Venoco wants oil from Ellwood and Carpinteria bluffs

By Robert Stiler

A 15-story high oil-drilling rig on the Carpinteria bluffs?

People who have succeeded in keeping the community’s oceanfront natural find the concept grossly incompatible. But Venoco Inc. wants to erect a 175-foot rig onshore from which it would tap offshore oil deposits by means of slant drilling. At a June 13 hearing about 30 people testified, all but one opposing the project. Another 427 protesters signed a petition circulated by the Carpinteria Valley Association (CVA). The signed petitions were submitted at the hearing which drew an overflow audience at Carpinteria City Hall.

Public agencies and private contractors are preparing impact reports for expanding offshore oil production in Goleta as well as Carpinteria. Both projects are Venoco ventures. A hearing for the Goleta project came too late for a summary in this issue of Condor Call.

In Carpinteria, the protests were varied, but many centered on the 175-foot drilling rig which was repurposed from an oil well and large platform distributed by the CVA. The structure would tower over the bluff near Carpinteria City Hall and the harbor seal rookery.

“If this project is approved as proposed, it will set a horrible precedent for development of the rest of the Gaviota Coast,” according to the Environmental Defense Center.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Elton Gallegly (HR 4162) passed the House in June that gives United Water Conservation District 440 acres of the Los Padres National Forest. It now goes to the Senate for approval.

The land is located in Ventura County at the southeast corner of the forest close to Los Angeles and includes the Blue Point campground, a forest access road, a portion of a proposed wild and scenic river, and the Agua Blanca and Piru Creek Trailheads, an important access point for the Sespe.

In exchange, the forest service will receive 340 acres of land on the western slopes above Lake Pits that has been primarily leased for grazing.

In typical fashion of anti-environmental legislation being submitted by Congress, the bill does the opposite of what it purports to do. The news release issued by Gallegly states that the bill would eliminate private inholdings, consolidate lands owned by the Water District around Lake Pits and provide better public access to the area.

The possible development at Blue Point could adversely impact the adjacent Sespe Wilderness and compromise one of the wildest areas left in Southern California. Sierra Club and Forest Service volunteers have been restoring the hiking trails that enter the wilderness from the Blue Point area. They have proposed a number of possible alternatives to the Forest Service that would allow greater public access to the area while protecting the natural resources. These proposals have not been considered because of this legislation.

“The bill would be like having a huge oil platform in our own backyard,” the CVA said in its spring newsletter. “With no structure in Santa Barbara County taller, the drilling tower will dominate the skyline and define the character of Carpinteria.”

How much oil would be produced is uncertain, but many Carpinterians said turning toward clean fuel production is far more important than extending the use of petroleum, a polluting fuel that contributes to global warming.

“Ellwood Project”

Meanwhile, offshore Goleta at Ellwood, Venoco wants to drill 40 new wells from Platform Holly, a 40-year-old offshore structure in state waters, within three miles of shore. It wants state permission to expand its offshore lease into areas that the state took back from ARCO in the 1980s in a settlement of a highly contested lawsuit over ARCO’s extended plans.

The Venoco plan, too, has been VENOCO . . . see page 3

EAVESDROPS

“We’d lie there beneath the stars, mesmerized, wrapped in a special magic until the tale ended and the fire died.”

—Bruce Brownell in a tribute to Frank Van Schaick, who passed away June 20 at age 84. He was a teacher and an author who for many years wrote the “Nature Walks” column in the Santa Barbara News-Press and co-authored two books with Dick Smith.

“Stop this legislation in the Senate. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)"
LNG battle expanding to legislators

By Al Sanders

The Steering Committee of the Los Padres Chapter’s LNG Task Force have elected two new members who are also on the chapter’s Executive Committee. They are Jesse Kobayashi and Kesa Ryono, who have agreed to join Committee Chair Trevor Smith in taking on the Chapter’s mission to stop LNG in Ventura County. The committee is revising the web site and preparing to send some people to Sacramento to speak to our legislators. Club members are urged to help out the effort by calling 488-7988 or visiting the web site: www.VenturaLNGTaskForce.com.

