

The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

December/January, 2015/16

DECEMBER-JANUARY CALENDAR

Wed	Dec 16	6 pm	Board Meeting: McEwan's
Sun	Dec 20	7 am	Christmas Bird Count
Wed	Jan 20	6 pm	Board Meeting: Burnetts'
Thurs	Jan 21	7 pm	General Meeting: Don Brubaker

GENERAL MEETING

Habitat Restoration in San Francisco East Bay

Don Brubaker grew up in Ridgecrest, the son of beloved science teacher and past Kerncrest Board Member Lloyd Brubaker, and brother of past Kerncrest president Sherry Brubaker.

Don, a biologist, has worked in several areas of research and habitat management, including a project to reintroduce the San Clemente Island Shrike and management of the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge. He is currently Manager of the Don Edwards complex of National Wildlife Refuges in the San Francisco East Bay, which includes the San Pablo and the Antioch Dunes refuges.

His presentation will be about the habitat restoration work being done at those refuges. In addition to being informative, his talk will *no doubt* be entertaining. We look forward to seeing him.

Maturango Museum, 100 E Las Flores Ave, at 7 pm on Thursday, January 21, 2016.

KERN COUNTY'S OLDEST CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Please join us for the 59th annual China Lake Christmas Bird Count. Continuing with tradition, the count will be the first Sunday of the Count Period, this year on December 20, from 0700 to 1700.

Count week is from December 17 to 23. Species that are seen during Count Week but not on Count Day also get tallied, so keep an eye out for interesting species you see during that period, and note where you see them.

We will meet at Leroy Jackson Park at 0700 on the 20th. The compilation at 5 pm will be at the home of Pat Moore, as usual.

Please email compiler Peter Woodman at (Kivabio@aol.com) and let him know if you plan to participate.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Local Christmas Bird Counts:

Saturday, December 19, 2015, California City: compiler, Alexia Svejda. Email AlexiaSvejda@gmail.com or call 661-810-6268. Year begun: 2015 (*NEW*).

Saturday, January 2, 2016, South Fork Valley (around Weldon): compiler, Denise LaBerteaux, Phone 760-378-4278. Year begun: 1992

Sunday, January 3, 2016, Kern River Valley (around Lake Isabella): compilers, Bob Barnes & Alison Sheehey. Email Bob at bbarnes@lightspeed.net. Year begun: 1979.

For a complete list visit www.natureali.org.

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, January 15-18, 2016. This year's festival has expanded field trips and events. To register and for more information, visit www.morrobaybirdfestival.org.

San Diego Bird Festival, March 3-6. at Marina Village Park. Registration is open and detailed event information is available at www.sandiegoaudubon.org.

SAVE THE DATES:

2016 Field Trips:

February 20: Pixley National Wildlife Refuge

March 19: Lake Isabella & Tilley Creek Campground.

April 22-24: Owens Lake Bird Festival

May 21: Inyokern to Red Mt Breeding Bird Survey Rte.

SAVE THE KENNEDY MEADOWS CAMPGROUND

The Inyo National Forest has removed the portable outhouses and closed the Kennedy Meadows campground. This would not necessarily be an Audubon issue but for the fact that the campground will likely continue to be heavily used, and the removal of the outhouses will result in pollution of the environment. See the attached article provided by our member, Ed Royce, and consider dashing off a letter to your representatives.



Valley Sightings – November 2015

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

FOF for **Ross's Geese** was from the ponds Nov 23 (SLS).

A **Common Goldeneye** was at the ponds Nov 23 (SLS).

Western Grebes were at the ponds Nov 12, 23, and 26 (JA, BB, SLS).

Also at the ponds on Nov 12 were an **American White Pelican** and a juvenile **Black-crowned Night Heron** (JA).

An **Osprey** flew over the children (and adult escorts) at the ponds on Nov 12 (JA).

A **Virginia Rail** was seen (and heard!) at the ponds on Nov 12 (JA).

Rounding out the exciting sightings for the Junior Audubon field trip on Nov 12 was a **Common Moorhen** (JA).

A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was in Grapevine Canyon Nov 28 (BS, SLS). While this is a rarity in the valley, only three previous records, it is the second time this species has been found in this canyon. Other interesting birds included two pairs of **Acorn Woodpeckers**, a **Mountain Chickadee**, two **Oak Titmice**, **Bushtits**, two **Western Bluebirds**, two "Gray-headed" **Dark-eyed Juncos**, and twenty **Pine Siskins**.

Three **Tree Swallows** and a **Barn Swallow** were at the ponds Nov 23 (SLS).

A hike on Nov 11 designed to fill an ebird gap produced three new species for Cow Heaven Canyon **Cooper's Hawk**, **Townsend's Solitaire**, and **Sagebrush Sparrow** bringing this list to 94 species (SLS, BS). Yes, it does look like 100 species are possible for this canyon with little riparian habitat. Other interesting birds included **Bushtits**, and a **White-breasted Nuthatch**.

A **House Wren** was at the ponds Nov 30 (SLS).

A **Pacific Wren** was SW of Inyokern Nov 5-10 (LK). This is a very rare visitor to the valley, last being seen here in 2011. Most of our records are from November.

Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were at the ponds Nov 12 (SLS). This is only the 3rd record at that location.

Red-breasted Nuthatches continue to be reported (L&SSu, SLS, BB, TM).

Our only report of **Cedar Waxwing** this month was from SW of Inyokern on Nov 18 (LK).

Two **Western Bluebirds** were seen in Sage Canyon on Nov 21, along with several **Mountain Bluebirds** (BBu).

Two **Chipping Sparrows** were in Ridgecrest Nov 22 (BB).

A **White-throated Sparrow** was S of Inyokern Nov 11-13 (SLS).

Red Crossbills were in Ridgecrest Nov 18 (BB), SW of Inyokern Nov 14-15 (PW), and S of Inyokern Nov 29 (SLS).

Two **Pine Siskins** were S of Inyokern Nov 11 (SLS) and a larger group was SW of Inyokern through at least Nov 15 (PW).

FOF for **American Goldfinch** was Nov 11 (BB, SLS) in multiple locations.

A **Bullock's Oriole** was seen in Ridgecrest Nov 20 and 21 (L&SSu).

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, Brenda Burnett (BBu), Junior Audubon field trip (JA), Louise Knecht, Bob Steele, Terri Middlemiss, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Peter Woodman*

FEDERAL DUCK STAMPS

Did you know the revenue from purchases of Federal duck stamps is used to purchase land for National Wildlife Refuges? (The stamps are now called Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps.) By now, stamp sales have surpassed \$900 million and helped to protect 6.5 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat.

In addition to being a ticket to all National Wildlife Refuges, a requirement for anyone over 16 who wants to hunt, and a beautiful collectible item, these stamps provide many benefits to migrating and nesting wildfowl and many other birds and wildlife.

You can buy them online at the US Post Office website: www.usps.gov/ but it's not easy.

First, go to www.usps.com, and do NOT click on "buy stamps". Instead, look at the top of the page and click on Postal Store. That will put you on a page where the list on the left of clickable links includes Federal Duck Stamps.

There you go! This year's design is our own locally-nesting Ruddy Duck, at \$25. Last year's beautiful Canvasback is also still available, at \$15. There are also "Junior Duck" stamps using designs from winners of contests for young artists. Check those out, too!