



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

The Chat



March 2014

March CALENDAR

Wed	Mar 19	6:00 pm	Board Meeting at Burnett's (refreshments by Parker)
Thu	Mar 20	7:00 pm	General Meeting Mike Prather
Sun	Mar 30	6:45 am	Field Trip to Tejon Ranch

General Meeting MIKE PRATHER

Our speaker for March is Mike Prather. Mike and his wife Nancy have resided in Inyo County since 1972 when they moved to Death Valley to teach. Mike and Nancy now live in Lone Pine after retiring from 30 years of teaching. Mike has actively been working on land and water issues in the Owens Valley since 1980 with the Owens Valley Committee (past president), Eastern Sierra Audubon (past president) and Sierra Club (past chapter chair). The re-watering of 62 miles of the Lower Owens River and the massive wildlife return to Owens Lake as a result of the Los Angeles Owens Lake Dust Control Project has been the center of Mike's conservation focus since the early 1980's. The enhancement and protection of the Owens River and Owens Lake Important Bird Areas attracts most of his current efforts and he invites everyone to join in the fun.

Mike's topic will be "A Globally Significant Shorebird Important Bird Area (IBA) in the Making." An enormous wildlife resource has returned to Owens Lake, a migration stopover to tens of thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl that was lost nearly 100 years ago. The lake was dried as a result of water gathering by the City of Los Angeles, but now is receiving careful application of water to control the regional dust storms born with the lake's death. Roughly 35 square miles of Owens Lake's surface are covered with shallow ponds or sheet flooding resulting in thousands of acres of rich feeding habitat for sandpipers, snowy plovers, ducks and geese. In fact, 9 more square miles of ponds and sheet flooding are currently under construction.

In 2001 the National Audubon Society designated Owens Lake an Important Bird Area. Creation of a collaborative lake-wide conservation action plan was begun by Eastern Sierra Audubon and Audubon-CA in partnership with Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Department for Fish and Game and the State Lands Commission. This process has grown into a larger effort to design an Owens Lake 'Master Plan' that would seek to save water for Los Angeles in return for large tracts of designated habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl.

Today hundreds of birders and wildlife watchers are visiting the lake on guided fieldtrips to see this amazing migratory spectacle. Nesting snowy plovers (the largest inland site in California), large flocks of least and western sandpipers, thousands of American avocets, peregrine falcon, white-faced ibis and more are all at your feet on tours of the lake. Now the challenge is to determine how much of the rare resource can be protected in perpetuity. Can a balance be found between the need for water by Los Angeles and need to protect wildlife for the citizens of California?

Join us at the Maturango Museum, March 20, at 7:00 pm, for Mike's presentation.

Field Trip TEJON RANCH

At 270,000 acres, Tejon Ranch is the largest contiguous private property in California. Straddling the Tehachapi Mountains, it lies at the convergence of four of California's ten major ecological regions: Great Central Valley, Sierra Nevada, Mojave Desert, and Southwestern California. Tejon Ranch provides the only corridor for wildlife movements between vast tracts of protected lands. The Conservancy was born from the collaborative efforts of the Tejon Ranch Company, Audubon California, Endangered Habitats League, Natural Resources Defense Council, Planning and Conservation League, and Sierra Club. The Conservancy oversees the conservation of 240,000 acres of Tejon Ranch lands, home to more than 60 at-risk species

A historic agreement was reached in 2008 between Tejon Ranch and the environmental organizations to preserve this land. In exchange, the organizations agreed not to oppose Tejon Ranch's plans to develop approximately 30,000 acres located in other areas of the ranch.

Wear sturdy shoes and layered clothing, and bring a lunch. The date is Sunday, March 30th.

The Conservancy will provide 4-wheel drive vehicles and drivers/guides.

Meet at the Union 76 in Inyokern at 6:45, for departure at 7:00. Those joining us from out-of-area should plan to be at the Conservancy Headquarters, 1037 Bear Trap Rd Lebec, at 9:00.

It is imperative that you call Bob Parker at (760) 446-2001 or email him at rsparker7@msn.com by March 24th if you plan to go, so the vehicles may be arranged and any possible late changes communicated.



Valley Sightings – Dec 2013 - Feb 2014

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

December 2013

Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** arrived on Dec 10 at the ponds and remained through the month (SLS). They were also seen at the golf course (TL).

