



The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

December/January 2010/11

DECEMBER/JANUARY CALENDAR

Wed	Dec 15	6:00 pm	Board meeting, Burnetts' Refreshments by Middlemiss
Sun	Dec 19	7:00 am	Christmas Bird Count
Wed	Jan 19	6:00 pm	Board meeting, Burnetts'
Thu	Jan 20	7:00 pm	General Meeting: Raptors

GENERAL MEETING RAPTORS & FALCONRY

Our January program will be a two for the price of one. And of course, you realize that price is pretty good.

Shelley Ellis, a biologist at the local Bureau of Land Management Office, will give a talk, accompanied by lots of good photos, about the interesting avian family: raptors. Also on the program will be Dr. Novak, a retired local veterinarian. Dr. Novak is quite active as a falconer. He will discuss the art and science of the sport of falconry in interesting detail. And best yet, he brings to the program one of his live falcons. So bring the kids. They will enjoy being up close and personal with one of Dr. Novak's birds of prey.

This informative program will be held in our normal location, the Maturango Museum, on our normal evening, the third Thursday of the month (in this case, the 20th) at our normal time of 7:00 PM. The public is invited. See you there.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accordance with Kerncrest Audubon Society bylaws, a nominating committee consisting of board members Brenda Burnett, Noel Gravelle, and Lee Sutton has been constituted to find volunteers for officers' positions to be vacated at the end of this fiscal year. Our general meeting and election will be in May. If you wish to volunteer or to provide ideas for nominees, please contact a committee member.

Names of committee nominees will be published in the next issue of *The Chat*. Nominations will also be open from the floor at the annual meeting.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REMINDER

The China Lake count is on Sunday, December 19. To sign up, call Peter Woodman at 760-377-3466, or email him at kivabio@aol.com for meeting times and locations.

WORK DAY

Bob Powers Gateway Preserve

10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm, Friday, December 10th. Meet at the Verizon parking lot at the corner of Suhre and the CA Hwy 155 nd extension into Lake Isabella at 10am (or walk out and join the group at the enhancement site after your arrival).

Commitments of one hour or more are welcome throughout the four hour work period. "Supervisors" are welcome if physical labor is out for you at the time or if you just want to attend to see what's happening. :)

Bring outdoor work clothes, hat, work gloves, water, snacks. Site preparation: clear berm, till soil.

Seeding: spread mugwort seed (will take a handful or less of minutes), rake soil over seeds.

Audubon Kern River Preserve Staff Sean Rowe and Jeff King will bring shovels and rakes. They will also bring extra work glove sets. Feel free to bring your own gloves and tools if you wish.

12pm-1pm will be a work break for sack or nearby restaurant lunches. Bottom Line: Realize "Kern" Red-winged Blackbird and Tricolored Blackbird habitat enhancement on up to 4000 square feet of the approximately 20,000 square foot existing berm on the Bob Powers Gateway Preserve.

Submitted by Bob Barnes

Editor's Note: No field trip is scheduled for January. Birding is excellent at this location, so folks may wish to carpool from Ridgecrest and make this opportunity an un-guided field trip. Hopefully, someone from the Kern River Valley will volunteer to serve as tour leader and help in pointing out locations.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If you are a local chapter member or a subscriber to the *Chat* it is time to renew. You can tell if you need to renew by looking at the date on your mailing label. If the date is "1/1/11 (K)" you need to renew. To renew just send a check for \$15 for membership (including the *Chat*) or \$7.00 for just the *Chat* to, "Membership, Kerncrest Audubon Society, PO Box 984, Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0984.

Happy Holidays!
See you in February



Valley Sightings November 2010

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

For the seventh year in a row the **Snow Goose** with neck collar number A-PR returned to the ponds. This year it was on Nov 23 (SLS).

A **Tundra Swan** was at the ponds Nov 25 and 30 (SLS), and three were seen Nov 27 (BB).

Our first cold winter storm of the season blew in a number of interesting birds. At the ponds five **Common Goldeneye**, two **Hooded Merganser**, ten **Common Merganser**, and a **Red-breasted Merganser**. The Inyokern sewage ponds had a **Common Merganser**. At the old sewage ponds a **Common Goldeneye** was new, species #176. At the golf course three **Mountain Bluebirds** and a late **Common Yellowthroat**. All these birds were seen Nov 24 (SLS, BB, BS). Of all these birds only a Common Goldeneye remained the following day and remained until the 27th (SLS, BB).

Another **Common Goldeneye** was at the ponds Nov 30 (SLS).

Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** were at the ponds Nov 4 (SLS).

