



# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

January, 2007

## January Calendar

Thu	Jan 11	7pm	Board Meeting, Suttons'
Thu	Jan 18	7pm	General Meeting
Thu	Jan 25	8:30am	Field Trip: Little Lake

### **FIELD TRIP:**

#### **LITTLE LAKE WORK PARTY**

Just a little, easy work remains to complete the beautiful, handicapped-accessible wildlife viewing overlook at Little Lake. Come join a joint work party, with Kerncrest Audubon members and guests, and Ridgecrest Bureau of Land Management personnel, to complete the work, watch the birds, and celebrate!

Depending upon weather and the availability of portable barbecue equipment, we may picnic on lunches we bring, or be treated to a barbecue. Call Shelley Ellis at 446-5012 or Lee Sutton at 375-1981 to find out, and to sign up.

Bring sunscreen, hat, gloves, and layered clothing. Tools will be provided.

Meet at the Inyokern Post Office at 8:30am.

(Non-working supervisors are also welcome.)

#### **NO RICHMOND ROAD CLEANUP**

You may have noticed that no Richmond Road cleanup party has been scheduled recently. That's because the City of Ridgecrest has begun to charge the organizations doing the cleanup \$75 per year for the cost of installing and maintaining the signage giving them publicity for the cleanup.

While we recognize the city's need to recoup these costs, your Board of Directors did not feel our paying it would be a valid use of Audubon Society members' contributions. While we enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to the beauty of Ridgecrest, the value of the work to habitat conservation or membership development was negligible. Therefore, we voted at a recent board meeting not to continue to participate in the program.

We'll miss getting together at the Suttons for Shirley's homemade refreshments, and we thank her for all those years of baking goodies and making coffee for the cleanup crews!

### **GENERAL MEETING JANUARY 18 THE NATURE AND NATURAL HISTORY OF MIDWAY ISLAND**

Sandra Wieser, assistant at the Kern River Preserve in Weldon, served with the military on Midway Island in the Pacific. She has some wonderful pictures and background material on the wildlife (including those crazy birds the Gooney Birds), World War II history, and geology of the island chain, and will share all this with us at our January general meeting.

7pm on January 18, Maturango Museum.

#### **2007 KRV SPRING NATURE FESTIVAL**

The 13th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival (formerly known as the Bioregions Festival) is set for April 27-30, 2007. A full slate of field trips is scheduled for all four days, including five owling trips.

Check out the web site:

<http://kern.audubon.org/bioregion.htm>.

### **SAND CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (SEEP) HELP URGENTLY NEEDED**

For the past several years, Kerncrest Audubon's participation in the SEEP program has consisted of conducting bird station walks with the children in the canyon, and of conducting preparatory classroom sessions on how to use binoculars, with a power point presentation on the birds likely to be seen and heard.

As of the present, it looks as if Dan Burnett, who has been coordinating this effort, will not be around to do it this year. We feel this classroom session is a vitally important part of the program.

If you are a retired teacher, or anyone who likes working with children in the classroom, WE NEED YOU! The Power Point presentation is already prepared, and training on how to use it is available. You need only take it and the binoculars to the classroom. The schedule will be established by Peggy Jacobson, BLM SEEP coordinator. The program is conducted throughout parts of March and May.

Volunteers are also needed to help the children see the birds in the canyon. Please call Dan Burnett at 375-8634 if you can help!

## **Happy New Year!**



## Valley Sightings –December 2006

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).

A **Horned Grebe** was at the ponds Nov 28 (SS).

The fifteen **Tundra Swans** and four **Hooded Mergansers** at the ponds Nov 29 were new high counts for these species (SS). A male **Hooded Merganser** was at the ponds Dec 8 (SS).

The six **Tundra Swans** at the cemetery Dec 17 were the 170<sup>th</sup> species for that location (BB, MK).

Four **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at the old sewage ponds Dec 25 (L&ShS, D&BBu).