Financial support is critical to our mission that we concentrate on educating the public with the facts on how harmful this project will be for the environment. LNG opponents won a small victory by the recent announcement that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agreed to extend the public comment period to Aug. 3, 2006 primarily because of its failure to reach out to the Hispanic community.

Mike Stubblefield, the Chapter’s air quality delegate, had already prepared comments and testified at the EPA hearing held in Oxnard, but welcomed the extension in order to expand on comments and issues. Stubblefield had previously commented that the project description failed to consider the air pollution from all the new emissions associated with the project. “I know why it’s being done this way,” said Stubblefield, “because if they included everything, as they should, they will be well over the federal criteria for significant impacts.”

The proposed Cabrillo Port project by BHP Billiton consists of a floating storage and re-gasification vessel connected to two new parallel subsea pipelines. The pipelines would make landfill adjacent to the Southern California Gas Company’s Ormond Beach metering station. The vessel would be moored about 14 miles off the Ventura coast and 18 miles from Anacapa Island. The equipment on the vessel includes eight submersed combustion vaporizers, four generator engines (one a backup), three spherical LNG storage tanks, one diesel fuel storage tank, and emergency and auxiliary support equipment.

The proposed permit and supporting documents are available at the Ventura County APCD, local libraries and on the EPA web site at: www.epa.gov/region09.

EAVESDROPS “If the whole world lived like us, we would need about five more planets.”

—Comment from the Sierra Club review of The High Price of Materialism, by Tim Kasser, which details the relationship between wealth and happiness.

The Fossil Free By ’33 campaign of the Community Environmental Council brought the public up to speed during a conference in July on how to get better at utilizing all kinds of energy. Focusing on the theory that oil supplies will soon be used up, and when quickly decline, the CEC hoped to gather experts from the tri-counties’ cities and services and San Luis Obispo leaders were absent.

Nevertheless, the CEC conference focused on the community’s needs, the most important being conservation and energy efficiency. Others include biofuels, hybrid cars, wind, solar and ocean power.

Some practical solutions were cited, such as the country’s new “green building,” upgrading county air conditioning and lighting. Santa Barbara City is considering an agreement with a company that would build a large solar system on top of a maintenance building.

Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance is also working with cities and services on conservation projects. To keep apprised of the efforts, log on to: www.communityenvironmental.org.

Wind farm sparks ideas

A plan to put up to 80 wind turbines along Mission Canyon and Van Nostrand ridges near Lompoc was unveiled in July to a packed house of interested citizens.

The plan, a first for Santa Barbara County, could produce enough energy for all the power needs of the North County, but people worried about the turbines killing birds, night lights required by Federal Aviation Administration, grading on the ridges and the towers blighting the mountain views.

Next up is preparing an environmental impact report, and anyone who wants to comment on what issues it should address may contact county Energy Division.

The Lompoc Wind Energy Project details are on the county’s website, which also contains photos of the area and what a similar project (in Spain) looks like: www.countyofsb.org/energy.
Earth Alert’s “Heroes of the Coast” series of interviews with California’s major coastal activism has begun showing on the Adriatica Public Access Channel 25 in Oxnard-Port Hueneme at 6 p.m. on Sundays.

The series is a set of half-hour interviews by Earth Alert Founder and Director Janet Bridges of coastal activists who have played major roles in events. Those included the 1972 passage of Prop 20, which created the Coastal Conservancy, 1976-88 marine sanctuary and California Coastal Act.

“This is a labor of love, honoring the contributions of the coastal activists to California,” said Bridges. “Without their work, which most people take for granted, a great deal more of the California coastline would look like lower Malibu or Malibu del Rey. In a year and a half, we’ve been able to interview 25 of these valuable, and many are in the works,” Bridges said.

