

The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

March, 2015



MARCH CALENDAR

Wed	Mar 11	9 am	Work <u>Party</u> : Sprague Ranch
Wed	Mar 18	6 pm	Board Meeting: Thompsons
Thu	Mar 19	7 pm	General Meeting at Museum
Sat	Mar 21	8 am	Field Trip: Panamint Valley
Mon	Mar 23	9 am	Work <u>Party</u> Cow Heaven Spr.

GENERAL MEETING

Tim Ludwick: Birds of Peru *back by popular demand*

In January, Tim Ludwick provided a program on his recent trip to southern Mexico. We knew at the time he had also travelled to Peru, so we hounded him to do a presentation on that trip as well. He has agreed.

A true birders paradise, the country of Peru boasts one of the largest bird lists in the world. All these birds are found among breathtaking scenery and some of the most important archaeological sites in the world. Peru's amazing avian diversity results from the great wealth of habitats from the deserts near Lima to the humid jungles of the Amazon basin to high Andean peaks and mist-shrouded cloud forest. Tim Ludwick will present photos of birds and other wildlife from a trip in 2013 across the Andes and along the Manu Biosphere Reserve of southern Peru.

Tim has been a birder since he got his first field guide, *The Golden Guide to Birds*, as a child. Ever since then, he's been chasing birds across the US, and, more recently, Central and South America. When not out looking for birds, Tim works as a biologist for NAWS China Lake.

The program will be at the Maturango Museum at 7 pm on Thursday, March 19.

(By the Way, it looks like March is Peru month at the Maturango Museum. On Sunday, March 22, at 3pm, Andrea Pelch will be doing a program there on her trip to Peru with the Archeological Conservancy. Check it out at www.maturango.org/ and click on 2015 Lecture Program.)

FIELD TRIP

Panamint Valley Warm Springs

Last year at approximately this time, maybe a little later, we took a trip to the Panamint Valley to visit the warm sulphur springs. We saw many Phainopeplas and Yellow-rumped warblers. This year there will also be **wildflowers!**

Matter of fact, there will likely be wildflowers wherever we go this spring, thus the flowers at the top of the calendar.

Bob Parker will lead. We'll make a day of it and go looking for flowers as well as birds, and we may, if folks wish, go on up to Panamint Springs for lunch at the restaurant.

Call Bob at 760-446-2001 for more info. Meet at the Trona Road park-and-ride at 8 am. Bring snacks and water, and a picnic if you would rather that than eat at the restaurant.

COW HEAVEN SPRINGS "WORK" DAY

Every year we go up to Cow Heaven Canyon to check on the springs and the bird watering tank there, to make sure water is flowing and not all going to the cattle watering tank, and that planks allowing for escape of wildlife that land in the tank are in place. A couple of us work. The rest just bird and picnic, and enjoy the outing.

Join us! Monday, March 23. Meet at 9 am at the defunct Union 76 station in Inyokern. Call Lee Sutton at 760-375-1981 for further information.

SPRAGUE RANCH TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD POND PROJECT

Another "work" party needs help at the Sprague Ranch TRBL pond. Kerncrest promised volunteer work as "in kind" contribution for the Audubon California grant for tricolored blackbird habitat enhancement at the Kern River Preserve. We need to get up there and plant some stinging nettle stolons for nesting habitat! The work is not strenuous, and those not able to do even light work can help feed the rest of us, or take pictures, or something.

Please call Brenda at 760-382-4935 if you can help. Wednesday, March 11.



Valley Sightings – February 2015

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

Greater White-fronted Geese were at the ponds Jan 10 (SLS).

Snow Geese continued in big numbers, up to 2000 at the alfalfa fields, (L&SSu), but the last report for **Ross's Goose** was seven at the ponds Feb 8 (AS).

Canada Geese were at the old sewage ponds Feb 8 (L &AL).

A **Brewer's Duck** (Gadwall x Mallard hybrid) was at the ponds Feb 26 (SLS).

A **Common Goldeneye** was at the ponds Feb 5 (BB), and then seen again Feb 18-20 (SLS).

FOS for **Double-crested Cormorant** was from the ponds Feb 8 (AS). One was also noted battling the wind over the alfalfa fields Feb 28 (L&SSU).

FOS for **American White Pelican** was from the ponds Feb 18 (SLS).

White-faced Ibis remained at the ponds throughout the month (m.ob) for our 1st February record.

FOS for **Turkey Vulture** was from the ponds Feb 10 (BB).

Cooper's Hawks were nesting at the college Feb 25 (SLS).

Red-shouldered Hawks continued at the ponds and golf course throughout the month (m.ob.).

White-winged Doves typically arrive in the valley in April so one that showed up at the golf course Feb 18 was quite a shock (SLS).

FOS for **White-throated Swift** was from the ponds Feb 18 (SLS).

Acorn Woodpeckers were in Grapevine Canyon Feb 22 (SLS, BS).

A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at the old sewage ponds Feb 16 (L&SSu). This could very well be the bird that had been seen at the cemetery late last year.

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was on base Feb 25 (SLS). This is a continuing bird that was found late last year and is missed more than it is seen.

A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was at the golf course Feb 18 and 23 and on base Feb 25 (SLS). If this is the same bird it was a range of over a mile and a half.

A **Merlin** was at the golf course and at various locations on base Feb 20-25 (SLS).

Our first report of **Clark's Nutcracker** since May 2008 was up by Owen's Peak Feb 15 (MS).

FOS for **Violet-green Swallow** was from the golf course Feb 23 (SLS).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were in Ridgecrest Feb 9-10 (BB) and at the college Feb 25 (SLS).

