



# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

February 2009

## **FEBRUARY CALENDAR**

Thu Feb 12 6pm Board Meeting, Archibalds'  
Sat Feb 28 7:30 Field Trip: Mojave Narrows

### **FIELD TRIP**

#### **MOJAVE NARROWS REGIONAL PARK**

Well, folks had such a good time on last year's trip to Mojave Narrows Regional Park in Victorville that we're going to do it again! There should be some over-wintering waterfowl, owls, maybe some woodpeckers, and who knows what else? It's a varied habitat, with everything from grasslands to wetlands.

Those who wish to camp or RV will go down on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> or earlier, and should call the park for reservations at (760) 245-2226.

Those who plan to come for the day will meet at the south Albertson's parking lot, at the SW corner near the service station on Saturday morning, the 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am to car pool and caravan. Bring the usual layered clothing, sunscreen, and a picnic lunch.

Those camping should call Dan Burnett at (760) 375-8634 and let him know if you plan to come, and arrange a meeting time on Friday to form an RV caravan.

Those going for the day on Saturday should also call Dan, to arrange a time and place to meet at the park, and for directions if needed.

### **CONSERVATION CORNER**

by Terri Middlemiss

In the latest newsletter from Ventana Wildlife Society, the researchers describe their harrowing rescue of the California Condors in their care. The last 3 were almost not rescued because the Coast Guard helicopter encountered smoke so thick that they had to use their GPS system and night vision goggles to land. Then they had to fly out with raging walls of fire on one side and fog and smoke on the other. They found a hole in the smoke to fly through. The last three birds were very hard to catch, but the biologists made a Herculean effort and prevailed.

The other good news is that although they knew that 2 of the chicks in coastal nests had survived, it was awhile before they could check on the third nest, which was inland. This chick was the first truly wild-laid and reared chick for the Big Sur flock. The area where the nest tree was completely burned over and that tree was burned half way up its 200 feet. Success! The chick had survived the heat and smoke in its cavity at the top of the tree.

So many of us now have Cooper's Hawks living with us year-round because of bird feeding, so be sure that the birds have nearby cover to retreat to. I have brush piles, creosote bushes, trees and shrubs near my feeders. Sometimes, the brush

pile seems to be moving with all the little faces peering out to see if the coast is clear.

Birds eat insects. Lots of them. So, I am going to remind you again, if you haven't already, consider joining The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. 9 out of 10 bird species feed on insects and other invertebrates. The Xerces Society has produced ground-breaking publications on insect conservation, trained thousands of farmers and land managers to protect and manage habitat for insects. They have also raised awareness about the importance of the invertebrates of the forests, prairies, deserts, streams and oceans. [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org) 4828 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland OR 97215.

President Obama has already scored with my "conservation self"! He has temporarily (only) stayed the execution, planned by Bush, of wolves living in the Greater Yellowstone area and the rest of the Rockies. Hundreds were to be slaughtered. Idaho and Wyoming continue with their plans to delist the wolves and murder them under Bush's plan. President Obama and Director Dale Hall of the USFWS need to hear from us. We are asking them to permanently reject the Bush plan and take a more long-term, responsible, scientific approach to managing those areas. Go to [www.savewolves.org](http://www.savewolves.org), a part of Defenders of Wildlife who have been long time champions of wolf existence. You will be able to send a letter through that website. Defenders will not send you emails unless you ask for updates.

### **TRIP REPORT**

#### **WIND WOLVES PRESERVE**

We had a great turnout for our field trip to Wind Wolves preserve on Saturday, Jan 31. Fifteen enthusiastic birders enjoyed a sunny, almost-windless day hearing about the preserve and its history, seeing its flora and fauna, and just relaxing in a beautiful place. Sherryl Clendenen and her husband David graciously spent the whole day showing us around, and drove most of us in the preserve's van. We thank them mightily!

Bird highlights of the day were two Golden Eagles soaring over their perennial nest and perching nearby, and loong looks up close and through the "scope" at a Great Horned Owl sound asleep in the palm tree in front of the preserve headquarters. Other species we rarely see on this side of the mountains included Ferruginous Hawk and Golden-crowned Sparrow. On the way back, one carload of us saw a Bald Eagle, while another carload saw a flock of White-faced Ibis.

