



# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

October 2010

## **OCTOBER CALENDAR**

Wed	Oct 20	6:00 pm	Board meeting, Burnetts'
Sat	Oct 23	all day	Field Trip, Mojave Narrows Regional Park, Victorville

## **OCTOBER FIELD TRIP**

### **MOJAVE NARROWS REGIONAL PARK**

It's time for what has become our annual outing to Mojave Narrows Regional Park in Victorville. This is a new time of year to make this trip, and we expect a good variety of fall migrants and maybe even a few vagrants. It's a varied habitat, with everything from grasslands to wetlands.

Those who wish to camp or RV will go down on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> or earlier, and should call the park for reservations at (760) 245-2226.

Those who plan to come for the day will meet at the south Albertson's parking lot, at the SW corner near the service station on Saturday morning, the 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30am to car pool and caravan. Bring the usual layered clothing, sunscreen, and a picnic lunch.

Those camping should call Brenda Burnett at (760) 382-4935 and let her know if you plan to come, and arrange a meeting time on Friday to form an RV caravan. If you would like to camp but don't have a tent, that can be arranged, too

Those going for the day on Saturday should also call Brenda, to arrange a time and place to meet at the park, and for directions if needed.

## **SAVE THE DATES**

There's still time to plan to go to the Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton, November 18-21. For information visit <http://cvbs.org/>.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT DATES**

November 18 Program: Bob Steele "Chicken Run"

November 13 Field trip: Tehachapi

If you missed Hector Villalobos' program last month on renewable energy project applications swamping the Ridgecrest Bureau of Land Management Office, he will present it again to the

Sierra Club meeting on Monday, November 22, 7:30 at the Maturango Museum.

(Speaking of the museum, the gift shop now has a wonderful assortment of bird-related items, including all the Audubon western bird little stuffed toys with authentic calls, birders' journals, bird-themed Christmas ornaments, and more!)

## **EDUCATION: JUNIOR AUDUBON**

Junior Audubon in Ridgecrest is in its fifth year now, and has expanded to two schools, Faller and Inyokern elementary schools. Brenda Burnett and Terri Middlemiss sponsor the club at Inyokern, while Dan Burnett with the help of Mike Holland, Elaine Wiley and sometimes others conduct the festivities at Faller. Both clubs meet every Tuesday before school, and both try to have two field trips a year.

Last year the Inyokern club made an early field trip to the China Lake sewer ponds, where we were lucky enough to spot the visiting Tundra Swan, getting a rare "life bird" for all attending. We took another trip in the Spring to Terri Middlemiss' yard north of Inyokern, where the children observed a truly bird-friendly yard.

**WE NEED MORE SPONSORS.** The impact of our being in existence for 5 years is that we now have GRADUATES and are getting pressure from them to establish a club at Monroe Junior High School. Is there anyone among you readers who would enjoy sponsoring a junior high school club? It would likely also be before school, for early in the day is the best time to watch birds. Field trips are also before school. And we've found it easy to find Kerncrest members willing to help with field trips by driving their cars. So the undertaking does not really seem to take any of your time! It actually is a fine way to start a day once a week. Or the junior high school members might even wish to meet only once a month and concentrate on doing short field trips rather than classroom projects. These kids are already avid birdwatchers and would surely help with planning the curriculum.

**WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE THESE  
STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO KEEP  
BIRDING!!**



## Valley Sightings Aug-Sept 2010

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).

### AUGUST

In August the fall migrants are really pouring through as you'll read with all the first of fall (FOF) reports. Additionally, there was a major rarity in the valley.

The **Greater White-fronted Geese** at the ponds Aug 27 became our earliest fall record (BB). Our previous early record was Sep 6.

Our second **Cattle Egret** of the year was at the ponds Aug 29-30 (BB).

A juvenile **Red-shouldered Hawk** was at the ponds Aug 22 (BB).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was at the ponds Aug 2, 23, 28, and 31 (BB, SLS).

Juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were at the ponds Aug 16-18, 23, and 25 (SLS).

The valley's 2<sup>nd</sup> record of **Wandering Tattler** was from the ponds Aug 27 (BB). The first record was way back on June 4, 1993.

**Common Moorhen** had a great breeding season boosting the pond population up to eighteen on Aug 9 (BB).

The 105<sup>th</sup> species for Freeman Canyon was **Eurasian Collared-Dove** on Aug 2 (KL).

A **White-winged Dove** was at the ponds Aug 18 (SLS).

**Red-breasted Nuthatches** were at the college Aug 3 (BB) and Aug 21 (JAS), and in SE Ridgecrest Aug 14 (LS).

The **Virginia's Warbler** at the ponds Aug 25 fits nicely in the middle of their previous valley records Aug 9-Sep 24 (SLS). We average about one sighting a fall.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> **Lucy's Warblers** this fall were at the ponds Aug 9 (SLS) and 15 (BB) with the bird on the 15<sup>th</sup> being our new late fall date.

A **Tricolored Blackbird** was SW of Inyokern July 31 (LK).