Since “we’ve begun them, Ellen Stern Harris—considered by many as the ‘mother of the Coastal Act’—has died of cancer. I knew Ellen would, all along, have wanted to honor her while she was still with us … that’s why I started this project,” she said.

Bridges believes that the work of environmentalists will join the contributions to American history made by patriots, abolitionists, suffragettes, Freedom Fighters and feminists.

“These movements are made up of people whose individual contributions are rarely known,” she said. “This series begins to create a video record of some of California’s most significant coastal activists.”

Earth Alert is an Earth Award winning organization based in Oxnard; for more information, visit its website: www.sanetwater.org.

Upcoming schedule for the Heroes series:

Aug. 6—Dan Pearson, Ormond Beach wildlife
Aug. 13—Susan Jordan, LNG
Aug. 20—Pedro Nova on current issues, especially oil
Aug. 28—Peter Douglas, Part 1 in a series on history of the Coastal Commission
Sept. 4—Peter Douglas, Part 2 in a series on history of the Coastal Commission
Sept. 11—Don May, LNG
Sept. 18—Al Sanders on Roma Armbrust & Cynthia Leake
Sept. 25—Bob Sollen on the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill

EASEDROPS

“Those plein air painting journeys into Santa Barbara’s back country with Ray Strong have been some of the most intrusive users over these watercraft destroy the peace and tranquility that are part of the experience,” Pearson said.

“Jet skis have been choosing the interests of the incompatibility of motorized watercraft,” Pearson said. “The noise and pollution from these watercraft destroy the peace and tranquility that are part of the experience people are seeking. But more important is the effect on marine and avian wildlife that are terrorized by these machines,” Pearson said.

Sundors noted that when California Department of Boating and Waterways’ Director Raynor Tsuneyoshi spoke in support of jet skis he was choosing the interests of the most intrusive users over non-motorized users.

“Jet skis are so dangerous and noisy that they have no business in any part of the Sanctuary. The very term ‘Sanctuary’ is the antithesis of the proposed uses. Therefore, jet skis should be prohibited,” Sanders said.

Vehicle Routing Act representative Paul Jenkins added that, “Jet skis are also a great danger to surfers and swimmers because they can’t always see the swimmers and can run over people in the water,” he said.

Sanders and Pearson were present at the last few meetings. Others include:

—Renewed the Santa Barbara office lease at $375 per month, with the Santa Barbara Group picking up $100 of that.

—Requested the services of the Sierra Club conflict resolution committee to address conflicts within the ExCom.

—Agreed to oppose a Forest Service land swap that may affect access into the Santa Barbara backcountry. See story on page 1.

—Donated $100 to the Lynnell Hanks—Lovelace Memorial Scholarship Fund at Buena High School. A life-long champion of environmental causes, Lynnell passed away on July 6. She was the wife of Condor Call editor John Hankins.

—Approved fund appeals to members for continuing opposition to LNG proposal off Ventura County and the urbanization of the Gaviota Coast at Naples in Santa Barbara County. Stories on these are on pages 1 & 2.

Also, Santa Barbara Group Chair Eidon Easton and Chapter employee Erin Zellor attended the Sierra Club’s fund raising training.

—the chapter is now accepting old cell phones for recycling in addition to printing ink cartridges, which earn money for us. Either may be dropped off or sent to the Chapter’s office (address in Page 2) or given to Erin at the Easton & Zellor SBG meetings.

—Supported the Sepp Group’s opposition to an amendment allowing the Camarillo development Port Hueneme, as well as the creation of an Oxnard Harbor District overlay area and annexation of the City of Oxnard from any land within that SPA.
### Arroyo Hondo Preserve open

The Arroyo Hondo Preserve on the Gaviota Coast is open for free public hiking and picnicking on the first and third weekends of each month.

