on the Oxnard Plain through 9 Feb. Continuing birds at Point Mugu included 9 **Blue-winged Teal** through 17 Feb; 21 **Greater Scaup** through 12 Feb; as many as 5 **White-winged Scoters** through 17 Feb; and a **Black Scoter**, **Common Goldeneye**, and **Red-necked Grebe** through 12 Feb. A **Eurasian Wigeon** was found in Port Hueneme on 3 Feb (JB) and another continued in Simi Valley through 2 Feb. A pair of **Blue-winged Teal** continued at the Ventura Sewer Ponds through 15 Feb and another pair was on the Oxnard Plain on 16 Feb (DP). Two **Redheads** continued at Lake Sherwood through 17 Feb. Two **Blue-footed Boobies** continued on Anacapa Island through 2 Feb with at least one remaining along with a **Brown Booby** through the end of the month. **American White Pelicans** occurred widely including 2 near Point Mugu on 16 Feb (KR), 3 at Lake Sherwood on 17 Feb (MH), 31 over east Ventura on 10 Feb (RM), and as many as 24 at the Santa Clara River Estuary through 26 Feb (JW & AF). Waders of note included a **Least Bittern** at Lake Sherwood on 19 Feb (MH) and continuing **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** at Point Mugu. The wintering **Sandhill Crane** remained on the Oxnard Plain through 16 Feb.

The nesting pair of **Bald Eagles** were at Lake Casitas through February and those visiting the lake to see the eagles should respect the closure area around the nest. Other continuing birds of note there included four **Common Mergansers** through the end of February, and a **Burrowing Owl** through 25 Feb.

The **Plumbeous Vireo** continued at Rancho Simi Park through 5 Feb. Other birds of note at Rancho Simi included a "**Yellow-shafted**" **Northern Flicker** 5-26 Feb (JB), a **Hermit Warbler** 5-26 Feb (JB), a "**Pink-sided**" **Dark-eyed Junco** 2-5 Feb (DP), and as many as three "**Slate-colored**" **Dark-eyed Juncos** 5-15 Feb (JB). Continuing birds at the nearby Arroyo Simi included as many as six **Blue-winged Teal** and eight **Hooded Mergansers** through 23 Feb, a **Common Goldeneye** through 5 Feb, and a **Common Merganser** through 2 Feb.

Uncommon woodpeckers and passerines were reported widely throughout the county in February. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, likely a continuing bird from earlier in the winter, was seen again at Canada Larga Road on 24 Feb (KR) and a **Red-naped Sapsucker** also continued there through 26 Feb. A "**Yellow-shafted**" **Northern Flicker** was in Camarillo on 10 Feb (SB), which was one of several reported this winter. A **Vermillion Flycatcher** continued near Point Mugu through 16 Feb. A very unseasonal **Warbling Vireo** wintered in Camarillo and remained through 14 Feb (AS). A **Brown Creeper** continued in Camino Real Park through 1 Feb and another was found at Valle Lindo Park in Camarillo on 10 Feb (DP). Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** continued at Mae Boyer Park in Oak Park through 3 Feb (DC) and another was in Newbury Park on 15 Feb (FM). Eight **Mountain Bluebirds** and 100 **Tricolored Blackbirds** were in the Ozena Valley on 14 Feb (DP). Exceptional were two well-documented **Red-throated Pipits** on the sod fields along Hueneme Road on 16 Feb (LS); while rarely seen during the fall, there are nearly no winter records in California. The wintering **Nashville Warbler** continued in Ventura through 16 Feb. A **Vesper Sparrow** was at Ahmanson Ranch on 11 Feb (JM), a **White-throated Sparrow** was in Camarillo 4-6 Feb (SB), and a **Harris's Sparrow** continued on Anacapa Island through 26 Feb. As many as six **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were near Point Mugu 9-15 Feb (DP), a **Tricolored Blackbird** continued at Arnold Road through 15 Feb, and 25 were near Point Mugu on 9 Feb (DP).

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), notify David Pereksta at pereksta@pacbell or call 659-5740.

Good birding,
David Pereksta

Observers: Joel Barrett, Stacey Bergman, Dan Cooper, Alexis Frangis, Mary Hansen, Frank Martin, Robert McMorran, John Mueller, David Pereksta, Kay Regester, Larry Sansone, Adam Searcy, and Jackie Worden

VENTURA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 24198
Ventura, CA 93002

If you are not sure if your membership has expired, please **email** Jackie at jbworden7@gmail.com and she will check it out for you.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee recommends the following for the Board of Directors for the program year 2014-2015:

Adele Fergusson	Joyce Schoppe
Alexis Frangis	Bruce Schoppe
John Connor	Marianne Slaughter
Judy Dugan	Janice Sussha
Laura Gulovsen	Jim Sussha
Sandy Hedrick	Jackie Worden
Karin Kersteter	Neil Ziegler

The Nominating Committee included John Connor, Nancy Schorsch, Laura Gulovsen and Sandy Hedrick.

Sandy Hedrick
Chair, Nominating Committee

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
Publicity	Jim Sussha	983-3929
Webmaster/Science	Alexis Frangis	217-4833
Membership	Jackie Worden	652-0577

At Large:	Adele Fergusson	415-4304
	John Connor	654-1805
	Nancy Schorsch	643-5825
	Janice Sussha	983-3929
	Judy Dugan	642-0842
Newsletter Editor	Dee Press	484-8415
Program Committee:	Laura Gulovsen	642-6544
	Margaret Wilson	647-7962
	Audrey Vincent	525-5826

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Thousand oaks, CA



BOARD MEETING: There will be no Board of Directors meeting in April.

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 **1st** of the month preceding the next issue.* E-mail to: deepress2@gmail.com. Call Editor Dee Press at 484-8415 for more information.