



The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

November 2011

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Wed	Nov 16	6:00 pm	Board Meeting	Gravelles'
Thu	Nov 17	7:00 pm	General Meeting:	Maturango Museum
Sat	Nov 19	8:30 am	Field Trip	Local Hot Spots

GENERAL MEETING REED TOLLEFSON

The South Fork Kern River supports one of California's finest remaining examples of Great Valley Cottonwood-Willow Forest. It is recognized at the state and regional levels as a valuable natural asset that provides opportunities for education, nature tourism, research and recreation. Audubon's Kern River Preserve protects 3,434 acres of this river forest, associated wetlands and uplands. We conduct habitat restoration, invasive weed control and many other types of land stewardship on our property as well as surrounding private ranches and public lands. Audubon partners with local county, state and federal resource managers to help ensure that this rare and unique river forest, our preserve and the surrounding rural landscape are preserved for the future. Audubon is working beyond the South Fork Valley as a member of the Southern Sierra Partnership a collaborative effort with The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Business Council, Conservation Biology Institute and Sequoia Riverlands Trust. Our aim is to create large scale regional conservation outcomes in the Southern Sierra Nevada to help address issues like climate change, alternative energy development, air quality, and forest management.

Reed Tollefson has a B.S. in Wildlife Management from Arizona State University. He came to the South Fork Kern River Valley in 1987 to work as a seasonal field technician on riparian restoration projects for The Nature Conservancy (TNC). He was hired full time by TNC and eventually became the Manager of the Kern River Preserve. In 1997 the Preserve was transferred to the Audubon Society and Reed was fortunate to be hired by Audubon where he continues to work today.



DEAD SALT CEDARS ON ONYX RANCH

FIELD TRIP

Enjoy a relaxed, easy day of exploring local birding spots looking for our local species and any unexpected exotic transients that we may find.

This trip, led by Noel Gravelle assisted by all participants, will start at 8:30 AM, Saturday, November 19th at the north west corner of the Cerro Coso Community College main parking lot.

We'll spend 1 to 2 hours or as much time as needed to thoroughly explore the many diverse habitats in the area for what we can see before moving on to other IWW locations.

Expected locations include: the road south of the fairgrounds to look for Burrowing Owls, the cemetery, the Ridgecrest waste water ponds north of the cemetery, and the BLM Wild Horse/Burro Corral area.

Depending on time available other sites that may be suggested by participants can be visited.

Bring appropriate clothing, water, sunscreen and snacks for a light lunch in case we go past lunch time. Of course always bring your binoculars, spotting scopes and field guides.



Valley Sightings October 2011

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

A pair of **Wood Ducks** was at the ponds Oct 6 (SLS,

TL).

A female **Eurasian Wigeon** was at the ponds Oct 31 (SLS).

An adult male **Surf Scoter** was at the ponds Oct 29-31 (LA). This very rare vagrant was last seen in the valley Nov 6, 2009 and falls nicely in their migration window of Oct 5-Nov 6.

The **Hooded Merganser** at the ponds Oct 29 was a new early date for fall migrants by three days (SLS). Five Hooded Mergansers were at the ponds Oct 31 (TL).

The **Common Loon** at the ponds Oct 27 has been the only one seen in the valley this year (TL, SLS).

To give an idea of the relative abundance and scarcity of the big grebes, a **Clark's Grebe** was at the ponds Oct 29 (BB), while **Western Grebes** were noted on thirteen days. .

Cattle Egrets were at the ponds Oct 14-29 (SLS).

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was at the ponds Oct 11-25 (BB, SLS).

A **Ferruginous Hawk** was at the college Oct 14 (JS).

The 6th valley record of **Rough-legged Hawk** was at the ponds Oct 29 (SLS). This is the earliest valley record by about a week and the first seen in the valley since Dec 8, 1997.

A **Merlin** was at the ponds Oct 26 (SLS).

A **Black-bellied Plover** was at the ponds Oct 1 (SLS).

The last sighting of **Baird's Sandpiper** was Oct 10 and **Pectoral Sandpiper** was Oct 19 (SLS).

Bonaparte's Gulls were at the ponds Oct 17 and 27 (SLS).

The **Herring Gull** at the ponds Oct 3 was slightly earlier than expected (SLS).

White-winged Doves continue to be seen. They were noted on Oct 2 in Ridgecrest (EC, BB),

Oct 9 in SE Ridgecrest (N&EG), and Oct 20 in SE Ridgecrest (LS).

The **Lesser Nighthawk** at the ponds Oct 17-22 was later than expected (SLS).

An **Acorn Woodpecker** was at the college Oct 7 (RO).

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was at the college Oct 9 and a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was seen Oct 13-16 (SLS, JS). The Yellow-bellied was the first seen since Jan 31, 2009.

The **Least Flycatcher** at the college Oct 7-8 was the 3rd valley record (SLS).

The 7th valley record of **Red-eyed Vireo** was at the college Oct 2-6 (NG).

A late **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was at the ponds Oct 23-24 (BB).