### August
- **8**
  - **San Jose—Lompoc Outing:** HIKE ALONG CONSERVATION. Start the hike with a few miles in our local area. We’ll cross the Ventura River and enjoy a hike of 4.5 miles. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. SUPPLIES:
    - **4/26**
      - **BEACH WALK—CARPINTERIA:** Start the week off with a few miles in our local area. We’ll walk from State Beach to Carpinteria and back. Meet at 9am at the Bank of America parking lot at缺乏下午地址
    - **14**
      - **MENDOCINO COAST:** Start the week off with a few miles in our local area. We’ll walk from State Beach to Carpinteria and back. Meet at 9am at the Bank of America parking lot at缺乏下午地址
    - **21**
      - **BEACH WALK—CARPINTERIA:** Start the week off with a few miles in our local area. We’ll walk from State Beach to Carpinteria and back. Meet at 9am at the Bank of America parking lot at缺乏下午地址
    - **28**
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### September
- **1**
  - **BEACH WALK—CARPINTERIA:** Start the week off with a few miles in our local area. We’ll walk from State Beach to Carpinteria and back. Meet at 9am at the Bank of America parking lot at缺乏下午地址

### Outing Notes

- **$4 S/H  FREE WITH CD**
- **30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**
- **OUTING SCHEDULE**

### Conditions

A number of constraints and restrictions on Los Padres National Forest are closely monitored to ensure that both land use and the natural and cultural heritage of the area are protected. This is a great idea to check conditions with ranger stations. Numbers to call in the following order (805) 658-5100:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Los Padres National Forest Districts</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Padres</td>
<td>(805) 658-5100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>(805) 658-5100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura</td>
<td>(805) 658-5100</td>
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### Forest Notes

For updated information, news releases, maps, and other public service announcements, visit the Los Padres National Forest website:

www.fs.fed.us/lospadres

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<tr>
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### Ongoing Outings

**Every Monday morning**

- **Jan Elizabeth Buchwater and Patricia Pumphrey**
  - Meet every Monday morning at 8:30 a.m. for moderate hikes and walks, and the group sometimes goes for coffee. CALL 660-0230 or 674-4697.

**Every Wednesday**

- **Urbane Evening Hike**
  - Weekly urban hike in Ventura Merritt Avenue, at 6 p.m. for a 4-mile hike to the top of Father Serra’s hills with views of ocean and the Channel Islands, then down the hill to the ocean and end of trail. Bring water, backpack, and a light snack. Meet at the Merritt Avenue parking lot.

**Every Thursday**

- **El Capitan—Ventura**
  - Easy 2-mile hike to the top of El Capitan with panoramic ocean views. Meet at the parking lot behind the El Capitan Center for Education and Exploration. Bring water and bug spray.

**Every Saturday**

- **Social Hike**
  - An easy to moderate 4.5 mile hike in Santa Barbara front country, back roads. Meet at 6:15 p.m. at the Old Mission. Bring a flashlight. Optional snack/potluck or after-tour. CALL 966-0717.

**Every Sunday**

- **Corrino Group**
  - Leading a special series of Sunday Afternoon Hikes approximately every three weeks, this group is geared to the interests of individuals or families who wish to take a 2-3 hour walk in the outdoors with frequent stops to examine or study wildlife and the ecology. Exercise is of secondary concern. The hikes are not intended to be strenuous, but may entail some walking of hills or walks on roads. No pets or radios. TMC MOUNTAIN HIKES.

**Monthly Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archaeology</th>
<th>State, local, and Native American history</th>
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### Outing Schedule

Los Padres Chapter • Sierra Club
http://www.sierrapadresclub.org

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### About the National Forest Service

The National Forest Service is a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture. The agency was established in 1891 and is responsible for managing 150 million acres of land in the United States. The agency’s mission is to conserve and enhance the nation’s forest resources and values.

### EVADEPORS

“Cash is dead. Is there another? Charge every person crossing illegally the $5 Adventure Pass Fee. Eleven minutes fifty times much and the National Forest Service is back in business. Voila!”

