



The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

May 2012

MAY CALENDAR

Wed	May 16	6:00 pm	Board Meeting at Burnetts'
Thu	May 17	7:00 pm	General Meeting
Sat	May 19	8:00 am	Field Trip to Sage Flats

General Meeting

ILEENE ANDERSON

Ileene Anderson, biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity, will give an update on the status of large-scale planning processes in the California Desert, including the Ridgecrest area regarding the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan and BLM's Solar Development Planning. Her presentation will cover development issues affecting California condors and golden eagles and updates on current relatively local projects of concern including Pine Tree golden eagle mortality and current litigation over the North Sky River project.

Ileene has an MS in biology from Cal State Northridge and has worked on desert conservation issues for over 20 years, including the last seven years with the Center for Biological Diversity. She served six years on BLM's Desert Advisory Council. She has great respect and affection for desert landscapes and the species they support.

7:00 pm Thursday, May 17 at the Maturango Museum.

(Some background: Many in Kerncrest Audubon Society have felt that the positions of California Audubon and the National Audubon Society have been too much in favor of alternative energy at almost any cost, and that those organizations have provided too little support for efforts such as ours to prevent destruction of valuable desert habitat. The Center for Biological Diversity, on the other hand, filed as Intervenor in the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project, have joined other organizations in suing Kern County over their recent certification of a wind energy project in Jawbone Canyon very near Butterbrecht Springs, and have in general provided *much-appreciated* support to the cause of protecting desert wildlife and preserving their habitat. Ileene has personally provided much of that support.)

Field Trip

SAGE FLATS

May is starting to get hot in the Indian Wells Valley, so it's time to head for the hills for our last field trip of the season. Join leader Brenda Burnett at the 76 Station in Inyokern at 8:00 am on Saturday, May 19 for a drive to Sage Flats, above Olancho. Bring a picnic, plenty of water, and layered clothing.

This trip will afford opportunities for no-hiking birding from the car and parking areas, and for a side hike through a grove of pinyon pines for those who want some exercise. We'll hope for Oak Titmouse and woodpeckers, among others. Depending on the weather, some or all may want to proceed to the waterfall in Fall Canyon, or to Owens Lake for a search for shore birds after leaving Sage Flats. Call Brenda at 760-382-4935 to sign up or for more information.

BIRDATHON

We had a beautiful day for this year's birdathon, which took place on Saturday, April 28th. It was a warm day with very little wind but just enough breeze to keep the temperature comfortable. The teams participating this year included the Sand Canyon Point Counters (Dan Burnett and Lisa Lavelle); the Three Stooges (Lee and Shirley Sutton and Jean Sutton Klingbeil); the Bushtits (Brenda Burnett, Terri Middlemiss, Nancy Robinson, and Joyce Seibold); and the Wandering Albatrosses (Lloyd and Sherry Brubaker).

Areas covered throughout the day included the college, the cemetery, the Ridgecrest and Inyokern ponds, the wild burro facility, Indian Wells and Sand canyons, Cow Heaven Canyon, Walker Pass, Grapevine Canyon, Brown Road, and the China Lake ponds. Most teams did an old-fashioned race to get the most species, with the exception of the Sand Canyon Point Counters, who concentrated on trying for mountain species in Sand and Indian Wells canyons. The Bushtits tallied the highest number, 98, by covering the college, the cemetery and old sewer ponds, Cow Heaven Canyon, Walker Pass, Grapevine Canyon, the Knecht ranch, the

(continued on page 3)



Valley Sightings April 2012

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

The 369th species for the valley was a **Western Gull** at the ponds Apr 26 (SLS). It was also the 293rd species for the ponds.

A **Mallard x Gadwall** hybrid was at the golf course Apr 11 (SLS).

A **Cinnamon x Blue-winged Teal** hybrid was at the ponds Apr 17-26 (SLS).