A flock of **Bushtits** was SW of Inyokern Oct 28 (LK).

A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was at the college Oct 10 (BB).

Phainopeplas were at the college Oct 10-15 (JS, SLS).

The **Hermit Warbler** at the college Oct 15 is our latest sighting date by fifteen days (SK).

Palm Warblers put on an amazing showing this fall. With just eight previous records, three more were added. Birds were at the ponds Oct 6 and 26 (SLS), and another was at the college Oct 8-9 (VH).

The **Clay-colored Sparrow** at the college Oct 7-14 was our second record this fall (SLS).

A **Vesper Sparrow** was at the college Oct 8-9 (SLS).

A gray-headed **Fox Sparrow** was at the college Oct 10 and a red **Fox Sparrow** was at the ponds Oct 27 (SLS). The red Fox Sparrow is a very rare migrant and this is just our second record.

A **Swamp Sparrow** was at the ponds Oct 20 (SLS).

White-throated Sparrows were at the college Oct 9 and 28 (SLS).

An **Indigo Bunting** was at the college Oct 13-16 (SLS).

The 3rd valley record for **Dicksissel** was at the college Oct 7 (SLS). This species was last seen in the valley on Oct 3, 1998.

Bobolinks were at the ponds Oct 1-7 with a high count of seven on Oct 2 (TW).

A Lawrence's Goldfinch was at the college Oct 16-17 (SK).

FOF for American Goldfinch was from S of Inyokern Oct 16 (SLS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Liga Auzins, Bob Barnes, Encar Card, Noah Gaines, Noel and Ellene Gravelle, Vernon Howe, Sandy Koonce, Louise Knecht, Tim Ludwick, Ron Overholtz, Joyce Seibold, Lee Sutton*

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP REPORT

Those who missed this trip to the Steeles' cabin in Aspendell missed a wonderful time! The birds, the fall leaves, and the hospitality were all awesome. On Saturday, we all met at Silver Lake on the June Lake loop, where the leaves and photo ops were incredible. Bird highlights there were an amazing 9 Horned Grebes, rare for these inland lakes, both Red-breasted and Common Mergansers, and a Surf Scoter!

Sunday morning saw us trekking up to North Lake for more beautiful leaves. A long search for an American Dipper finally paid off, at least for some of us. My (Brenda's) favorite birds there were a flock (family?) of Pygmy Nuthatches. Bob showed us the tree hole they roost together in and said it's fun to go over in the morning and watch them all pile out of it. We missed that, but enjoyed hearing them call to each other as they foraged en masse. They act much like Bushtits, calling continuously to each other, but their voices are clearer and more musical. What a treat!

Here's the complete list of birds seen:

- Common Loon
- Horned Grebe
- Eared Grebe
- Western Grebe
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Green Heron
- Mallard
- Ring-necked Duck
- Surf Scoter
- Common Merganser
- Red-breasted Merganser
- California Quail
- American Coot
- Belted Kingfisher
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Steller's Jay
- Clark's Nutcracker
- Black-billed Magpie
- Common Raven
- Mountain Chickadee
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Pygmy Nuthatch
- American Dipper
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Townsend's Solitaire

- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Spotted Towhee
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Cassin's Finch
- Lesser Goldfinch
- Brewer's Blackbird

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Alison Sheehey provided this information on the region's Christmas Bird Counts. Further information, including all of California's CBCs, is available on her web site: www.natureali.org

The first five days of the count period have Christmas Counts and all compilers can use help. Access to many normally closed areas is arranged by compilers, so if you want to really bird the heck out of Kern, here is your opportunity.

Please contact the compiler directly to participate.

WEDNESDAY, December 14, 2011

Bakersfield CBC: Compiler: John Wilson - year began 1949 held in 1950 resumed in 1973

FRIDAY, December 16, 2011

Buena Vista CBC: Compiler: Alison Sheehey, Phone: 760-417-0268. - year began 1989

SATURDAY, December 17, 2011

Butterbredt CBC: Compiler: Charles Bragg, Phone: (310) 454-9662 - year began 1977

Lancaster CBC: Compiler: Mary & Nick Freeman, Phone: (818) 247-6172 - year began 1980

SUNDAY, December 18, 2011

China Lake CBC: Compiler: Pete Woodman, Phone: (760) 377-3466 - year began 1957

TUESDAY, December 20, 2011

Tehachapi CBC: Compiler: Larry Parmeter, Phone: (559) 276-8753 - year began 1992

WEDNESDAY, December 21, 2011

Bear Valley Springs CBC: Compiler: Alison Sheehey, Phone: 760-378-2029 - year began 1995

SATURDAY, December 31, 2011

Carrizo Plains CBC: Roger Zachary, Phone (805) 466-6222 - year began 1971

South Fork Valley CBC: Compiler Denise

LaBerteaux, Phone: (760) 378-4278 - year began 1992

SUNDAY, January 1, 2012

Kern River Valley CBC: Compiler: Alison Sheehey, Phone: 760-417-0268. Housing available bring sleeping bag - year began 1979

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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.

The Chat

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

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