

The California Condor

Ventura Audubon Society
November 2024 Volume 66, Number 3
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
venturaaudubon.org

Our vision for Ventura County is a place where
native birds thrive in healthy habitat, and
humans co-exist respectfully with birds and other wildlife



Call Notes

by Rachel Ameche , VAS President

Thank you to all who supported the chapter during our Birdathon "Birdtober" fundraiser! We are grateful for your generous support and are looking forward to continuing our efforts to protect birds and the places they need in and around Ventura County. If you didn't get a chance to donate but still want to please visit our website. Your donations to support our work year round are much appreciated. For those of you waiting for our

annual letter, you should be receiving it soon. Special thanks to Ricky at [National Graphics](#) for helping to create our new mailer.

Our November speaker is coming to us via Zoom and it's one you won't want to miss. The Trust for Public Land will be presenting about the future of Rancho Canada Larga, Sexton Canyon and other projects in Ventura County. This beloved part of Ventura County is chalk full of beautiful wildlife and is a popular destination to see a variety of birds. Join us for a Zoom presentation to learn what is being done to protect these hotspots.

If you follow us on social media, you've likely seen many new Dog Rangers joining the ranks. A Dog Ranger is a dog and their person who have pledged to help birds by modeling bird friendly behavior in and around bird habitat. They pledge to give birds space, wear their leash, never chase birds and not run through protected areas. These changes can reduce disturbance and allow birds to rest and roost. This program is making an important impact for birds in Ventura County. Be sure you're following VC Dog Rangers on Instagram and Facebook and come say "Hi" to the team when they are tabling at the Ventura Botanical Gardens or near the beach.

Thank you for reading and happy birding!

Here's how to support Birdathon

Look for our letter in your mail box! You also contribute either online or via mail:

Online contribution

1. Go to our website, www.venturaaudubon.org.
2. Click on the "Donate to Birdathon- PayPal" button, this will take you to our PayPal page. Where you can contribute with a credit card or a PayPal account.

Mail-in contribution:

- If you received a mailer, just fill out the addressed return envelope
- If you did not receive a mailer, send a check payable to:
Ventura Audubon Society, P.O. Box 24198, Ventura, CA 93002

For all checks, write "Birdathon" in the memo line

[Donate for Birdathon](#)

I Bird, I Vote

You have an opportunity to give a voice to birds and their habitat. Join bird lovers across the country and PLEDGE TO VOTE in the 2024 election. The best way to protect birds and the places they need is to make sure that you vote this year on or before Election Day on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

VAS is proud to support the Yes on Prop 4 campaign and encourage all

Californians to vote for this important opportunity. Supporting this bond means investing in our environment, our treasured biodiversity, and the well-being of all Californians, creating a brighter future for everyone.

- The need for action is urgent—according to Audubon’s science, nearly two-thirds of North American bird species could face extinction by the year 2100.
- These are urgent investments in proven solutions - from conserving rapidly disappearing habitats and protecting our natural treasures, to ensuring clean drinking water for all communities and preventing disastrous wildfires, resources will go where it is needed most to secure a resilient future.
- Proposition 4 will be uniquely equitable because it dedicates at least 40% of its funding to underserved and climate-vulnerable communities.



We invite you to read a blog post by Lindsay Rose, our Whale Tail summer intern and a UCSB graduate. Over the summer, Lindsay worked as part of our Shorebird Recovery team, monitoring western snowy plovers and least terns at Ormond Beach. In her thoughtful post, she reflects on her field experience and discusses how it has shaped her perspective on Proposition 4. We hope you find her insights meaningful and informative.

[Lindsay's Blog Post](#)

For more detailed information on Proposition 4 and why California Audubon supports this proposition, visit this [post from California Audubon](#) featuring a Q&A with Mike Lynes, California Audubon Policy Director.

Dog Rangers

By Kristen McKenna
Volunteer Coordinator

Dog Rangers reframes the public conversation around the disturbance of shorebirds and seabirds by dogs, letting beachgoers know how their dog can help birds. The pledge directly asks dogs to make following promises, in support of birds:

- I will never chase birds or wildlife.
- I will wear my leash at the beach to help birds feel safe.
- I will give birds about 100 feet of space to relax and refuel.
- I won't climb the dunes or walk-through established nesting areas.



Each month, the Dog Rangers program has been expanding its outreach. The Dog Ranger family has grown so much in the past couple of months; we have nearly 80 recruits! We began outreach at the Ventura Botanical Gardens and have had a wonderful response from community members. Our next scheduled appearance will be Friday, November 8th. Come say hello to learn about the program and how your pooch can help contribute to bird conservation!