The **American Bittern** at the ponds Apr 19 (DVB) was the first seen since 30 Apr 2009.

A **Green Heron** was at the ponds Apr 22 (DVB).

Ospreys were at the ponds Apr 1 (DVB) and 29 (AS), W of Inyokern Apr 9 (BBu), and N of Inyokern Apr 11 (TM).

The seventeen **Swainson's Hawks** at the ponds Apr 9 was a new high count for the valley (SLS). Additional **Swainson's Hawks** were seen in Ridgecrest Apr 10 (SLS), at the ponds Apr 11 (SLS), and north of Inyokern Apr 24 (TM).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was at the ponds Apr 1 (DVB).

FOS for **Semipalmated Plover** was from the ponds Apr 13 (DVB).

A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at the ponds Apr 16-19 (SLS).

FOS for **Wilson's Phalarope** was Apr 19 at the ponds (TL).

FOS for **Red-necked Phalarope** was from the ponds Apr 11 (DVB). This is a new early spring date for the valley, with the previous being Apr 16.

It has been a good spring for **Franklin's Gulls**. The first were seen Apr 6 and they were seen through the rest of month with a high count of sixteen on Apr 27 (BB).

A **Herring Gull** was at the ponds Apr 5 (SLS).

FOS for **Forster's Tern** was from the ponds Apr 11 (SLS).

FOS for **Lesser Nighthawk** was from the ponds Apr 15 (DVB).

A **Common Poorwill** was N of Inyokern Apr 18-28 (fide TM).

FOS for **Vaux's Swift** was at the ponds April 27 (B&DBu)

FOS for **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was from SE Ridgecrest Apr 11 (L&SSu).

Calliope Hummingbirds were seen S of Inyokern Apr 11 (SLS), and at the college Apr 16 (AS).

Belted Kingfishers were seen at the ponds Apr 5, 6 (DVB), and 10th (SLS), and at the old sewage ponds Apr 17 (SLS).

A **Downy Woodpecker** was at the college Apr 22 (JS). This is a new late spring date for the valley with the previous date being Apr 3.

Four new species, **Gray Flycatcher**, **House Wren**, **Vesper Sparrow** and **Lesser Goldfinch** were added to the Cow Heaven Canyon list Apr 7 bringing the total there to 81 species (SLS, AS).

FOS for **Olive-sided Flycatcher** and **Western Wood Pewee** were from SW Inyokern Apr 26 (LK), for **Ash-**

throated Flycatcher was from the ponds Apr 19 (SLS), for **Gray Flycatcher** was from the ponds Apr 5 (DVB), for **Hammond's Flycatcher** was from the ponds Apr 16 (SLS), and for **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was from Indian Wells Canyon Apr 6 (L&SSu).

A **Vermilion Flycatcher** was at the ponds Apr 28 (KL).

FOS for **Cassin's** and **Warbling Vireo** was from Nine Mile Canyon Apr 8 (SLS, AS).

FOS for **Violet-green Swallow** was from the evaporation fields Apr 14 (L&SSu).

FOS for **Bank Swallow** was from the ponds Apr 6 (DVB).

A **Mountain Chickadee** was in Nine Mile Canyon Apr 8 (SLS, AS).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were at the college Apr 16 (AS)-18 (BB).

A **White-breasted Nuthatch** was in Nine Mile Canyon Apr 8 (SLS, AS).

FOS for **House Wren** was from Cow Heaven Canyon Apr 7 (SLS, AS).

The last **Mountain Bluebird** sighting in the valley this spring was at the golf course Apr 11 (SLS).

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was in Nine Mile Canyon Apr 8 (SLS, AS).

FOS for **Nashville Warbler** was from the college Apr 17 (BB).

FOS for **Yellow Warbler** was from the golf course Apr 23 (SLS).

FOS for **Townsend's Warbler** was from S of Inyokern Apr 26 (SLS).