—Robert Heffernan of Lompoc.
Dick Smith is true ‘wilderness spirit’

The Wildling Art Museum is honoring the memory of Dick Smith with its annual Wilderness Spirit Award, along with an exhibit of his photographs, sketches and hand-made items.

Often called the “conscience of Santa Barbara County,” Smith was a reporter, photographer, naturalist and conservationist who loved the back country wilderness, a large portion of which is named after him. "Dick Smith and his Backcountry Wilderness" runs from September 17 through January 7 at the Wildling Museum in Santa Barbara. The exhibit is sponsored by the Sierra Club.

Smith died in 1977 at the age of 56, his friends and area politicians joined forces to get legislation passed commemorating Smith’s innumerable contributions to Santa Barbara County.

In 1982, the 60,000-acre Dick Smith Wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest was dedicated in his memory, also supported by the Sierra Club. As a journalist for the Santa Barbara News-Press for 29 years, he educated readers about the wonders of nature and wilderness through his photographs and articles. He especially captured the national movement in 1969 with his iconic photograph of a corral being covered in oil off the Santa Barbara coast.

A gifted artist as well as a journalist, many of Smith’s outstanding photographs featuring sweeping vistas of the backcountry, the outdoors, and portraits of plants and animals will be on view.

The exhibit will also highlight Smith’s work with his hands and tooled leather, built furniture, carved wood and many other works of art. Known for his generosity, Smith gave his handmade artworks to friends and gifted several examples of his sculptures and household objects are featured in the exhibit.

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EPA may tackle toxic Halaco

By Al Sanders

Los Padres Chapter members by now are used to the broken promises and failures to act that have characterized the ongoing battles to get a clean up of wetlands that were converted to the Waste Management Unit (fancy name for 'slag pile') at Halanco Engineering's Oxnard facility.

So it is understandable that a little concern is in order before anyone falls in love with recent efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to move forward on a cleanup plan.

"We have all been lead down this path many times before," said Port Hueneme resident and Chapter Executive Committee member Kesa Ryono. "But if they follow through, it’s worth a look."

River 'banks' 

Long-term restoration of riparian habitat for the Santa Clara River Parkway Project began earlier this year thanks to a $208,000 grant awarded by the Santa Clara River Trustee Council.

The Santa Clara River is the last natural river in the area and the longest free-flowing river in Southern California. However, it faces major threats from development, notably the massive Newhall Ranch project, the first phase of which is eyed along Highway 126 west of Interstate 5.

In response, Friends of the Santa Clara River, Center for Biological Diversity and Wishywo Foundation filed a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers alleging it has failed to address cumulative impacts of development.

To get involved and/or keep up with events, contact the Friends of the Santa Clara River, call Ron Bottoff at 498-4323 or log on to: www.fcsrc.org.

Suit aims at lead bullet ban

A coalition of conservation and health organizations announced in July that they will use the California Fish and Game Commission for continuing to allow use of toxic lead ammunition.

Experts say lead bullets are poisons rare California condors, which feed on contaminated carcases, causes left behind by hunters, who also poison themselves by eating shot or bullet fragments embedded in meat.

The Center for Biological Di-

WE'RE GLOBAL! Condos Call on the web at:

www.lospadres.sierraclub.org
santabarbaratrailguide.com


guinity (CBD), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), and the Wishywo Foun-
dation, along with representatives from the hunting community served a 60-day notice of intent to sue under the federal Endangered Species Act.

"Lead poisoning from ammuni-
tion is the single greatest obstacle to the recovery of wild California con-
dors," said Jeff Miller with the CBD. "California put the condor on the state quarter as a symbol of our natural heritage, but if we want condors to survive, we must stop poisoning their food supply."

The intent to file suit follows failure by an Assembly committee to pass local Assemblymember Pedro Nava's bill (AB 2123) that would not only limit use of lead bullets, but also provide non-lead substitutes at no cost.

