

# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

April 2010

## **APRIL CALENDAR**

Sat	Apr 10	9am	Beginning Birding, Library
Tue	Apr 13	6pm	Board Meeting, Brubakers
Sat	Apr 17	9am	Beginning Birding, Library
Sun	Apr 24	??	BIRDATHON
Sat	May 1	all day	Spring Nature Festival Audubon Kern River Preserve

## **BIRDATHON**

The field trip for April will be, as usual, the Kerncrest Audubon Society annual fundraiser the Birdathon.

For information on this event, and for a pledge sheet, please see page 3.

## **SPRING NATURE FESTIVAL**

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival exhibits and activities will take place on Saturday, May 1st. Field trips will be conducted from Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

On Saturday, there will be many events at Audubon California's Kern River Preserve, 18747 Highway 178, Weldon, including bird walks led by Kerncrest Audubon Society volunteers, bird banding by the Southern Sierra Research Station, and information booths and exhibits located in the large, shaded front yard of Preserve Headquarters.

For the complete schedule visit <http://kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm>. Here you will find trip descriptions and schedules, workshop schedules, and much more information.

To register for the ice cream social and program, or to sig up for field trips, email [krfriends@audubon.org](mailto:krfriends@audubon.org).

## **BIRD WATCHING 101 – BASIC BIRDING**

The Kerncrest Audubon Society, in cooperation with the Maturango Museum and the Ridgecrest Library, is conducting a bird watching class for beginning birders. This is an introduction to the hobby of watching birds. Each session will involve a discussion of one or more topics followed by a short bird walk. Topics to be discussed include “Local Birds of the Season”, “How to See a Bird”, “How to Identify that Bird”, “Binoculars and Scopes”, “Which Bird Book is for Me”, “Where the Birds

Are”, “How to Attract Birds to my Yard”, “Do You Hear that Robin?”, and others topics of interest to the group.

Two sessions have been held, the first with a walk around Jackson Park and the museum garden, the second with a trip to the old sewer ponds and cemetery. Saturday, April 10 will be a trip to Cerro Coso college. Each session will be independent of the others so participants don't have to commit to attending all the sessions. All sessions begin at 9am at the Kern County Library on Las Flores.

Tell your friends and neighbors! Bring your children and grandchildren! These sessions are free. Those interested, regardless of age, are welcome. For more information contact Dan Burnett at 760-375-8634.

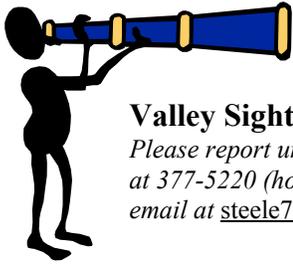
## **CONSERVATION: REPORT FROM THE BOARD**

Surely all are aware of the solar power generating facility proposed to be installed on approximately 4,000 acres both north and south of Brown Road, just west of where South China Lake Boulevard intersects highway 395. In addition to the Desert Tortoise Protective Council, the Kerncrest Audubon Society has filed a petition to intervene in this process. This action will give us more leverage than individual citizens in the permitting and review process, and will put us on early distribution for documents. The text of our reason for intervention on this petition reads:

"Kerncrest Audubon Society is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society, representing members in east Kern County. We are concerned that the proposed site is irreplaceable habitat for sensitive and endangered species, and is known to be the residence of the desert tortoise, burrowing owl, Le Conte's thrasher, desert kit fox and the Mojave ground squirrel. In addition, as residents of the Indian Wells Valley, we are concerned with proposed water use."

Another issue upcoming in our area is a proposed photovoltaic solar generating facility along highway 178 in Weldon. Members in that area will surely wish to provide input on that

We'll be discussing both issues at the April 13<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Attend, if you want to help or provide input.



## Valley Sightings February 2010

Please report unusual sightings to Susan Steele at 377-5220 (home) or 939-1722 (work), or by email at [steele7@verizon.net](mailto:steele7@verizon.net).

The Faller Junior Audubon trip to the old sewage ponds Mar 30 had two lingering **Snow Geese**. The rest of their flock headed north on Mar 18.

**Ross's Geese** were last seen at the ponds Mar 17 and **Red-shouldered Hawk** on Mar 8 (SS).

The immature **Tundra Swan** was last seen at the ponds Mar 2 by the Inyokern Junior Audubon.

A **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** hybrid was at the ponds Mar 2 and a Mallard x Gadwall hybrid was there Mar 31 (SS).