A **Tundra Swan** was at the ponds Dec 9 (SLS) and remained until the 10th (TL), and two were noted flying over Ridgecrest on the CBC (L&SSu).

A **Common Goldeneye** continued at the ponds through Dec 17 being missed more often than seen (SLS, TL, BB).

A **Hooded Merganser** lingered at the ponds through Dec 10 (SLS).

The **Bald Eagle** on the CBC was a treat. First at the ponds in the morning (SLS) and then in the afternoon it had moved to the old sewage ponds (L7SSu). Another Bald Eagle was at the ponds Dec 27 (SLS).

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was at the ponds Dec 11-23 (SLS, DVB).

A **Vermilion Flycatcher** was at the ponds Dec 1 (TL).

The **Red-breasted Sapsucker** spotted S of Inyokern was the 186th species for that location (SLS).

A **Nuttall's Woodpecker** was S of Inyokern Dec 15 (BS).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was seen at the ponds intermittently Dec 10 -23 (SLS).

Mountain Bluebirds were only reported from the golf course, with a high count of eighty on the CBC (TL, D&BBu), and two at the evaporation fields Dec 28 (L&SSu).

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was on the base Dec 17 (SLS), and another was at the college Dec 15 (ADeM, SR, RW).

A male **Varied Thrush** was at the college Dec 13 (SLS), but could not be re-found on the CBC two days later.

“Sooty” **Fox Sparrows** were S of Inyokern Dec 4 and 15 (BS), and at the ponds throughout the month (TL, DVB, SLS).

Two of the **Swamp Sparrows** at the ponds continued through Dec 15 with at least one being noted through the end of the month (SLS).

The **Harris's Sparrows** at the ponds remained throughout the month (SLS).

A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was S of Inyokern Dec 4 (SLS).

A “Gray-headed” form of the **Dark-eyed Junco** was at the college Dec 24 (SLS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Dave Blue, Bob Barnes, Dan and Brenda Burnett, Al DeMartini, Tim Ludwick, Sean Rowe, Bob Steele, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Rachel Woodard*

January 2014

FOS for **Turkey Vulture** was from S of Inyokern on Jan 11 (SLS).

The **Burrowing Owl** at the cemetery returned on Jan 13 (SLS), after it left for the winter on Oct 3.

White-throated Swifts were in Grapevine Canyon Jan 14 (TI, SE).

A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was S of Inyokern Jan 11 (SLS).

An **Acorn** and **Nuttall's Woodpecker** were in Grapevine Canyon Jan 14 (TI, SE).

A **Merlin** was at the golf course Jan 16 (SLS).

A **Vermilion Flycatcher** was at the golf course Jan 16 (SLS).

FOS for **Tree Swallow** was from the ponds Jan 22(SLS).

The **Golden-crowned Kinglet** in Ridgecrest Jan 3 was the 159th species for that location (L&SSu).

Le Conte's Thrashers were first noted carrying nesting material on Jan 12 (LK).

The only **Cedar Waxwings** reported this month were from the college Jan 13 (SLS). This is amazing considering the number of berries and attendant robins.

Our wintering warblers are usually limited to yellow-rumped with the occasional orange-crowned, so the **Black-throated Gray Warbler** found in Ridgecrest Jan 13 is a great find and our first winter record (EC). This bird was also seen on the 15 and 26th (EC, BB). To put this in perspective our earliest spring sighting date is Mar 21 and our latest fall sighting date is Oct 30.

A **Brewer's Sparrow** was at the college Jan 29 (SLS). It is hard to say if it is wintering, or a spring migrant.

A **Vesper Sparrow** was at the cemetery Jan 28 (SLS).

A "Sooty" **Fox Sparrow** was seen S of Inyokern Jan 11 and 24 (SLS).

The **Swamp Sparrow** at the ponds was seen Jan 1 (DVB), and 7-8 (SLS).

The **Harris's Sparrows** continued to be seen at the ponds throughout the month (SLS, BB).

A **Pine Siskin** was S of Inyokern Jan 11 (SLS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, Dave Blue, Encar Card, Shelley Ellis, T S Imfeld, Louise Knecht, Lee and Shirley Sutton.*

February 2014

A female **Wood Duck** was at the ponds Feb 8-13 (DVB).