A pair of **Hooded Mergansers** was at the ponds Nov 12 (BB).

The **Cattle Egret** at the ponds continued through Nov 8 (BB).

An immature **Bald Eagle** was at the ponds Nov 18-19 (SLS).

The same **Northern Harrier** returned to winter in SW Inyokern for the 10th year in a row (LK). This bird has unique plumage marks that identify him. This year's date was Nov 16.

The **Ferruginous Hawk** S of Inyokern Nov 26 was the second sighting in the valley this year after a five year gap (SLS).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was in SE Ridgecrest Nov 4 (PY).

The **Merlin** at the ponds Nov 15, 21-22 and the one at the golf course Nov 18 appeared to be the same bird (SLS).

The **Snowy Plovers** remained at the ponds through Nov 4 (BB).

A **Red Phalarope** was at the ponds Nov 8 (SLS).

The immature **Franklin's Gull** continued through Nov 3 (SLS) and an adult was seen Nov 4 (BB). This is a new late date for the species in the valley.

A **Herring Gulls** were at the ponds Nov 4, 16, 17 (BB, SLS).

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was spotted at the college Nov 3 and 16 (SLS).

Lingering **Barn Swallows** were at the ponds Nov 2 and **Tree Swallows** were seen Nov 20 (SLS, BB).

A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was at the college Nov 3 (SLS).

The Faller Jr Audubon field trip to the college Nov 2 turned up a male **Phainopepla** and a flock of **Cedar Waxwings**.

Red-breasted Nuthatch continue to be seen in the valley in good numbers. They've been noted in SE Ridgecrest (LS), at the college and cemetery (BB), N of Inyokern (TM), and S of Inyokern (SLS).

The 8th valley record of **Palm Warbler** was at the ponds Nov 3 (SLS) and presumably the same bird was seen Nov 7-8 (BB). All of the valley's sightings have occurred between Oct 1 and Nov 8.

A **Pine Siskin** was at the college Nov 20 (BB).

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, Shelley Ellis, Louise Knecht, Joyce Seibold, Lee Sutton, Tom Wurster, Pat Yates*

AUDUBON ASSEMBLY

For the past several years, Audubon California has held an almost-annual get-together for chapters at Asilomar, the idyllic retreat near Monterey. This year, a decision was made to hold that assembly in San Diego in conjunction with the San Diego Bird Festival, allowing us to mix fun and field trips with the indoor chapter-building and idea-sharing workshops. This festival is not until March of 2011, but registration is already available on-line. As usual at our popular winter California festivals, workshops and field trips fill up early. So go to ca.audubon.org/assembly.php, check out the events, and REGISTER!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

by Alison Sheehy

As the Christmas Bird Count season approaches the air crisps and excitement builds to see what old friends, rarities and potential life birds might be found out in the valleys, mountains and deserts of our great county.

The schedule is finally complete with a few changes from the norm.

The Bakersfield CBC after 30+ years is moving to a weekday! This count is always exciting and normally is the most birdy of all in the county. Centered around Hart Park, John Wilson has compiled this count for many years and we are indebted to him for his continued involvement in the birding community. This move will allow those of us who have had to choose due to a conflict with China Lake to participate in both counts.

The Bear Valley Springs and Tehachapi Counts experienced a bit of a hiccup with the Tehachapi Mountains Birding Club on a reorganizational hiatus. So, with my love for the opportunity to bird the Arvin area during the Bear Valley count, I will help compile the count for this year and hope that we see our friends at TMBC be able to become active again soon. Larry Parmeter of Fresno started the Tehachapi Count and has agreed to compile it again for this year. We will work with the CBC crew at National Audubon to get these counts up on the website so those interested can sign up.

And after threatening to stop the Buena Vista Count, I found myself lamenting the fact that no one stepped up to take over compilation. After last year's five thrasher bonanza, I just couldn't stop and with Susan Steele going to again examine every gull and go for broke on a Kern County big year, this count will continue for this year at least.

WEDNESDAY, December 15, 2010

Bakersfield, Kern County: Compiler: John Wilson - year began 1949 held in 1950 resumed in 1973

(meet at 7 a.m. at Mirror Drive in Hart Park. Contact John Wilson, jcwilson@lightspeed.net to RSVP.