A **Mountain Bluebirds** was at the golf course Feb 18, which may be our last report from the valley floor this year (SLS). They were also noted in Grapevine Canyon Feb 22 (SLS, BS).

A **Varied Thrush** continued at the college through Feb 20 (SLS).

A **California Thrasher** was singing in Grapevine Canyon Feb 22 (SLS, BS).

The **Le Conte's Thrashers** first nesting attempt ended with a blown down nest Feb 21 (LK).

A singing **Lark Sparrow** was heard SW of Inyokern Feb 14 (LK).

Pine Siskins were SW of Inyokern (LK, PW), and in Ridgecrest (BB) throughout the month, and S of Inyokern Feb 22- 28 (SLS), and at the college Feb 13 (AA).

Lawrence's Goldfinches showed up at the college Feb 20 in pairs and seem to be staying to breed (SLS). Another pair was SW of Inyokern Feb 21, but didn't remain (LK).

Thanks to the following observers: *Alice Atwood, Bob Barnes, Lisa and Aiden LaVelle, Louise Knecht, Alison Sheehy, Mark Stacy, Lee and Shirley Sutton. Peter Woodman*

DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

The period for filing comments on this plan, which was 5 years in the making, ended last Monday, February 23rd. Lee Sutton, Hector Villalobos, and Brenda Burnett (mostly Hector) jointly authored comments for Kerncrest Audubon Society, and mailed them off in time to reach Sacramento by the deadline. At press time, they had not yet been posted on the California Energy Commission DRECP web site. That may be explained by the fact that, according to an article on KCET reWire on line, some 12,000 comments

were filed, most on the last day. It will take awhile to post them all.

Kerncrest's comments are attached to the email edition, for your info. Readers of the paper edition may read them at the home of any board member, or may request a copy by calling 760-375-8634 and leaving a message. They ended up being 5 pages long.

The article by KCET can be seen at <http://www.kcet.org/news/define/rewire/government/drecp>

It is an excellent article, mostly about the Environmental Protection Agency's comments on the plan. We were happy to see that they discussed the issues of dust and water.

All comments may be read (eventually) at <http://drecp.org/draftdrecp/comments/>

You will see that, compared to more general comments from several environmental organizations, Kerncrest's were specific to the local area. That is because we were advised by Department of Fish and Wildlife personnel at the workshops held locally that comments reflecting local expertise and describing local situations would most likely be considered for changes to the plan.

Another comment letter that supports ours is one from Philip Leitner.

Other good ones are from Basin & Range Watch, and Rebecca Unger.

I could go on. You could spend days/months reading them all!

CHAT MAILINGS

Back in November, we ran a questionnaire asking people to respond if they wanted the Chat, in either electronic or paper form. We received a heartening response, which indicated that most of our members want the Chat emailed. Only 15 responded that they want to continue to receive it in paper form.

Now, we are concerned that some who really want the Chat happened not to read that issue, or failed to realize that no response meant no Chat. We went ahead and implemented the change, since our bulk mail permit expired at the end of 2014 and we elected not to pay the \$200 to continue it for another year.

Do you know of anyone who is missing their Chat? Please, if you do, please let me know of them by calling 760-375-8634, or have them email me at chatbird@verizon.net if they wish to be put back on the list.

Thanks!

Brenda Burnett

FIRST ANNUAL OWENS LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL

This event is not until April, but registration is already available online, and it is suggested you sign up for field trips and register in advance, to be sure of trip availability.

We have some illustrious local members who will be leading trips and workshops, as well as accomplished birders and tour leaders from farther away. And it is important that we support this festival and help build up enthusiasm for our local Important Bird Area!

The brochure can be accessed through the Friends of the Inyo web site: friendsoftheinyo.org and click on Owens Lake Bird Festival under Coming Events over on the left.

April 25, 2015, with early registration and a reception on Friday, April 24.

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP TO BUTTERBREDT SPRINGS

Those who "chickened out" and did not go because of the wind missed a wonderful outing.

Now we know why the birds drop down into that spring when the wind is blowing from the west: it is protected!

Five intrepid birders went, and saw a total of 17 species including absolute swarms of Ruby-crowned Kinglets (2 dozen?) and Lawrence's Goldfinches (20 or so); lots of yellow-rumped warblers (1 Myrtle), and even an orange-crowned warbler. Ten turkey vultures soared overhead, seemingly able to use the westerly wind to angle across and go due north.

And of course wildflowers.

HOUSE WREN

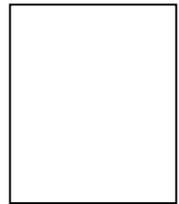
Is it OK to quote something that is copyrighted as long as you say where you got it? I think so, else many term papers would be in violation of copyright laws. So here goes:

This is from the book *Charles Harper's Birds & Words* published by Frame House Gallery, 1974:

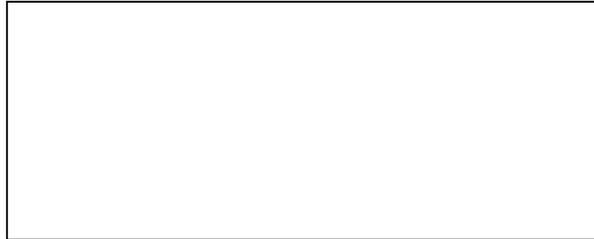
"If House Wrens were people, they would probably remodel old farm-houses. But they're not, so they remodel others things, like old shoes, tin cans, cows' skulls and clothespin bags, using twigs, grass, feathers, bark and spider webs. He stakes off the lot and fills some holes with sticks. She decides which one they'll call home, throws out all his furniture, and starts from scratch. Maybe House Wrens *are* people."

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Newsletter of the Kerncrest Audubon society
P.O. Box 984, Ridgecrest, CA 93556



March 2015



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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
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