Information and comments on the proposed rule may be sent by Aug. 27 to the Field Supervisor (Attn: WSP-44) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1655 Remond Road, Arcata, CA 95521 or to Lady: fws.wsp/**arcata**.

Help stop Alaska oil lease

On September 27, the Bush administration could auction off the first oil and gas leases to oil compa-
yes in the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area of the Western Arctic.

The decision to open up the area to leasing eliminates long-established wildlife and environmental protec-
tions first put in place by Reagan Administration Interior Secretary James Watt. It is home to an esti-

The habitat and health of snowy plovers and other endangered beach birds are discussed by (from left) Reed Smith and Linda Kraus and others at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo recently. (Photo by Al Sanders)

By Al Sanders

Snowy plovers have derided people and eggs. Photo by Al Sanders

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Help stop Alaska oil lease

On September 27, the Bush administration could auction off the first oil and gas leases to oil compa-
yes in the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area of the Western Arctic.

The decision to open up the area to leasing eliminates long-established wildlife and environmental protec-
tions first put in place by Reagan Administration Interior Secretary James Watt. It is home to an esti-
Opposition increasing over Island hunting

By Carolyn Greene

Island chick on webcam

It’s been since 1949 that a bald eagle was hatched on the Channel Islands where the population was decimated because of DDT pollution. But in April the first chick since then was born on a webcam installed by Channel Islands Live, a new project that uses technology to let the public see what’s happening on the islands. Underwater cams are also used. Check it out for yourself at http://ichl.vcoe.org.

Hollywood Beach

Agencies insensitive to beach

The population of some endangered birds at Hollywood Beach has crashed, probably because government agencies are not treating it as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHAn)

One of the conditions applied by the California Coastal Commission to Ventura County for approval of the Boating Instruction and Safety Center project in the Channel Islands Harbor was that the beach would be considered sensitive as defined by the Coastal Act.

As of two years ago, Hollywood Beach seemed to be on its way to re-establishing habitat for California least terns and Western snow plovers. Close to 50 least tern nests and seven plover nests were successful in that year. However, the ESHA designation has not been followed by support from action of responsible agencies of both species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave permits to the Army Corps of Engineers allowing “take” of both least terns and plovers in 2005. The Corps then dredged the area. The results were predictable—no terns have nested at Hollywood since the habitat was altered and plovers tried to nest this year unsuccessfully.

Sussex Group Executive Committee member Trevor Smith believes that the dredging work by the Corps is being compounded by Ventura County’s beach grooming and other management activities.

“The County keeps grooming the area where both terns and plovers are trying to nest. They place trash cans right in the heart of the ESHA area and drive every-where they want within the area that should be protected,” said Smith.

Terms . . .

Cont’d from back page

1990 by organizing volunteers to erect signs and fencing to watch over nest sites to deter tres-passers. The OWP was responsible for getting hundreds of citations written for off road vehicle violations and for dumping and littering.

We also reported violations of the Baldwin Company that lead to one of the first cease and desist orders ever issued by the California Coastal Commission and which lead to a restoration order by the Department of Fish and Game. We reported violations of 160 stream alteration regulations that forced the Ventura County Flood Control District to cease draining the Ormond Lagoon. We reported violations by Halaco Engineering that became part of the litigation that resulted in closure of the plant.

Last terms had not reached success-fully at Ormond for at least 25 years prior to our Chapter’s involvement.

We are now in our 17th year of leadership in protecting least terns, snow plovers and all other area wildlife.

But we did help Ventura Audubon, Surfers, Environmen-tal Coalition, Ormond Beach Observers, Point Mugu Wildlife and others helped acquire and construct miles of fencing.

Flushed drugs still harmful

In the past, the public was ad-vis ed to flush unwanted medicines down the toilet as a poison preven-tion measure.

But recent studies indicate that the pharmaceuticals found in waste-water may have an adverse effect on the environment. Sewage treat-ment facilities are not designed to remove or destroy the chemicals found in many drugs, which conse-quently end up in surface water.