We were also lucky enough to participate in another C.A.R.L. fundraising event. The local dog rescue organization, C.A.R.L., has helped thousands of dogs find their forever homes, and we were so happy to join forces with them to raise awareness and funds for these wonderful pups. The day was full of happy dogs and enthusiastic adopters, making it a truly joyful event.

Another new venture for us will be the monthly Sailor & Skippers Market. If you're interested in having your four-legged friend take the Dog Ranger pledge and learn more about how they can make a difference, come stop by tomorrow, Saturday, November 2nd, from 10 AM - 3 PM at 2070 E. Main Street. We'll be ready with bandanas and treats for your fur baby.



Birding Field Trips



This is by far our most popular activity. Fostering a love of birds and understanding of their needs is critical to protecting them and inspiring the next generation of birders. We provide trip leaders at local birding hotspots. Currently we hold field trips twice monthly. We provide enough trip leaders that we can break into small intimate groups.

Some of the local hot spots we visit include:

- Arroyo Verde Park
- Camino Real Park
- Santa Clara River Estuary
- Ormond Beach
- Settling Ponds
- Ventura River Estuary
- Carpenteria Salt Marsh

November VAS Field Trips



Lake Casitas



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8th 8:30 AM

Join us for a walk by the lake, there's usually something for everyone here. From Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers and Warblers, to various Ducks and Geese. Recent sightings include White-tailed Kite and Zone-tailed Hawk. And there's always a chance we might see one of the resident Bald Eagles.

CSU Channel Islands Regional Park



Photo by Chuck Engel

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23th 8:30 AM

This park has slopes of coastal sage and southern cactus scrub, wetlands and riparian habitat, and the remains of the "Scary Dairy", the old Camarillo State Hospital Farm. A wide variety of passerines, waterfowl and raptors can be found here. Recent sightings include American White Pelican and Peregrine Falcon. Walking will

mostly be on dirt and gravel trails.
No restrooms or water in the
park. Fee for parking, carpooling is
encouraged.

Visit our field trips [webpage](#) to sign up for a field trip or for more details

Beginners are welcome on all field trips. Light drizzle does not necessarily cancel trips, but heavier rain will. For all trips, please wear appropriate clothing (layers are suggested), comfortable shoes, and bring snacks, water, hats, sunscreen, binoculars and field guides.

Questions or need help? Email fieldtrips@venturaaudubon.org

November Speaker Program



Preserving Wildlife Habitat in Ventura County with Trust for Public Land

Speaker: Alexander William Size and Adam Hirsch
Date/Time: November 12th at 7 PM PDT
Location: **Via Zoom**

Presentation Summary: Trust for Public Land (TPL) is grateful for the opportunity to present our ongoing land conservation efforts in Ventura County, with a focus on the unique ecosystems shaped by the Transverse Range. Our work includes the protection of significant properties like Rancho Cañada Larga, Sexton Canyon, and Crooked Palm, which are crucial to preserving the region’s biodiversity and natural landscapes. In the face of accelerating land loss—6,000 acres disappearing daily to development—it’s more urgent than ever to safeguard these spaces. Through strategic conservation, we’re ensuring vital wildlife corridors, enhancing community access to nature, and protecting key areas from climate risk. We look forward to sharing more with the Ventura community on November 12th!

Trust for Public Land’s Lands Initiative work is dedicated to safeguarding the nation’s most treasured landscapes, ensuring they remain accessible and preserved for future generations. Through strategic land acquisitions, conservation easements, and partnerships with local communities, TPL’s Land Protect team works tirelessly to secure iconic natural spaces and cultural sites. The initiative plays a crucial role in enhancing climate resiliency, protecting vital watersheds, mitigating the risks of wildfires, maintaining wildlife corridors that are essential for biodiversity, and connecting communities to the outdoors. By focusing on both immediate protection and long-term stewardship, TPL ensures that these vital lands continue to provide environmental, recreational, and economic benefits, reinforcing the commitment to creating healthier, more sustainable communities across the country.

For more information and a Zoom link visit our programs page [HERE](#)



Alexander William Size

Upon graduating from Oxford College of Emory University in 2000 and Emory University in 2003 with a B.A in Environmental Studies, Alex moved to southwest Florida and was hired by Trust for Public Land (TPL) to support the team’s conservation efforts in Sarasota County. After completing several



Adam Hirsch

Adam Hirsch is the Director of Philanthropy for Southern California at Trust for Public Land (TPL), where he plays a pivotal role in advancing the organization’s land protection initiatives and expanding its parks and schoolyards portfolio across the region. With a diverse background in business development, social enterprise, community engagement, and fundraising, Adam is deeply committed to fostering inclusive communities and preserving green

land conservation projects in southwest and central Florida, Alex transferred to Trust for Public Land's San Francisco headquarters in 2011.