A female **Common Goldeneye** was seen at the ponds Mar 18 - 30 (SS).

Eighty **Turkey Vultures** were attempting to roost overnight in Ridgecrest Mar 28 (BBu).

**Osprey** have put in a good showing at the end of this month with one SW of Inyokern Mar 26 and 30 (LK), one at the Inyokern Sewage Ponds Mar 28 (TC), and one at Lark Seep Mar 30 (TC).

**Sharp-shinned Hawks** were more in evidence this year than previous years (LS, SS). In a typical March one-two are seen and this year there were six reports.

The highlight of a point count in Indian Wells Canyon Mar 27 was a **Golden Eagle** interaction with a coyote (L&SSu).

The first **Black-bellied Plover** of the spring was at the ponds Mar 17 and the first **Long-billed Dowitcher** on Mar 4 (BB).

Another **Long-billed Dowitcher** was spotted in the unusual location of the alfalfa fields N of Inyokern Mar 27 (TM).

The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the spring was in Ridgecrest Feb 21 (SE), and the next was Mar 6 (JAS). Only seven reports have been received, which is below average.

A **Hairy Woodpecker** and a **Mallard** pair were the highlights of a point count in Sand Canyon Mar 29 (LS, BP, SE, LL).

The first **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was seen S of Inyokern Mar 24 (SS).

The first **Western Kingbird** of spring was at the ponds Mar 30 (SS).

The **Loggerhead Shrikes** SW of Inyokern had three juveniles out of the nest and hopping in the foliage on Mar 31 (LK).

The first **Violet-green Swallow** was at the ponds Mar 8, the first **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was Mar 17, and **Barn Swallow** Mar 25 (SS).

A **Titmouse**, presumably an Oak Titmouse, was at the college Mar 14 (JAS).

The **Cactus Wren** SW of Inyokern continues to sing as he hasn't attracted a mate (LK).

The **Western Bluebird** invasion on the valley floor continued with six birds on the base Mar 16 (SS).

The last report of **Mountain Bluebirds** was from the golf course Mar 8 (SS).

The **LeConte's Thrashers** SW of Inyokern successfully raised another family and the juveniles were out of the nest by Mar 20 (LK).

Our first February record of **Phainopepla** was at the college on the 28<sup>th</sup> (JAS). There are a couple records in January and several in March, with the bulk of spring migrants starting in mid-April.

The **Phainopepla** in Ridgecrest Mar 28 was a new yard bird (D&BBu).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was N of Inyokern Mar 1 (TM) and another was at the college Mar 14 (JAS).

A "Myrtle's" **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was in SE Ridgecrest Mar 14 and 20 (LS).

The first **Common Yellowthroat** of the spring was S of Inyokern Mar 26 (SS).

The **American Tree Sparrow** in SE Ridgecrest on Mar 14 was only the 2<sup>nd</sup> valley record (PW). The 1<sup>st</sup> was way back on Nov 2, 1989.

A **Fox Sparrow** was at the college Mar 26 (SS) and another was in Ridgecrest Mar 27 (D&BBu).

The first migrant **Lark Sparrows** were SW of Inyokern on Mar 13 and **Brewer's Sparrows** were seen Mar 21 (LK).

The first **Yellow-headed Blackbird** of the spring was at the ponds Mar 25 and for Brown-headed Cowbird was Mar 15 (SS).

The first **Hooded Oriole** this spring was in Ridgecrest Mar 16 (JAS). To put this in perspective, our earliest ever arrival date is March 3, and they are expected by St Patrick's Day. The bulk of Hooded Orioles were late this year with a pair of **Hooded Orioles** in Ridgecrest Mar 27 (D&BBu) and males in Inyokern Mar 30-31 (SS, LK).

Another Oriole, not identified to species, was heard N of Inyokern Mar 17 (TM)

**Bullock's Orioles** were seen SW of Inyokern Mar 30-31 (LK) and S of Inyokern Mar 31 (SS).

A **Pine Siskin** was S of Inyokern Mar 13, 15 and 30 (SS) and two were seen intermittently throughout the month N of Inyokern (TM).