The preserve, one of ten belonging to the Wildlands Conservancy, is open for touring and camping by arrangement. For information and camping reservations call (661) 858-1115.

DECEMBER 2008 – JANUARY 2009 EASTERN KERN COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

SPECIES	CHINA LAKE	SOUTH FORK	ISA-BELLA				
				Golden Eagle		2	5
				large hawk sp.		1	
				American Kestrel	10	17	4
Greater White-fronted Goose	5			Merlin	1	1	
Snow Goose (white form)	1,750			Peregrine Falcon			1
Snow Goose (blue form)	5			Prairie Falcon	3	2	1
Ross' Goose	420			Virginia Rail	5	26	
Ross' Goose (blue form)	1			Sora	2	3	
Canada Goose		2	124	American Coot	452	19	129
Wood Duck			2	Killdeer	18	1	86
Gadwall	34	5	22	American Avocet	5		
American Wigeon	34	6	250	Greater Yellowlegs			3
Mallard	92	82	68	Spotted Sandpiper			1
Cinnamon Teal	2			Western Sandpiper			3
Northern Shoveler	1,440		20	Least Sandpiper			250
Northern Pintail	23		3	Long-billed Dowitcher*	1		
American Green-winged Teal	174	7	3	Wilson's Snipe		2	19
Canvasback	34			Ring-billed Gull	16		172
Redhead	13			California Gull	1		696
Ring-necked Duck	35			Herring Gull			19
Greater Scaup (new)	1			gull sp.			515
Lesser Scaup	3			Rock Pigeon	570	6	8
Bufflehead	18		14	Band-tailed Pigeon			2
Common Goldeneye	1	1	43	Eurasian Collared-Dove	17		25
Hooded Merganser			5	Mourning Dove	842	97	222
Common Merganser			2,351	Greater Roadrunner	3	2	
Ruddy Duck	409		1	Barn Owl		1	
duck sp.			30	Great Horned Owl	1	12	1
Mountain Quail		7	4	Burrowing Owl	1		
California Quail	268	334	386	Long-eared Owl	2		
Common Loon			2	White-throated Swift		30	71
Pied-billed Grebe	11		11	Anna's Hummingbird	17	4	30
Eared Grebe	24		2,026	Costa's Hummingbird	9		
Western Grebe	1		66	hummingbird sp.	19		1
Clark's Grebe			31	Belted Kingfisher			6
Aechmophorus sp.			999	Acorn Woodpecker		5	178
American White Pelican			6	Williamson's Sapsucker			2
Double-crested Cormorant			902	Red-naped Sapsucker	2	2	1
Great Blue Heron			26	Red-breasted Sapsucker		2	3
Great Egret	1		4	Ladder-backed Woodpecker		2	
Turkey Vulture			CW	Nuttall's Woodpecker		35	26
Osprey			6	Downy Woodpecker		11	5
White-tailed Kite			CW	Hairy Woodpecker		22	9
Bald Eagle			3	White-headed Woodpecker			1
Northern Harrier	5	6	3	Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	31	34	33
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	3	3	Black Phoebe	18	12	26
Cooper's Hawk	10	4	6	Say's Phoebe	20	13	10
Sharp-shinned/Cooper's sp.	1			Vermilion Flycatcher	1		
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	5	7	Loggerhead Shrike	7	21	3
Red-tailed Hawk	13	24	40	Steller's Jay		7	1
Ferruginous Hawk		6	2	Western Scrub-Jay		128	337
Buteo sp.		1		Pinyon Jay		12	