The 120<sup>th</sup> species for Lark Seep was the **Snow Goose** on Dec 13 (SS).

The **Peregrine Falcon** at the ponds Dec 4 was completely unexpected and our first December record (SS). This sighting is a month later than our next latest sighting date.

**Prairie Falcon** and **Oak Titmouse** were new species for No Name Canyon and brought the total there to 97 species on Dec 23 (SS).

The **Marbled Godwit** at the ponds Dec 7-8 was unexpected this late in the year (SS).

The **Red Phalarope** at the Inyokern ponds Dec 17 was the 86<sup>th</sup> species for that location (BS). It is also an extremely late sighting date. Our previous latest date was Nov 27 and the species is more typically only seen occasionally through mid Oct.

Two **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were at the cemetery Dec 11 with one remaining through Dec 25 (BB).

The **Stellar's Jay** W of Ridgecrest Dec 8 was a new yard bird and the first one seen on the valley floor this year (BM).

A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was at the pond though Dec 7 (SS).

The **Oak Titmouse** continues at the cemetery being seen thru the 24<sup>th</sup> (BB) and S of Inyokern thru the 24<sup>th</sup> (m.ob).

The interior race **Bushtits** continue at the ponds being seen through Dec 16 (SS).

The **Sage Thrasher** at the Inyokern ponds Dec 24 was the 87<sup>th</sup> species for that location (SS). This bird is probably attempting to winter locally.

**Barn Swallows** were at the ponds Nov 29 and Dec 17 when later than expected (SS).

Two **Varied Thrush** were N of Inyokern Dec 2 (LA).

The thirteen **Mountain Bluebirds** at the college Dec 16 were the 173<sup>rd</sup> species for that location (SS).

It has been a great year for **Mountain Bluebirds** as evidenced by the 130 seen in the valley on the CBC – Dec 17 (m.ob.).

The 171<sup>st</sup> species for the cemetery was a **Spotted Towhee** on Dec 23 (BB).

Two **Lark Sparrows** were at the cemetery Dec 25 (BB).

A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was at the college Dec 5 (LS).

The **Pine Siskin** in Ridgecrest Dec 18 was the first one reported this fall (JS).

Christmas bird count highlights from Dec 17 include: six Tundra Swans, Black-crowned Night-heron, Red-naped Sapsucker, Oak Titmouse and fourteen Mountain Bluebirds, at the cemetery (BB, MK); ninety Mountain Bluebirds, Red-naped Sapsucker, Hairy and Nuttall's Woodpecker at the golf course (JS, SW); three American White Pelicans flying over B Mountain (KP, RK, BH); Hairy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, six Cedar Waxwings, Stellar's Jay in NW Ridgecrest (DLaB, LL, SF); a Brewer's Sparrow in SE Ridgecrest (PW, SW); thirty Chukar in SE Ridgecrest (GW, SB); two Orange-crowned Warblers in Ridgecrest (L&ShS); Fox Sparrow in SE Ridgecrest LB, SB); one American Avocet, twenty-four Long-billed Dowitcher, four Dunlin, two Common Moorhen, eleven Bushtits, and two Barn Swallows at the ponds (SS), two Cactus Wrens (BH, BS), a Varied Thrush, and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at the college (BS); three Oak Titmouse and a Red Phalarope in Inyokern (BS).