Alex has protected over 35,000 acres through twenty-six conservation transactions in Southwest Florida, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles Counties, as well the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains, lower Colorado River, Coachella Valley and Mojave Desert. He currently directs TPL's land conservation efforts as the Southern California Land Conservation Director, overseeing a team of three Project Managers, as well as a Wyss Foundation-supported fellow.

Alex is an avid cyclist, mountain biker, runner and hiker, and spends his remaining time baking Neapolitan-style pizzas and practicing piano, organ and guitar. He lives in Oakland, California with his partner, Becky, and beloved pup, Gracie.

spaces nationwide. His values resonate strongly with TPL's mission to create healthy, livable environments for future generations.

Adam holds a degree in Political Science from the University of Vermont and a Master's in Public Service Management from DePaul University. He brings a multifaceted skill set to his role at TPL, aiming to amplify the organization's impact on local communities through strategic fundraising and program development. Based in Los Angeles, Adam's personal life mirrors his professional passions, as he and his family regularly explore California's National and State Parks and engages in a wide array of outdoor and cultural activities.

**VAS International Birding Trip
Belize and Guatemala:
Neotropical Birds and Mayan Ruins
February 16 - 24, 2025
with
Frank DeMartino**

Deposits Due November 13th, 2024



In what are now the countries of Belize and Guatemala, the ancient Maya civilization once flourished, leaving behind cities, temples, pyramids, and observatories still standing, enshrouded in tree cover. Amid rainforests and valleys, archaeological sites tell the story of this culturally rich region while also

providing habitat for a diversity of flora and fauna, including hundreds of bird species. As you seek out resident and migratory avifauna across a variety of ecosystems, you'll also gain a behind-the-scenes look at Audubon's current bird-based tourism initiatives and flyway conservation efforts in partnership with local community-based organizations.

Highlights

- Discover both concentrated flocks and rare sightings of avifauna, such as the Jabiru, Yellow-headed Parrot, Yucatan Jay, and Yucatan Woodpecker, in the wetlands and pine savannas of Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Examine Maya history at the Tikal, Yaxha, and Cahal Pech archaeological sites, and go birding amid the ancient structures and surrounding forests.
- Meet with members of the Petén Birding Association, a local group dedicated to birding, environmental education, and conservation through ecotourism.
- Hike the trails at Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Refuge, a tropical moist forest sheltering some 300 avian species, including trogons, tanagers, flycatchers, and the Yellow-billed Cacique.
- Learn about a community-based conservation project in the village of Red Bank aimed at saving and creating habitat for the Scarlet Macaw.
- Enjoy up-close encounters with some of the country's native fauna, including a pair of Harpy Eagles, at the Belize Zoo.

There are still spots available, sign up today by clicking the banner below.

[Click Here for More Information and to Sign-Up](#)

Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 21st Volunteers and Leaders needed!

Each winter the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a chance to participate in the oldest and longest running community science project. Click [here](#) for information from National Audubon on the history of the CBC, and [here](#) for reports from 1900-present.

Each Audubon chapter counts a 15-mile diameter "count circle". The same circle is counted each year for consistency. The Ventura Audubon count circle is sub-divided into 8 sectors (see map to the right). Each sector has a leader who organizes teams within their sector, and the entire circle is organized by our CBC coordinator and compiler, Frank DeMartino. Frank will report the data after the count is completed to the National Audubon Society database.

If you would like to participate this year, either in the field or from your backyard, please do one of the following:

- Email Frank DeMartino at venturabirdcount@gmail.com
- Visit or call the [Wild Birds Unlimited](#) store in Ventura

Our December speaker program will feature Frank DeMartino who will give details on this years count

Other ways you can support the Ventura Audubon Society

Do you work for a company that uses Benevity?

If you volunteer for Ventura Audubon your volunteer hours go even further with matching funds

Check with your employer



Thank you to our supporters!

Financial contributions to our chapter allow us to continue our work protecting birds and their habitat.

Businesses, Organizations and Agencies

- The Nature Conservancy
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- National Audubon Society, Audubon in Action Grant
- California Coastal Commission Whale Tail Grant
- The Port of Hueneme
- The City of Port Hueneme
- Patagonia
- 1% for the planet
- Ventura Coast Brewing Company
- Topa Topa Brewing Company
- The Walter and Karla Goldschmidt Foundation



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