

# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

November 2008

## **NOVEMBER CALENDAR**

Tues	Nov 11	6pm	Board Meeting, Brubakers'
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Nov 13</b>	<b>7pm</b>	<b>General Meeting</b>
Sat	Dec 06	8am	Indian Joe Canyon
Sun	Dec 14		Christmas Bird Count

## **GENERAL MEETING**

### **The Dirt on Mohave Ground Squirrels**

Howard Clark, from Fresno, California, will give a presentation on the state threatened Mohave Ground Squirrel in November. He will talk about the general ecology of the squirrel and discuss his adventures trapping the species in the Mojave Desert during most years since 2001. There will be many photos of his field experiences, including birds and reptiles that happen into the traps. Some of his fieldwork occurred in the Ridgecrest area. Howard will also talk about history and conservation of the species.

Howard is an accomplished wildlife ecologist and biologist with 11 years of professional wildlife and research experience, focused on the fauna and ecosystems of Northern, Central and Southern California, and the Mojave Desert. He currently works for an ecological consultant firm in Fresno.

So please join us for this free program at the Maturango Museum on Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Note that **this program is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday** instead of our usual 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday. For further information, contact me, Lee Sutton at 375-1981.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

There is no field trip planned for November, but there are several available in December, depending upon how many Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) you sign up for, in addition to our Kerncrest AS trip to Indian Joe Canyon. In case the December newsletter is late in being published, I'll cover them here for your advanced planning.

Note the trip to the Wind Wolves Preserve near Bakersfield, originally tentatively scheduled for November, has been rescheduled for the end of January, to coincide with the date their manager is available to come provide the evening program for our general meeting.

## **INDIAN JOE CANYON**

Kerncrest Audubon Society is voluntarily responsible for monitoring a Department of Fish and Game Preserve at Indian Joe Canyon in the Argus range. We haven't been there for a couple of years, so have scheduled December's field trip to go visit it.

It's a beautiful, moderate but longish (1.25 miles each way) hike to the stream at the Preserve. Bring a picnic lunch, and the usual preparation for desert hiking: sunscreen, jackets, hat, lots of water.

We'll meet at the park-and-ride on Trona Road at 8am on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **CHINA LAKE CBC**

As usual, the China Lake Christmas Bird Count will be held on the earliest date possible, Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. The Compiler will again be Peter Woodman, who can be reached at 760-377-3466.

For those of you west of Walker Pass who want to go west, the Bakersfield count is the same day. The compiler is John Wilson, and there is a link to his web site at the naturali site below.

The South Fork and Isabella counts will again be in January, and I will remind you of them in the next newsletter.

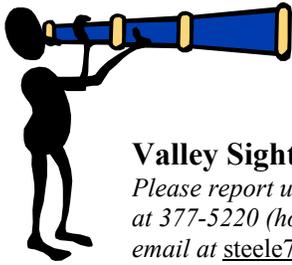
For information on scheduling and contacts for all of California's Christmas Bird Counts, visit [natureali.org/cbcs.htm](http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm).

## **UPCOMING FESTIVALS**

12<sup>th</sup> annual **Central Valley Birding Symposium**  
November 20th to 23rd, 2008 at the Stockton Grand Hotel, Stockton, California  
<http://www.cvbirds.org/Symposium.htm>.

13<sup>th</sup> annual **Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival**  
January 16-19, 2009. All-day and half-day tours and workshops throughout the festival, and outstanding evening speakers on Saturday and Sunday. The variety of vendors at this festival is always stupendous. You may view the schedule, sign up for trips and register for the festival at their web site, [www.morrobaybirdfestival.org](http://www.morrobaybirdfestival.org).

Or call me at 375-8634 to arrange to borrow my paper copy of the schedule and registration form.



## Valley Sightings October 2008

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 **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at the ponds Oct 20-28 (SS).

The **Baird's Sandpiper** at the ponds Oct 25 is later than expected (TW).

**Pectoral Sandpiper** sightings were not as numerous this fall as in previous years with only 3 different sightings Sep 18-Oct 1 (SS).

The **Stilt Sandpiper** at the ponds Oct 21 is the first one seen in the valley since Aug 30, 2005 and the latest sighting date in the valley (SS).

Interesting birds from the El Pasos include a **Common Poorwill** on Oct 1 and **Pinyon Jays** on Oct 2 (DLaB).

The latest **Rufous Hummingbird** reported this fall was N of Inyokern Oct 10 (PG).

A hike in Grapevine Canyon Oct 2 produced a **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, and **Hairy** and **Acorn Woodpeckers** (SS, SE).

**Red-naped Sapsuckers** were reported Oct 18 from the college (JS) and N of Inyokern (PG).

**American Crows** have been reported 14 times in the valley with eleven of the sightings between Oct 20 and Nov 6. The latest fit this trend nicely being seen Oct 26 in Ridgecrest (BB).

**Red-breasted Nuthatches** were at the college Oct 19 (SS), in Ridgecrest Oct 20-26 (BB), and intermittently through the month (LS).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> valley record of **Gray Catbird** spent his Oct 6-11 stay N of Inyokern eating oranges (LB).

The **Phainopepla** SW of Inyokern Oct 17 is the first one reported this fall (LK).

The 10<sup>th</sup> valley record of **Northern Parula** was from the ponds Oct 1 (SS).

Rare Warblers at the college included the 3<sup>rd</sup> valley record of **Magnolia Warbler** on Oct 12 and the 7<sup>th</sup> valley record of **Palm Warbler** on Oct 18 (JS).

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was N of Inyokern Sep 23 (LB).

The **White-throated Sparrow** N of Inyokern Oct 28 was a new yard bird and the first seen this year (LB).

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at the college Oct 19 (SS).