American Crow	1			Pink-sided Junco			2
Common Raven	661	736	548	Red-winged Blackbird	108	218	42
Horned Lark	603		120	Tricolored Blackbird		252	450
Mountain Chickadee		4	21	Western Meadowlark	22	158	44
Oak Titmouse		52	186	Brewer's Blackbird	154	319	135
Verdin	31			Great-tailed Grackle	30		
Bushtit	1	166	100	Brown-headed Cowbird			1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	15		7	Purple Finch		8	107
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	11	34	House Finch	266	383	297
Pygmy Nuthatch		4		Pine Siskin*	1	19	32
Brown Creeper	1		3	Lesser Goldfinch	103	112	53
Cactus Wren	1	24		American Goldfinch	53	94	9
Rock Wren	9	20	23	House Sparrow	513	105	266
Canyon Wren		2	10				
Bewick's Wren	5	67	29	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS			
House Wren*	1	1	2	COUNTED	11092	8725	16216
Marsh Wren	30	9	1				
American Dipper		1	16	TOTAL No. SPECIES	93	97	118
Golden-crowned Kinglet		4					
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	23	61	110	CW This species seen during count week.			
Western Bluebird		136	120	* Unusual for China Lake count. Required documentation.			
Mountain Bluebird	39	200	57				
Townsend's Solitaire		1	7	NOTE: Susan Steele's Valley Sightings for December will be			
Hermit Thrush		4	10	carried in next Month's issue of The Chat. There wasn't room			
American Robin	32	19	83	for both the Valley Sightings and this list of Christmas Bird			
Varied Thrush*	1		1	Count data in this issue.			
Wrentit		2	24	Meantime, here's a fun little musing from Katy Penland,			
Northern Mockingbird	44	18	26	who moved this year to Pine Mountain, near the Wind Wolves			
California Thrasher		16	17	preserve, from Arizona. It was an email.			
European Starling	426	432	215				
American Pipit	20	3		<b>SUBJECT; SPRING ALREADY?</b>			
Cedar Waxwing	38	43	36	I know it isn't when we're only part-way through winter,			
Phainopepla		4	61	but Mtn Chickadees are singing their single-tone, three-note			
Yellow-rumped Warbler		22		call, which I only heard in spring in northern Arizona. An			
Yellow-rumped				Anna's Hummingbird male who was last seen on Dec. 20 after			
(Audubon's) Wbler	90	17	239	a 13 F. night has returned to a nectar feeder I re-hung after			
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle)				hearing a singing hummer three days earlier. (It's the same			
Warbler	2	1		individual, which has a slightly bulbous tip on his beak			
Spotted Towhee	6	46	78	making him quite distinguishable.) Four Purple Finches (3			
California Towhee		65	129	female, one male) are coming in to the suet and ground seeds			
Rufous-crowned Sparrow		2	4	every day. There were two male Yellow-rumped Warblers			
Chipping Sparrow		14		after the suet today. And one of the garden's snapdragons has			
Vesper Sparrow		13		fuzzy buds emerging from an otherwise dead plant.			
Lark Sparrow		119	39	Even a black bear was sighted 3 weeks ago less than 1/8			
Black-throated Sparrow	2	23		mile from my house, and I just heard tonight that people above			
Sage Sparrow	150	14		me on the mountain are reporting bear sightings already. An			
Savannah Sparrow	61	42		oddly warm winter so far despite a few days of low teens and			
Fox Sparrow		3	12	single digit nights here at 6,000 feet with daytime temps in the			
Song Sparrow	17	93	67	40s and 50s. Wonder if the bears even hibernated or just went			
Lincoln's Sparrow	5	15	6	walkabout for several weeks before returning.			
White-crowned Sparrow	505	2591	766				
Golden-crowned Sparrow		58	163	<b>REMINDER: RENEWALS ARE DUE</b>			
Dark-eyed Junco		206		Your membership is due if the mailing label on your			
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	110	645	709	Chat has "1/1/09(K)" highlighted. To renew please send			
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored)				your check for \$15.00 (or \$7.00 for Chat subscription			
Junco	2	3	5	only) to: Membership, Kerncrest Audubon Society, PO			
				BOX 984, RIDGECREST, CA 93556-0984.			
				This will be the last issue of the Chat sent to those			
				whose membership or subscription has expired.			

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**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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\_\_\_\_ 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  
Ridgecrest CA 93556

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*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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Permit No. 75  
Ridgecrest, CA

*February, 2009*