The best way to dispose of unwanted medicines is to take them by the moments that take our breath away.

—George Carlin

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RETURN TO TOP
How life turned for beach terns

By Al Sanders

After two consecutive years of large scale site abandonment, endangered California least terns have returned to nest successfully at Ormond Beach this summer. The comeback apparently confirms a theory that the impacts created by motorized paragliders were the determining factors that had previously decimated the bird’s population.

Volunteers have located 57 nests and many have already produced chicks.

The one observable factor that has occurred at the beach, thanks to many citizens and the Oxnard City Council, is the forced removal of motorized paragliders that had been harassing Ormond wildlife for over two years.

These unregulated personal aircraft started appearing in large numbers early in 1994. It was immediately apparent to Ormond volunteers and wildlife officials that the paragliders were harming and harassing both least terns and snowy plovers in violation of the Endangered Species Act and that they were harming most other avian species as well.

Paragliders are restricted to flying below 500 feet and have the capability of flying just a few feet above the ground at very slow air speeds. Birds react to the aircraft as if it were a large predator. With least terns this would mean that the whole colony would fly towards the aircraft and swoop or “dive-bomb” the aircraft to try to scare it away.

This tactic often works with sea gulls, but is inadequate to deal with man and machines. Terns would often and repeatedly be off their nests for a half hour at a time, making the nests vulnerable to other predators but, more importantly, subjecting the eggs to exposure, rendering them infertile.

Witnesses on several occasions photographed and videotaped the paragliders hovering over the nest sites with least terns flying around them in panic.

Official site monitors started to find abandoned eggs and even dead chicks and adult terns. During 2004 and 2005 most of the nest sites were abandoned. After two years of constant harassment it appeared that the Ormond least tern colony was on the verge of site abandonment and local extinction.

Many attempts were made by the Los Padres Chapter, Ormond Beach Observers, Earth Alert, the Beacon Foundation and others to persuade the pilots to fly elsewhere. Many responded by supporting the petition to delist snowy plovers and least terns. They refused to stop flying over the nest sites, even insisting on doing their take-offs near snowy plover nests.

Eventually the Chapter changed its efforts to try to persuade responsible agencies to do something to stop the flights over nesting areas. We were unsuccessful in getting enforcement of ESA and other laws, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Chris Delith assisted in finding an applicable municipal code that was usable by the City of Oxnard. Earth Alert Director, Janet Bridgers, devised a campaign to educate Oxnard City Council members about the paraglider problem. In October 2005 the Council unanimously passed an ordinance to prohibit take offs of motorized aircraft from within city limits with the exception of Oxnard airport. Delith joined with our chapter and many others to support the new ordinance.

Meanwhile, citizens communicated with Camarillo Airport, which leases space to ultralight aircraft flyers. The goal was to stop overflights by ultralights as well as the paragliders.

The results of stopping these aircraft have been profound. Least terns and snowy plovers benefited immediately.

But just as important is the increase of many species with lesser levels of protection. Upwards of 200 elegant terns are now roosting at Ormond. Black skimmers, night herons and great blue herons are again a constant presence. Water foul of many varieties are back in numbers.

“It is simply amazing to see how wildlife over the whole of the Ormond area has responded to the removal of the paragliders,” said Bridgers, who also serves as a volunteer on the Ormond Wildlife Patrol (OWP).

“There is absolutely nothing as joyous as the calls of least terns in the spring.”

For many volunteers the joy of this year’s success is tempered with the frustration of how difficult it was to get anything done. “Least terns are an endangered species. It shouldn’t have been this hard and taken this long to stop something so wrong,” said Bridgers.

Our Chapter has lead efforts to protect least terns and snowy plovers on Ormond Beach since 1992, and continues to educate Oxnard City Council members about the paraglider problem. We are now actively working with the Los Padres Chapter, Oxnard City Council members, and others to find Permanent solutions to this growing problem.

For the most enthusiastic.