

The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

June, 2016

FIELD TRIP

Flammulated Owl Box Monitoring in the Greenhorns



Come join us for some fun in the mountains around the Kern River Valley Saturday June 25th.

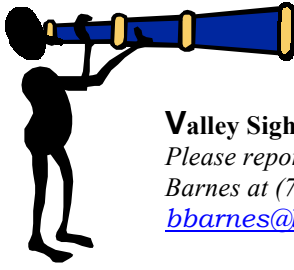
Flammulated Owls are small, nocturnal, neotropical migrants that vocalize quietly and are rarely seen. Natural cavities used by Flammulated owls are created by members of the woodpecker family, primarily in snags. These snags are not as common in thinned areas, as they are removed for safety or get knocked over by equipment. Squirrels and other avian cavity nesters compete for nest cavities, and as Flammulated Owls come late to the breeding grounds, these competitors may limit nest site availability. We aim to increase nesting options for owls which will potentially increase territory quality. Also putting up boxes, even if they don't always get used, may buffer negative impacts of logging/thinning. Successful introductions of nest boxes to managed stands would remove dependency on primary cavity nesters and lessen the potential impact of snag loss from logging projects.

Kerncrest Audubon Society and other private donors contributed to the building materials for Flammulated Owl Nest boxes, and volunteers helped build and hang the boxes. We now have 76 nest boxes up in the mountains around the Kern River Valley (Breckenridge and the Greenhorns). We aim to check them once during the peak of the breeding season (last week of June/first week of July).

Come for the day, or plan to camp for the night. If we don't see any owls, we may hear some.

Indian Wells Valley attendees will be meeting at the Inyokern Chevron station at 7am. Kern River Valley folks will meet at the Southern Sierra Research Station at 9am.

To arrange a different meeting place or time, or for more information contact Jenna Stanek at jestanek.ssrs@gmail.com or Bob Parker at 760-446-2001. In any case, please let one of them know if you plan to attend.



Valley Sightings – Late April/May 2016
Please report unusual sightings to Bob Barnes at (760)382-1260, or by email at bbarnes@lightspeed.net.

KEY: FOS = First of Spring; CC = Cerro Coso Community College, CLP = City of Ridgecrest water treatment plant ponds at China Lake NAWS, GC = Chima Lake Golf Course, IWV = Indian Wells Valley watershed; SSDC IBA = Southern Sierra Desert Canyons Important Bird Area

REPORTS:

A Brant at CLP May 14 (SLS continued through at least June 1 (SK). Also in the interim (BB, TB, CM, & AMS).

Two **Blue-winged Teal** at CLP May 15 (SLS).

A female **Red-breasted Merganser** at the CLP May 25 (SLS) continued through at least June 1 (SK). Also May 28 (AMS).

California Quail have seemingly increased in Ridgecrest residential neighborhoods with higher numbers noted this year vs. past years (BB, LT)

A **Brown Pelican** at CLP on May 27 (BB) continued at least through June 1 (SK). Also in the interim (SLS, AMS, CM).

A **Green Heron** at GC May 8 (SLS) and at CLP on May 27 (BB).

Fifteen **Semipalmated Plovers** together at CLP on Apr 28 (BB).

A **Willet** at the CLP ponds on May 1 (bird-a-thon) and May 6 & 7 (SLS).

Six adult, black-hooded/red-billed **Franklin's Gulls** at the CLP on Apr 30 (BB) and May 8 (SLS); one June 1 (SK).

Thirty-three **Bonaparte's Gulls** at CLP on June 1 (SK) was the high count report.

Up to four **White-winged Doves** at a NW Ridgecrest neighborhood throughout May (BB, EC).

A **White-winged Dove** at the GC periodically May 7-23 (SLS).

Six **Vaux's Swifts** at CLP on May 6 & five there May 7 (SLS), one over the Middlemiss yard north of Inyokern on May 7 (SLS).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at a NW Ridgecrest neighborhood June 1 (BB, EC).

An **Eastern Kingbird** at the GC May 15 (SLS, then BB, AMS, TB, CM) & 16 (SLS) was species #211 for that location.

A **Hairy Woodpecker** at SSDC IBA's Cow Heaven Canyon May 21 (LSu).

Loggerhead Shrike and **Le Conte's Thrasher** nesting finally successful at a yard SW of Inyokern (LK).

Two **Pinyon Jays** at SSDC IBA's Cow Heaven Canyon May 21 (LSu).

A **Bank Swallow** at CLP on May 25 (SLS).

Red-breasted Nuthatch in Ridgecrest through at least Apr 29 (BB).

A **Gray Catbird** at the Middlemiss yard north of

Inyokern May 6-8 (TM, then SLS, BB, KER, AMS).

A **Black-and-white Warbler** at the Middlemiss yard north of Inyokern May 6-8 (SLS, TM; then BB)

Two **Hermit Warblers** at CC May 13 (TE, HE, MS).

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** migrated through an east side Ridgecrest yard for the third week in a row May 2 (LSu, SSu).

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** at the Middlemiss yard north of Inyokern May 6-7 (SLS; then BB, KER, AMS), and May 9 (TM).

A **Summer Tanager** at the GC on May 14 (SLS) & 15 (BB, AMS, SLS, TB, CM) was species #210 for that location and IWV species #323 for sls..

A **Bobolink** at CLP May 28 (SLS, AMS).

A **Scott's Oriole** at SSDC IBA's Cow Heaven Canyon on May 21 (LSu).

Twenty-six **Red Crossbills** together in a NW Ridgecrest neighborhood May 2; individuals still present through May 30 (BB, EC).

Two **Red Crossbills** at the cemetery on May 28 (SLS, AMS).

A **Pine Siskin** at the cemetery May 29 was the latest reported (JF, CG, ML, DM, ASe, DVP).

More common spring migrants passed through IWV yards and publicly accessible birding hotspots in May adding to the wonderfun (wonderful fun!) of spring migration for local observers including **Western Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Gray Flycatcher, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole** (BB, BBu, EC, LK, TM, AMS, SLS, LSu, SSu, LT). Spring migration! What a treat! Yippee!

Thanks to the following for reporting: Bob Barnes (BB), Tom Benson (TB), Brenda Burnett (BBu), Encar Card (EC), Tom Edell (TE), Herb Elliot (HE), Jon Feenstra (JF), Carlos Gonzalez (CG), Louise Knecht (LK), Sandy Koonce (SK), Michael Lester (ML), Curtis Marantz (CM), Dan Maxwell (DM), Terri Middlemiss (TM), Adam Searcy (ASe), Alison Sheehy (AMS), Maggie Smith (MS), Susan Steele (SLS), Lee Sutton (LSu), Shirley Sutton (SSu), Lynne Thompson (LT), David Vander Pluym (DVP).

JUNE BIRDING: Vagrants and a few northbound spring migrants pass through the IWV into mid-June. First of "fall" southbound migrants may show-up, too, toward the end of the June (e.g. shorebirds such as Wilson's Phalarope, Rufous Hummingbird). Fall migration will be here sooner than you might think; starting late June and extending into November. Another Yippee!

Happy, productive, and rewarding June, July, and August birding; especially fall migration!

***And from the Editor: Happy Summer!
See you in September.***