FRIDAY, December 17, 2010

Tejon Ranch, Kern County: Compiler: Michael White; by invitation only - year began 2008

SATURDAY, December 18, 2010

Butterbrecht, Kern County: Compiler: Charles Bragg - year began 1977

Lancaster, Los Angeles & Kern County: Compilers: Nick & Mary Freeman

SUNDAY, December 19, 2010

China Lake, Kern & San Bernardino Counties: Compiler: Pete Woodman (Contact kivabio@aol.com to RSVP) - year began 1957

TUESDAY, December 21, 2010 (snow date 12-28)

Bear Valley Springs, Kern County: Compiler: Alison Sheehey - year began 1995

WEDNESDAY, December 22, 2010 (snow date 12-29)

Tehachapi, Kern County: Compiler: Larry Parmeter - year began 1992

SATURDAY, January 1, 2011

Carrizo Plains, Kern & San Luis Obispo Counties: Compiler: Roger Zachary, Phone (805) 466-6222 - year began 1971

South Fork Valley, Kern County: Compiler Denise LaBerteaux - year began 1992 (Contact eremico@aol.com to RSVP)

SUNDAY, January 2, 2011

Kern River Valley, Kern County: Compiler: Alison Sheehey (Contact natureali@gmail.com to RSVP) year began 1979

MONDAY, January 3, 2011

Buena Vista, Kern County: Compiler: Alison Sheehey - year began 1989

The complete schedule of California CBCs can be found...

www.natureali.org/cbcs.htm

Good birding,

Ali Sheehey

760-378-2029

(Local counts in bold)

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Kerncrest Audubon Society has received the following request for help with a research study. A couple of board members have tried filling out the form, have found it interesting and are inviting you to try it. You are encouraged to participate at your earliest convenience. The link will remain active for several months, but the students are trying to get some data collected this semester so that they can submit preliminary results for consideration at a conference.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

We are wondering if you would be able to help us out with a research study being conducted this semester at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Many birds are killed each year by various forms of human technology and activity. Some of these human-made hazards attract much more attention than do others. We are interested in how various factors that have been shown to influence people's perceptions of the risks posed by nuclear power or sources of water pollution (e.g., is it a 'new' hazard, how 'natural' does the hazard seem) may also contribute to peoples' perceptions of various hazards to birds. This

information will be useful in helping us strategize in campaigns to raise awareness with regards to different kinds of threats to birds and other natural systems.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could fill out the survey found at the following URL

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22BDFEUJWXT>

Your participation will remain anonymous and confidential. The survey takes about 25 minutes. At the end of the survey, you will be re-directed to a separate page upon which you can request a summary of what we find. This research project has met Muhlenberg College's Institutional Review policy requirements.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jeffrey Rudski at

rudski@muhlenberg.edu

INYO COUNTY ACTS ON IWV WIND TURBINES

As this Chat is going to press the Inyo County Planning Commission will hold public hearings regarding what may be the first wind turbines to be built in the Indian Wells Valley. The hearing scheduled for 1 December is expected to approve the installation of wind testing towers to determine the wind potential at a site North of Pearsonville. These test towers will be just under 200 feet tall, will be unlighted, and will be equipped with reflectors designed to warn birds away from the guys.

KAS has contacted the developers and the Inyo Planning Department to alert them to our concerns that this site is in a migratory fly way for passerines, raptors, and water birds thus requiring special studies to determine how migrating birds use the air space.

There are several more sites being considered for wind turbines in our area.

BIG CHANGES IN THE MOJAVE

Within the past four months the California Energy Commission has approved 7 solar power projects to be built in the Mojave Desert. These plants will cover over 24,000 acres of desert. Together, these approved sites can generate one and a half times more electricity than the Hoover Dam does. Construction has not started yet at any of the sites. Here is a brief run down on the projects.

The 250-megawatt Abengoa Mojave Solar Project is located on 1,700 acres of public land adjacent to Harper Dry Lake. The 250-megawatt Beacon Solar Energy Project is located on 2,000 acres of previous farm land between Highway 14 and Kohen Dry Lake. The 1,000-megawatt Blythe Solar Power Project is located on 7,500 acres of public land one mile north of the Blythe airport. The 250-megawatt Genesis Solar Energy Project is located on public land 25 miles west of Blythe just .5 miles north of I-10. The 709-megawatt Imperial Valley Solar Project is located on public land near the Salton Sea. The Calico solar plant is located 1 mile north of I-40 on Hector Road on 2,000 acres of private and 6,000 acres of public land. The 370-megawatt Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System is located at Ivanpah Dry Lake near Primm on 3,300 acres of public land.

The Imperial Valley Solar Project is in litigation brought by local Native American Tribes.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

National Audubon Society

Includes 1 year of Audubon magazine, Local chapter membership

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Please enclose a check payable to National Audubon Society

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Membership Data Center

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(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.

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P.O. Box 984

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Kerncrest Audubon Society

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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

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