

The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

June 2014

June CALENDAR

Nothing planned.
Have a good Summer!
See you in September

Audubon California Grant TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD HABITAT RESTORATION

Kerncrest Audubon Society and Kern Audubon Society have received grants of \$6,000 each for enhancing habitat for breeding Tricolored Blackbirds. Each chapter is to match those funds with a 50% (\$3,000) match. Kerncrest has already obtained partial funding from the Barnes Family Foundation and the Kern River Valley Heritage Foundation, so need only come up with an additional \$1,500, to come from Birdathon proceeds and chapter reserves. Your contributions to this project will be more than welcome.

Here are some of the words from the grant application, some paraphrased:

The colonial nature of Tricolored Blackbirds makes them particularly vulnerable during the breeding season. Native grasslands once used for nesting and feeding have been lost to urban and agricultural development. The majority of the Tricolored Blackbird population uses agricultural fields for nesting habitat. This is problematic because crops are harvested during the middle of the breeding season when there are eggs and/or young in the nests, making the agriculture habitat a sink habitat detrimental to the species population.

Our aim is to enhance, create, and protect habitat for breeding Tricolored Blackbirds at three locations in the Kern River Valley. Our primary habitat enhancement site is at the Bob Powers gateway Preserve located directly southwest of intersection of Highways 155 and 178 adjacent to the town of Lake Isabella. The site currently has a man-made pond created specifically for Tricolored Blackbirds, and has had breeding Tricolored Blackbirds in the past (last observed nesting on site in 2012). However, the wetland is dependent upon seasonal rains for water and is not used by blackbirds annually. We propose drilling a well and installing a solar power submersible pump to develop this site into an annually dependable breeding location.

The accompanying photos show what the area looked like in 2012, and what it looks like now, in a drought year.

The other two locations are both on the Audubon Kern River Preserve (KRP). Both have established wells in place, and the wells need new solar panels to operate. Both KRP

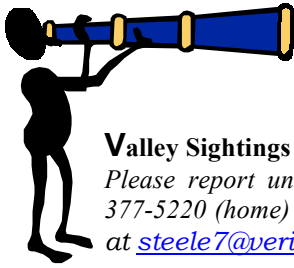
wetlands need enhancement to develop into suitable location for Tricolored Blackbird nesting.

So we got the grant, with much thanks to John Stanek, Bob Barnes, Sean Rowe, Tom Anderson and others who worked on putting it together! Work will continue after the completion of these projects in the form of population monitoring. We will be looking for volunteers. Keep this in mind for next season.



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Valley Sightings – May 2014

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

While the four **Brandt** at the ponds May 21 is a good number for the valley, it is not the high count which was thirteen back on June 23, 2010 (TL).

The female **Common Goldeneye** at the ponds lingered until May 2 (SLS).

A female **Red-breasted Merganser** was at the ponds May 1 (SLS).

The **Common Loon** was last seen at the old sewage ponds May 1-3 (BB). Another two Common Loons were at the ponds May 6 (TL).

The **Horned Grebe** remained through May 16 (SLS).

The **Band-tailed Pigeon** seen in Indian Wells Canyon on May 3 was the first in the valley in four years (L&SSu, N&EG).

In addition to our **White-winged Doves** that are trying to breed in Ridgecrest, another White-winged Dove was N of Inyokern May 11 (SLS). Now for the rest of the story about the doves in Ridgecrest. On May 4 they were observed mating and carrying nesting material (EC). On May 5 the nest was found (EC). Unfortunately, this nest did not have a happy ending and a shattered egg was discovered under the nest on May 11 (EC). This pair and another pair have both been seen carrying sticks for nesting subsequent to the first nesting attempt (EC), and with luck juveniles will be observed shortly.

A **Long-eared Owl** nest was discovered at the cemetery May 1 (BB) and three juveniles still with some fluffy feathers were seen out of the nest on May 28 (SLS).

Peregrine Falcons used to be a major rarity in the valley and endangered species across the United States. The success of their rebound can be seen from this month's sights at the ponds: the 1st (BB), 6th (TL), 11th (TW, LA), 12th (SLS), 21st (TL), and 28th (SLS).

An **Eastern Phoebe** was photographed at the cemetery on May 13 (SLS). This species is unexpected in our area at any time of year, being only the 2nd record, but completely mind boggling in the spring.

LOS for **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was from the S of Inyokern May 4 (BS).

A **Phainopepla** was at the college May 2 (JS), S of Inyokern May 18 (BS) and another was SW of Inyokern May 30 (LK).

An **Ovenbird** was at the college May 31 (GW).

Two **Black-and-white Warblers** were at the cemetery May 16 (SLS).

Cow Heaven Canyon's list is now at 86 species with the additions of **Hermit Warbler**, **Fox Sparrow**, and **Bullock's Oriole** on May 3 (BS).

Yellow-breasted Chats were SW of Inyokern May 7-11 (LK) and May 21 (SM), S of Inyokern May 7 (BS), and in Ridgecrest May 25 (JS) and May 11 (LS).

LOS for **White-crowned Sparrow** was from SW of Inyokern May 22 (SM).

A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at a backyard feeder May 28 (BBu).