FOF reports include **Wilson's Snipe** at the ponds Aug 24 (SLS), **Northern Flicker** at the college Aug 3 (BB), **Ash-throated Flycatcher** from the ponds Aug 1 (BB), **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** from S of Inyokern Aug 12 (SLS), **Willow Flycatcher** from Ridgecrest Aug 7 (LS), **Western Wood-pewee** at the ponds Aug 1 (BB), **Warbling Vireo** from Ridgecrest Aug 9 (JAS), **House Wren** at the ponds Aug 9 (SLS), **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** from the ponds Aug 1 (BB), **Orange-crowned Warbler** from the ponds Aug 9 (SLS), **Yellow Warbler** from the ponds Aug 9(SLS), **Black-throated Gray Warbler** from the ponds Aug 22 (BB), **Townsend's Warbler** from the ponds Aug 29 (BB), **McGillivray's Warbler** from the college Aug 16 (BB), **Wilson's Warbler** from the college Aug 16 (BB), **Yellow-breasted Chat** from the ponds Aug 29 (BB), **Chipping Sparrow** from the ponds Aug 1 (BB), **Brewer's Sparrow** from the ponds Aug 21 (BB), **Black-headed Grosbeak** from the ponds Aug 1 (BB), and **Lazuli Bunting** from the ponds Aug 18 (SLS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, Louise Knecht, Karen Luhn, Joyce Seibold, Lee Sutton*

### SEPTEMBER

A **Western Grebe** was at the ponds Sep 25 and 27 (BB).

Fifty **Turkey Vultures** is our largest flock reported so far this fall (LS). They were seen Sep 29 in SE Ridgecrest.

An **Osprey** was seen flying over the ponds Sep 15 (BB). In the fall we have records from July 27- Nov 3 with the bulk of the passage in mid September.

The **Cooper's Hawk** at the Inyokern ponds became the 95<sup>th</sup> species for that location on Sep 21 (SLS).

**Red-shouldered Hawks** were at the golf course Sep 7 and 13, and the ponds Sep 15-16 (SLS).

A **Merlin** was at the ponds Sep 27 (SLS). Our peak for this species migration is mid to late October with records throughout the winter.

**Peregrine Falcons** were noted at the ponds six days in September (BB, SLS). So far this year there have been 16 days with Peregrine sightings. Compare that with no sightings from 1988 -1991 and only 10 sightings in all of the 1990's. Peregrines are back!

The **Swainson's Hawk** perched along Highway 178 between Inyokern and Ridgecrest Sep 21 was the 16<sup>th</sup> seen in the valley this year (SLS). On average only one Swainson's Hawk is seen each year.

The first **Pectoral Sandpiper** of the fall was at the ponds Sep 10 and the last **Semipalmated Sandpiper** of the fall departed Sep 1 (SLS).

An adult **Sabine's Gull** was at the ponds Sep 21 and a juvenile was seen there Sep 22-28 with a second juvenile showing up on Sep 27 (BB).

One good Tern deserves another and another. Sep 14 a **Common Tern** was discovered at the golf course, then four **Caspian Tern** joined in a noisy chorus, and finally a **Forster's Tern** arrived (SLS). The uncommon Common Tern was last seen in the valley two years ago, and the Caspian Terns were species # 187 for the golf course. Another **Common Tern** was at the ponds Sep 15 (BB).

A **Belted Kingfisher** was at the ponds Sep 22 (BB).

The **Purple Martin** at the ponds Sep 1 was the 17<sup>th</sup> sighting for the valley and was the first seen since Sep 2007 (SLS). Our fall sightings for this species occur between Sep 1 and Oct 1.

**Red-breasted Nuthatches** were noted during visits to the college this month (BB) and another was in SE Ridgecrest (LS).

The first report of **Sage Thrasher** this year was from the base Sep 14 (SLS). This species has been seen from early August through the end of April.

Our only report of **Cedar Waxwing** this Sep was on Sep 14 at the base (SLS).

Our second **Virginia's Warbler** this fall was seen at the ponds Sep 9 (BB) and another was at the college Sep 19 (JAS).

An **American Redstart** was N of Inyokern Sep 23 and a **Northern Waterthrush** was there Sep 24 (LB). The redstart sighting is our first this year. The waterthrush is the 3<sup>rd</sup> record in that location, and only our 8<sup>th</sup> valley record.

Two **Yellow-breasted Chats** were seen this fall. The first was S of Inyokern Sep 14-15 (SLS) and the other was in Ridgecrest Sep 25-26 (JAS).

A **Green-tailed Towhee** was at the college Sep 16 (SLS). Our records are of migrants with only a quarter from the fall.

The first **Spotted Towhee** this fall was from SW Inyokern Sep 8 (LK).

Our Wintering **White-crowned Sparrows** have returned with the first one spotted at the ponds Sep 16 (SLS). These are of the white-colored race *gambelii*. A dark-lored *oriantha* put in an appearance in SE Ridgecrest Sep 29 (LS).

Two **Bobolinks** were at the ponds Sep 19-20 (KL). Our Bobolink records are mainly from the fall and all occur in the Sep 11- Oct 29 timeframe.

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, Linda Bates, Kelli Levinson, Louise Knecht, Karen Luhn, Joyce Seibold, Lee Sutton*

#### **UPDATE: PINE TREE WIND FARM**

Remember when Kerncrest Audubon Society joined Los Angeles Audubon Society in suing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power over their plans to develop a wind energy production facility just off Jawbone Canyon near Butterbredt Springs – and lost? Well, we have just learned that two Golden Eagles have been killed at that wind farm – one last year and one very recently – and nothing happened. No sanctions were imposed, no fines levied.

Is there, please, a reader who has the time and energy to find out what should have happened and to learn how to file a complaint or to whom to write letters? If so, call me at 382-4935 and I'll give you a contact at the local BLM office to work with.

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Kerncrest Audubon Society

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Lynne Thompson Treasurer 375-5677

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website: www.kerncrestaudubon.org

*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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