**Lawrence's Goldfinches** are being seen at the college. They were first noted Mar 12 and a high count of nine occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> (SS, JAS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, Dan and Brenda Burnett, Tom Campbell, Shelley Ellis, Lisa Lavella, Terri Middlemiss, Bob Parker, Joyce Seibold, Alison Sheehy, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Peter Woodman*

# BIRDATHON

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Kerncrest Audubon Society BIRDATHON will be held Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. We need you to form a team – even if it's only a team of one -- and sign up sponsors to contribute in support of the Kern River Preserve and our education programs. If you'd like to join, be, or form a team, phone Nancy Robinson at 375-2049. Teams may meet at any time or place they like, but it's best to let Nancy know where you plan to go, so that she may provide a "clearing house" to ensure maximum coverage of the area to maximize the number of species seen.

We'll bird all day (and all night, starting at sundown on the 17th, if you want to get owls) then meet at John's pizza parlor to compare and consolidate lists, and to celebrate!

Proceeds are split between the Kern River Preserve and our own education programs. This past year's education funds were spent primarily on expenses for the Faller and Inyokern Elementary School Junior Audubon Clubs, including such things as bird seed, owl pellets for dissection, and bird books to be presented to the children. We can't think of a better way to ensure these children retain their excitement about birds!

So Sign up for a Birdathon Team, and sign up friends and acquaintances, too. Collect pledges from friends wishing to sponsor your team by species seen, or contributions from those making lump sum contributions, and bring them to the Birdathon. E-mail Nancy Robinson at [nepr918@gmail.com](mailto:nepr918@gmail.com) or call 760-375-2049 for additional pledge sheets, to sign up, or for information.

If you can't participate, MAKE A CONTRIBUTION and mail it to Kerncrest Audubon Society, PO Box 984, Ridgecrest CA 93556. If you wish to contribute by species, please note the pledge by species and include your telephone number, so someone can call you after the event and let you know how many species were sighted.

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## KERNCREST AUDUBON SOCIETY

### **BIRDATHON 2010 Pledge/Contribution Form**

- Donation is tax-deductible
- Each sponsor will receive report and bird list
- Contributions support local Audubon Education Programs and the Kern River Preserve

1. Birder's (or Team's) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Choose Your Per Species Pledge:

\_\_\_ 10 cents \_\_\_ 25 cents \_\_\_ 50 cents \_\_\_ 1 dollar \_\_\_ Other amount

(Note the number of species seen has never exceeded 200.)

OR: Choose a Lump Sum Payment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. How can we contact you?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

4. Send completed form to Kerncrest Audubon Society, P.O. Box 984, Ridgecrest, CA 93556.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

National Audubon Society

Includes 1 year of Audubon magazine, Local chapter membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's address for gift subscriptions:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ New Member/Gift - \$20 (Renewal will be \$30)

\_\_\_\_ Senior (62+) or full-time Student - \$15

Please enclose a check payable to National Audubon Society

Clip out and mail to: National Audubon Society  
Membership Data Center

C45 P.O. Box 51005  
7XCH Boulder, CO 80323-1005

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Kerncrest Audubon Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ yr Kerncrest Audubon Society Membership @ \$15/year

(Includes subscription to *The Chat*)

\_\_\_\_ yr Subscription to *The Chat* only @ \$7/year

\_\_\_\_ Please request the National Audubon Society to exclude my  
name from promotional mailing lists.

Please enclose a check payable to Kerncrest Audubon Society.

Clip out and mail to: Kerncrest Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 984  
Ridgecrest CA 93556

Kerncrest Audubon Society

Sherry Brubaker	President	375-7245
Lee Sutton	Vice President	375-1981
Nancy Robinson	Secretary	375-2049
Lynne Thompson	Treasurer	375-5677
Brenda Burnett	Publications	375-8634
Lloyd Brubaker	Member at Large	375-7245
Terri Middlemiss	Conservation	377-5192
Dan Burnett	Education & Membership	375-8634
Nancy Robinson	Birdathon	375-2049
Newsletter Ed.	Brenda Burnett	375-8634
Webmaster	Noel Gravelle	375-2325
website:	www.kerncrestaudubon.org	

*Explanation of membership categories:*

National Audubon Society membership includes membership in the local chapter. It also includes a subscription to the Audubon magazine, and to the Kerncrest newsletter, *The Chat*. It also provides the right to vote in society elections, and inclusion on national society mailing lists for informational materials and solicitations for contributions.

Membership in the Kerncrest Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Chat*, (not to *Audubon* magazine) and provides the right to vote in local society elections. Inclusion on national mailing lists is optional.

A subscription to *The Chat* only does not provide the right to vote in elections.

***The Chat***

Newsletter of the Kerncrest Audubon society  
P.O. Box 984, Ridgecrest, CA 93556

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