Our only **Blue Grosbeak** was from SW of Inyokern May 10-11 and 17 (LK).

Thanks to the following observers: *Liga Auzins, Bob Barnes, Brenda Burnett, Encar Card, Tim Ludwick, Louise Knecht, Susan Moore, Joyce Seibold, Bob Steele, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Gary Wood, Tom Wurster*

KERN COUNTY BIRDIEST WEEKEND MAY 1 THROUGH 4, 2014

The following facts were provided by Bob Barnes at the end of subject weekend. We will not list the 240 species sighted, for lack of space. They are available from chatbird@verizon.net upon request. Those sighted only in the Lake Isabella watershed on May 3 are included in the Birdathon list on page 3, with an asterisk.

***72 Hour Kern Birdiest Count, 3:30pm, Thursday, May 1, 2014 through to 3:30pm, Sunday, May 4, 2014.

***REPORTED IN 2013, NOT IN 2014:
Ross's Goose, Snow Goose, Cackling Goose, Canvasback, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pacific Golden-Plover, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Red-naped Sapsucker, Yellow-billed Magpie, Ovenbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Grace's Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, Indigo Bunting

***REPORTED IN 2014, NOT IN 2013:
Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Common Loon, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Ruddy Turnstone, Gull-billed Tern, Flammulated Owl, Plumbeous Vireo

***PRESENT THURSDAY MORNING BEFORE 3:30PM COUNT START AND MISSED DURING COUNT: Pacific Loon, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow

***TOTAL SPECIES NUMBERS FROM KERN BIRDIEST 72 HOUR COUNTS: 2006-246 species, 2007-235 species, 2008-241 species, 2009-246 species, 2010-242 species, 2011-245 species, 2012-242 species, 2013-251 species, 2014-240 species

BIRDATHON 2014

Gadwall	Black-chinned Hummingbird	Townsend's Solitaire *
Mallard	Anna's Hummingbird	Hermit Thrush
Cinnamon Teal	Costa's Hummingbird	American Robin
Northern Shoveler	Acorn Woodpecker *	Northern Mockingbird
Redhead	Lewis's Woodpecker*	California Thrasher *
Ring-necked Duck	Nuttall's Woodpecker *	Le Conte's Thrasher
Bufflehead	Hairy Woodpecker *	European Starling
Ruddy Duck	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Mountain Quail *	Red-breasted Sapsucker *	Orange-crowned Warbler
California Quail	White-headed Woodpecker *	MacGillivray's Warbler
Common Loon	Northern Flicker *	Common Yellowthroat
Western Grebe *	Pileated Woodpecker *	Yellow Warbler
Clark's Grebe *	American Kestrel	Yellow-rumped Warbler (M)
Pied-billed Grebe	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Yellow-rumped Warbler (A)
Eared Grebe	Western Wood-Pewee	Black-throated Gray Warbler
American White Pelican *	Hammond's Flycatcher	Townsend's Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Gray Flycatcher	Hermit Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Wilson's Warbler
Great Egret	Dusky Flycatcher *	Green-tailed Towhee
Snowy Egret	Black Phoebe	California Towhee
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Say's Phoebe	Spotted Towhee *
White-faced Ibis	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Western Kingbird	Brewer's Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Loggerhead Shrike	Lark Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cassin's Vireo	Black-throated Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Hutton's Vireo *	Bell's Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk *	Warbling Vireo	Savannah Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Pinyon Jay	Fox Sparrow (Thick-billed)
American Coot	Steller's Jay *	Fox Sparrow (Slate-colored)
Black-necked Stilt	Western Scrub-Jay	Song Sparrow
American Avocet	Common Raven	Lincoln's Sparrow
Killdeer	Horned Lark	White-crowned Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Northern Rough-winged	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Willet	Swallow	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)
Marbled Godwit	Tree Swallow	Western Tanager
Least Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Summer Tanager *
Western Sandpiper	Cliff Swallow	Black-headed Grosbeak
Long-billed Dowitcher	Violet-green Swallow *	Blue Grosbeak *
Wilson's Phalarope	Mountain Chickadee *	Lazuli Bunting *
Red-necked Phalarope	Oak Titmouse *	Red-winged Blackbird
Bonaparte's Gull	Verdin	Tricolored Blackbird *
Franklin's Gull	Red-breasted Nuthatch *	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Ring-billed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch *	Brewer's Blackbird
California Gull	Rock Wren	Great-tailed Grackle
Black Tern	House Wren	Hooded Oriole
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	Pacific Wren *	Bullock's Oriole
Band-tailed Pigeon	Marsh Wren	Scott's Oriole
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Bewick's Wren	House Finch
White-winged Dove	Cactus Wren	Purple Finch *
Mourning Dove	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Pine Siskin
Greater Roadrunner	Golden-crowned Kinglet *	Lesser Goldfinch
Northern Saw-whet Owl *	Wrentit *	American Goldfinch
Great Horned Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *	Lawrence's Goldfinch *
Burrowing Owl	Swainson's Thrush	House Sparrow
Lesser Nighthawk	Western Bluebird*	*Seen west of Walker Pass only

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Newsletter of the Kerncrest Audubon society
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