*Thanks to the following observers: Linda Andrews, Bob Barnes, Lloyd Brubaker, Sherry Brubaker, Dan and Brenda Burnett, Sam Fitton, Brooks Hart, Marianne Kistler, Russell Kokx, Denise LaBerteaux, Lisa Lavelle, Bob Meade, Joyce Seibold, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Peter Woodman, Sam Woodman*

## 2007 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT COMPLETE LIST

Pied-billed Grebe 8  
Eared Grebe 21  
American White Pelican 3  
Great Blue Heron 1  
Black-crowned Night-Heron 1  
Tundra Swan 6  
Snow Goose (blue form) 23  
Snow Goose (white form) 3941  
Ross' Goose 428  
Canada Goose 17  
Cackling Goose 7  
Green-winged Teal 259  
Mallard 112  
Northern Pintail 55

Cinnamon Teal 12  
 Northern Shoveler 2269  
 Gadwall 86  
 American Wigeon 28  
 Redhead 2  
 Ring-necked Duck 11  
 Lesser Scaup 2  
 Bufflehead 12  
 Ruddy Duck 365  
 Northern Harrier 10  
 Sharp-shinned Hawk 8  
 Cooper's Hawk 15  
 "Sharp-shinned/Cooper's" species 1  
 Red-tailed Hawk 42  
 Golden Eagle (Adult) 1  
 American Kestrel 21  
 Prairie Falcon 12  
 Chukar 30  
 California Quail 513  
 Virginia Rail 4  
 Common Moorhen 2  
 American Coot 822  
 Killdeer 32  
 American Avocet 1  
**Red Phalarope 1**  
 Western Sandpiper 45  
 Least Sandpiper 43  
 Dunlin 4  
 Long-billed Dowitcher 24  
 Wilson's Snipe 1  
 Ring-billed Gull 12  
 California Gull 3  
 large gull sp. 16  
 Rock Pigeon 457  
 Mourning Dove 1037  
 Eurasian Collared Dove 69  
 Greater Roadrunner 4  
 Barn Owl 1  
 Great Horned Owl 1  
 Burrowing Owl 4  
 Long-eared Owl 32  
 Anna's Hummingbird 21  
 Costa's Hummingbird 12  
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1  
 Red-naped Sapsucker 2  
**Nuttall's Woodpecker 1**  
 Hairy Woodpecker 2  
 Northern Flicker (Red-shafted form) 43  
 Black Phoebe 9  
 Say's Phoebe 20  
 Loggerhead Shrike 21  
 Steller's Jay 1  
 Common Raven 353  
 Horned Lark 1982  
 Barn Swallow 2  
 Oak Titmouse 4

Verdin 29  
 Bushtit 11  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch 1  
 Bewick's Wren 8  
 Marsh Wren 18  
 Cactus Wren 2  
 Rock Wren 7  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet 23  
 Mountain Bluebird 130  
 Varied Thrush 1  
 American Robin 16  
 Hermit Thrush 1  
 Northern Mockingbird 65  
 Le Conte's Thrasher 5  
 European Starling 960  
 American Pipit 77  
 Cedar Waxwing 6  
 Orange-crowned Warbler 2  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) 52  
 Spotted Towhee 20  
 Sage Sparrow 428  
 Black-throated Sparrow 2  
 Brewer's Sparrow 1  
 Savannah Sparrow 27  
 White-crowned Sparrow 748  
 Fox Sparrow 1  
 Song Sparrow 9  
 Lincoln's Sparrow 3  
 Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) 273  
 Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored) 3  
 Western Meadowlark 41  
 Red-winged Blackbird 322  
 Brewer's Blackbird 456  
 Great-tailed Grackle 56  
 House Finch 390  
 Lesser Goldfinch 26  
 American Goldfinch 31  
 House Sparrow 545  
 104 species  
 18,205 individuals.  
 2 new species for the count in bold

## GET THE LEAD OUT

After many years and many dollars of effort to save the critically endangered California Condor, the so-far successful reintroduction program is threatened by the loss of birds to lead-contaminated meat killed by hunters.

After unsuccessful attempts to get legislation passed barring its use, The Center for Biological Diversity has taken the issue to court, and needs your help in convincing the legislature that lead ammunition must be eliminated in the condors' range. Says the CBD, "The success of the \$40 million California Condor recovery program hangs in the balance."

For more information and to find out how you can help, visit [www.savethecondors.org](http://www.savethecondors.org).