

The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

March, 2016

MARCH CALENDAR

Wed	Mar 16	6 pm	Board Meeting: Burnetts'
Thu	Mar 17	7 pm	General Meeting Program: Alison Sheehey
Sat	Mar 19	8 am	Field Trip Inyokern 76 Station
Sat	Mar 19	1 pm	Lloyd Brubaker Life Celebration

GENERAL MEETING

The wonderful World of Wildflowers with Alison Sheehey

From valleys, to mountains, to deserts... wildflowers are all around us in spring through summer and even into fall. While the El Nino has been a bit disappointing, the wildflowers are putting on shows from Death Valley to the coast. Nature Ali will help show where and when to find the best displays, how to identify wildflowers to family group, and how the bloom affects the birds that reside locally in winter and summer. Join her at the Kerncrest Audubon Society meeting, March 17, 2016, 7 p.m. at the Maturango Museum, 100 E Las Flores Ave, Ridgecrest, CA 93555.

Ali Sheehey aka Nature Ali is a Master Naturalist with a love of all things Kern County. Ali is an avid birder and photographer. She has traveled to all 50-states visiting 46 National Parks in the process. Conservation is an important part of her life. She is the Programs Director for Sequoia ForestKeeper a non-profit organization that promotes non-consumptive uses of Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument. Ali has a degree in Anthropology and has extensive course work in biology and geology. She is a native New Yorker with one son and two granddaughters.

FIELD TRIP Kern River Valley

This month's field trip will be on Saturday, March 19th. People attending from Ridgecrest or the Indian Wells Valley area will depart from the Inyokern 76 station at 8 AM.

The itinerary is evolving, so to arrange other meeting times or places please call Bob Parker at 760-446-2001 before the day of the trip.

There is exciting news impacting this trip: There is an opportunity for the Kern River Valley Heritage Foundation to purchase the 189 acres immediately south of the Bob Powers Gateway Preserve in the town of Lake Isabella. This area and the Audubon California Kern River Preserve were where we conducted pond enhancement projects with grant funding received in 2014. You may recall that donations were solicited from Kerncrest AS members to show grass roots support for the new acquisition in pursuit of grant funding from several agencies.

One of those agencies has turned out to be Audubon California, and it is looking likely we will receive \$100,000 from them, contingent upon its being leveraged with \$500,000 from the California River Parkways grant program and other grants, to reach the total selling price of around \$900,000.

At least one representative of Audubon California, Desiree Loggins, Chapter Network Manager for our area, will attend. This will be a great opportunity for all to meet her!

So back to the field trip:

As originally planned, we will start at the Tilley Creek campground, likely meeting other field trippers from the local area around 9:30 AM and birding there until we run out of birds or think it's time to meet others at the Bob Powers Gateway Reserve. We will then go on to the reserve, check out the pond restoration, and proceed to the hot springs area, where we have permission to enter and bird the now-private property.

Somewhere along the way, we'll stop and picnic. Bring a lunch, and maybe a folding chair for the picnic. If you don't have a weather forecast, call Bob Parker for advice on what to wear.

We'll scan the lake itself on the way toward home. Some may also be interested in checking out the progress of the new pond at Sprague Ranch.

Bob Barnes will lead us, at least until groups split up, if they do.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS MAY CHANGE. We hope you are flexible. We're not sure at what time Desiree will arrive, so may shuffle things a bit.



Valley Sightings – February 2016

Please report unusual sightings to Bob Barnes at (760)382-1260, or by email at bbarnes@lightspeed.net.

Bob Steele and Susan Steele are now getting ready for their April-September Pacific Crest Trail hiking/walking adventure. Best wishes to them both on what promises to be a amazing journey from the Mexican border to the Canadian border. Wow!

During Bob and Susan's absence, please get your reports to Bob Barnes (Email: bbarnes@lightspeed.net; Phone: 760-382-1260; submit reports to eBird for Bob to glean);

REPORTS:

Snow Geese totaling 1925 individuals were counted in 19 separate flights ranging in numbers of 2 to 330, mostly from the Ridgecrest Watchable Wildlife Park ponds to grazing on desert grass (LSu, SSu).

Two **Ross's Geese** at the China Lake pond Feb 21 were the last wintering individuals reported to date (AS).

Two hundred **American White Pelicans** over Freeman Junction Feb 21 (BBu); eighty flew over Faller School Junior Audubon field trip participants at Cerro Coso College on Feb 23.

A **Merlin** at an east side Ridgecrest yard on 2/20 (LSu, SSu).

A **Vermilion Flycatcher** continued at the China Lake Golf Course on Feb 11 (MD) and Feb 19 (SLS); and on base nearby Feb 21 (AS).

Eighty **Pinyon Jays** at Cow Heaven Canyon Feb 19 (DG); ten at Freeman Canyon Feb 20 (SLS).

A First of Spring (FOS) **Tree Swallow** at China Lake Golf Course Feb 19 (SLS).

Winter visiting **Red-breasted Nuthatches** continued in Ridgecrest through Feb (BBa, LSu, SSu).

A **Lincoln's Sparrow** at a NW Ridgecrest backyard throughout Feb (BBu).

A **White-throated Sparrow** at a NW Ridgecrest yard last reported for Feb 1 (BBu).

A **Red Crossbill** at China Lake Golf Course Feb 22 (SLS).

Thanks to the following for reporting: Bob Barnes (BBa), Brenda Burnett (BBu), Michael Dunn (MD), Dave Goodward (DG), Alison Sheehy (AS), Susan Steele (SLS), Lee Sutton (LSu), Shirley Sutton (SSu).

MARCH ANTICIPATED FIRST OF SPRING (FOS) ARRIVALS:

Spring migration is a wonderful occurrence in the Indian Wells Valley each year. Do report FOS arrivals (and lingering wintering birds as well). Anticipated FOS 2016 arrivals during March include **shorebird species** throughout the month, **Western Kingbird** (mid to late March), **Cassin's Vireo** and **Warbling Vireo** (rare late March), **swallows** (Violet-green, Barn, Cliff), **Orange-crowned Warbler**, **Common Yellowthroat**, and **Brewer's Sparrow** (late March), **Hooded Oriole** and **Bullock's Oriole** (mid to late March), **Scott's Oriole**, plus **Lawrence's Goldfinch** (mid to late March). Spring migration! Yippee!

Happy, productive, and rewarding March spring birding!

OWENS LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL

REMINDER: Registration is now open for the Owens Lake Bird Fest. For information, visit www.friendsoftheinyo.org, where you can find complete information on the festival, and register. The festival is April 22, 23, and 24, mostly in Lone Pine and at the lake.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE for LLOYD BRUBAKER

Most of you know our beloved Board Member and founding Christmas Bird Count participant passed last month. A celebration of his life will be held at the Maturango Museum on Saturday, March 19, starting at 1 PM.

Bring any photographs and stories you have of and about him, and help celebrate his life and all he stood for.

Call his daughter, Sherry, at 760-375-7245 for further information.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

All current elected officers of Kerncrest Audubon Society have agreed to run again, if no one steps forward to relieve them.

Do let any board member know if you are interested in serving! Or be sure to attend this month's general meeting to step forward.

The election will be at our annual meeting in May.