The **Black-headed Grosbeak** N of Inyokern Oct 5 was later than expected (PG).

A **Bobolink** was at the ponds Oct 1 (SS).

**Pine Siskins** were at the college Oct 19 (SS).

**American Goldfinches** were SE of Inyokern Oct 11 (LK), and S of Inyokern Oct 20 (BS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Linda Bates, Bob Barnes, Shelley Ellis, Patrice Glasco, Louise Knecht, Denise LaBerteaux, Joyce Seibold, Bob Steele, Lee Sutton, Tom Wurster,*

## CONSERVATION CORNER

by Terri Middlemiss

"Imposter Fish". An article in the Oct.-Dec. 2008 issue of "Conservation".

This subject relates to birds because the over-fishing of the world's oceans removes their food sources, and seabirds are killed on long-lines. There is wide-spread deceit carried out by the many handlers of seafood as they re-label less desirable fish to make us think that the health of the ocean is hunky-dory.

After all, we can still find red snapper, can't we? The only true red snapper that IS a red snapper comes from the Gulf of Mexico. Pacific red snapper is several different species of rockfish found along the U.S. Pacific coast. When red snapper samples were tested in a study done by Stephen Palumbi through Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station in Monterey, 77% of them were something else, like the lowly tilapia. Eating expensive red snapper at a sushi bar could find you really eating cheaper tilapia. Other fish labeled as red snapper come from other countries who don't have fishing regulations that protect species from exhaustion. Other tests of seafood from restaurants and stores turns up "mystery meat" and even unknown species!

Slimehead is now named Orange Roughy, Stumpknocker is Spotted Sunfish and Rock Salmon is really Spiny Dogfish. All are species which used to be considered "trash fish."

What happens is, "Mislabeling and renaming drive a vicious cycle in which preferred species are depleted, only to be replaced by less-palatable fish which in turn are depleted and replaced by even less-palatable ones."

The pocket seafood guides that we have been carrying around are undermined by the name

swapping that goes on within the industry. "The ability of individuals to vote with their restaurant bill is pretty much short-circuited, says Palumbi."

"The U.S. imports 80% of its seafood – and the FDA inspected only 0.59% of it in 2006." Whole Foods Market has begun certifying its suppliers of farmed (there is another whole topic!) seafood and for wild-caught fish. But, most seafood consumed is in restaurants where there are no labels available and waiters and chefs give false assurances such as "pregnant swordfish are released from the net". In another study by Palumbi's students, fish bought from stores found that 60% of the fillets tested fell outside the FDA's 13 codified species. This means that they were fish from over fished species, species in a 75% decline.

A fish can change hands half a dozen times as it travels from hook (where hooked seabirds, turtles, porpoises and sharks are drowned) to plate. It can travel back and forth across the world. "As distance from the hook increases and knowledge of fish decreases, the likelihood of mislabeling grows," says Jennifer Jacquet, author of a paper examining the consequences of renaming seafood...."

I suspected when I gave up eating seafood years ago, that there were reasons beyond over-fishing to consider, and that is the death of so many sea animals and the other ripples over-fishing cause. I am especially peeved to see small children wasting fried shrimp. I love seafood and miss it. I am saddened to see an uneducated public eating their way through the unseen depleted resources of the oceans. I hope this article gets a lot of attention from conservation groups who can help to inform the general public.

From the Editor,

Wow, that was an eye-opener for me! I've been conscientiously carrying around my little card, checking for what was OK to eat. I guess it's time to boycott fish in general, though some shellfish and crustaceans are still OK.

***But never shrimp!!!*** *Either they destroy the bottom dragging for them, or they cut down mangrove forests to farm them.*

For more information on the Monterey Bay Aquarium's seafood watch program, and updated information on what it's OK to eat, visit [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org).

## TRIP REPORT

### KERN PLATEAU BURN AREAS

Our October field trip to the Kern Plateau was one of our best yet. The weather was perfect, for one. The birds may not have been abundant, but the scenery was amazing and the company sublime.

Ed Royce, our teacher, used to be Head of the Research Department at the Naval Weapons Center. Upon retirement in 1988, he went back to school and earned a second PhD, this one at Cal State Davis, in Forest Management. He has since been doing independent research on and monitoring the progress of recovering forests in the local area. Our thanks to him for an interesting day.

We started through the older burn area of the Manter fire, where we stopped for a study of an area through which the fire had moved rapidly, only surface-burning the bases of some healthy trees. There we had a flyover of a White-headed Woodpecker.

We then went to the site of a newer fire, the McNalley, and had views of an area badly scarred and stripped by salvage logging – not necessarily a problem if done correctly, but in this case with many logs dragged by chains, leaving exposed dirt subject to erosion. Still, many snags were left standing, providing great perches for a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk that we watched for some time.

At our beautiful, streamside picnic lunch spot, we had good looks at a Hairy Woodpecker. We did not see the Black-backed Woodpecker one of us had so unrealistically hoped for. (Really, we were way out of its normal range!) Red-tailed Hawks, American Robins, Western Bluebirds, Pinyon Jays, Scrub Jays and Steller's Jays were numerous, as were Townsend's Solitaires, one of whom actually sang briefly for us. I'm probably forgetting a bunch of species. Call Lee Sutton at 375-1981 for a more complete accounting.

Two carloads of people from the Kern River Valley area of our membership met us at the Chimney Peak fire station. It was fun to have representation from up there, and to see people we usually see only at the festivals.

They left us after lunch, and most of the Ridgecrest folks ended the trip with a spectacular side trip up to Sherman Summit, with fantastic views of the Domeland Wilderness, and of the back side of Mount Whitney (and some close-up looks at Mountain Chickadees).

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Kerncrest Audubon Society

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*Explanation of membership categories:*

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