A **Long-eared Owl** returned to the cemetery Feb 18 (SLS).

FOS for **Rufous Hummingbird** was from Ridgecrest Feb 20 (L&SSu).

A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was at the golf course Feb 5 (SLS).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was at the ponds Feb 18 (SLS).

The female **Vermilion Flycatcher** was seen at the golf course through Feb 10 (SLS).

The **Loggerhead Shrikes** SW of Inyokern were first seen carrying food to the nestlings Feb 14 (LK).

Townsend's Solitaires were at the college Feb 9 (DVB) and at the ponds on Feb 11 (TL).

A **Sage Thrasher** was at the ponds Feb 18 (SLS).

The **Le Conte's Thrasher** pair SW of Inyokern were first seen carrying food to their nestlings Feb 25 (LK).

The "Sooty" **Fox Sparrow** continued S of Inyokern through Feb 10 (SLS).

The **Harris's Sparrows** continued to be seen at the ponds regularly through Feb 18 (SLS, TL, DVB). After that date they have either moved on, or their flock has moved to a different location. Time will tell.

The 189th species for a yard S of Inyokern was a **Harris's Sparrow** Feb 2-5 (SLS).

The **Lincoln's Sparrow** in Ridgecrest Feb 27th was a new yard bird (D&BBu).

Thanks to the following observers: *Dave Blue, Dan and Brenda Burnett, Tim Ludwick, Louise Knecht, Joyce Seibold, Lee and Shirley Sutton,*

PLAN AHEAD

The following events are coming up in April and early May. ***Put them on your calendar!***

April 26: International Migratory Bird Day and Spring Nature Festival at the Kern River Preserve

May 3: Kerncrest Audubon Society BIRDATHON fundraiser. Save the date and start working on putting together a team!

KILLER PIPES

You may remember that a couple of years ago we ran an article on the horrible number of birds killed and made to suffer in open-topped pipes, when they enter the pipes looking for nest sites and cannot fly out. (Reprints available upon request.)

Well, most of the new pistachio orchards in the area have open topped fence posts, as do several other private properties around the valley. Kerncrest Audubon Society hopes to begin a project to fill those pipes. To do that, we will need many volunteers -- to locate the pipes, get their owners' permission, and fill them.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please call Brenda Burnett at 760-382-4935, or email chatbird@verizon.net.

Kerncrest Audubon Society Board of Directors

President	Brenda Burnett	760-375-8634
Vice President	Hector Villalobos	760-446-4908
Secretary	Sherry Brubaker	760-375-7245
Treasurer	Dan Burnett	760-375-8634
Member	Shelley Ellis	760-375-7245
Member	Tim Ludwick	724-689-3189
Committee Chairs		
Field Trips	Robert Parker	760-446-2001
Conservation	Robert Parker	
Publications	Terri Middlemiss	760-377-5192
Membership	Noel Gravelle	760-375-2325
Birdathon	Lee Sutton	760-375-1981
Alternative Energy	Hector Villalobos	760-446-4908
Newsletter Ed.	Brenda Burnett	760-375-8634
Webmaster	Noel Gravelle	760-375-2325

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

National Audubon Society

Includes 1 year of Audubon magazine, Local chapter membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Donor's address for gift subscriptions:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

____ New Member/Gift - \$20 (Renewal will be \$30)

Please enclose a check payable to National Audubon Society

Clip out and mail to: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

PO BOX 422246

C2ZC450Z

PALM COAST FL 32142-6714

Or go to our website at www.kerncrestaudubon.org, click on "Membership" in the right-hand column of the page, then click on the Audubon logo with the flying egret. When filling in the form, select the chapter C45 KERNCREST AUDUBON SOCIETY from the pull-down menu to have your first year's dues credited directly to our chapter, please.

By joining on line, you may pay by credit card.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Kerncrest Audubon Society

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

____ yr Kerncrest Audubon Society Membership @ \$15/year

(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.

Please enclose a check payable to Kerncrest Audubon Society.

Clip out and mail to: Kerncrest Audubon Society

P.O. Box 984

Ridgecrest CA 93556

National Audubon Society membership includes membership in the local chapter, a subscription to the Audubon magazine and 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.