FOS for **Hermit Warbler** was from the college Apr 18 (SLS, SE).

FOS for **MacGillvray's Warbler** was from Cow Heaven Canyon Apr 7 (SLS, AS).

FOS for **Yellow-breasted Chat** was from S of Inyokern Apr 25 (BS).

FOS for **Western Tanager** was from S of Inyokern Apr 11 (SLS).

FOS for **Brewer's Sparrow** and vesper Sparrow was from Cow Heaven Canyon Apr 7 (SLS, AS).

FOS for **Black-headed Grosbeak** was from SE Ridgecrest Apr 11 (L&SSu).

FOS for **Lazuli Bunting** was from the college Apr 16 (AS).

FOS for **Scott's Oriole** was from Cow Heaven Canyon Apr 7 (SLS, AS).

A **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was in Indian Wells Canyon Apr 6 (L&SSu).

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, David Blue, Brenda and Dan Burnett, Shelley Ellis, Louise Knecht, Kelli Levinson, Tim Ludwick, Terri Middlemiss, Joyce Seibold, Alison Sheehy, Bob Steele, Lee Sutton, Shirley Sutton*

BIRDATHON continued

Middlemiss yard, and the Inyokern ponds. All teams shared the count of the China Lake ponds, made the evening of the 27th by Dan and Brenda Burnett. Total number of species seen was 113.

BIRDATHON 2012 SPECIES LIST

Eared Grebe	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Double-crested Cormorant	Western Wood-Pewee
Great Egret	Pacific-slope Flycatcher
Snowy Egret	Black Phoebe
White-faced Ibis	Say's Phoebe
Turkey Vulture	Ash-throated Flycatcher
Snow Goose	Western Kingbird
Canada Goose	Loggerhead Shrike
Gadwall	Plumbeous Vireo
Mallard	Warbling Vireo
Cinnamon Teal	Western Scrub Jay
Northern Shoveler	Common Raven
Lesser Scaup	Horned Lark
Ruddy Duck	Tree Swallow
Osprey	Barn Swallow
Northern Harrier	Oak Titmouse
Cooper's Hawk	Verdin
Red-tailed Hawk	Cactus Wren
American Kestrel	Rock Wren
Prairie Falcon	Bewick's Wren
Chukar	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
California Quail	Hermit Thrush
Common Moorhen	American Robin
American Coot	Northern Mockingbird
Snowy Plover	LeConte's Thrasher
Semipalmated Plover	European Starling
Killdeer	Orange-crowned Warbler
Black-necked Stilt	Yellow Warbler
American Avocet	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Greater Yellowlegs	Townsend's Warbler
Spotted Sandpiper	Hermit Warbler
Whimbrel	MacGillivray's Warbler
Western Sandpiper	Common Yellowthroat
Least Sandpiper	Wilson's Warbler
Wilson's Phalarope	Western Tanager
Red-necked Phalarope	Green-tailed Towhee
Bonaparte's Gull	Spotted Towhee
Ring-billed Gull	California Towhee
Caspian Tern	Chipping Sparrow
Common Tern *	Lark Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Black-throated Sparrow
Eurasian Collared Dove	Sage Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Savannah Sparrow
Greater Roadrunner	Song Sparrow
Burrowing Owl	Lincoln's Sparrow
Long-eared Owl	White-crowned Sparrow
Lesser Nighthawk	Dark-eyed Junco
Vaux's Swift	Black-headed Grosbeak
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Lazuli Bunting
Anna's Hummingbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Costa's Hummingbird	Western Meadowlark
Rufous Hummingbird	Brewer's Blackbird

Great-tailed Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Hooded Oriole
Bullock's Oriole
Scott's Oriole
House Finch
Lesser Goldfinch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

*There is uncertainty re whether this was a Common or Forster's Tern. Doesn't matter: it was only counted once.

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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.

The Chat

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P.O. Box 984, Ridgecrest, CA 93556

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