



The Chat



October/November CALENDAR

Sat	Oct 13	8:00 am	Rademacher Hills Cleanup
Wed	Oct 17	6:00 pm	Board Meeting at Gravelles'
Sat	Oct 20	8:00 am	Field Trip to Little Lake Overlook
Thu	Oct 25	6:00 pm	BLM Travel Mgmt Wkshp
Sat	Oct 27	6:00 pm	Elk Reserve Campover



This is not a photo of a Turkey Vulture seen at the Fall Nature and Turkey Vulture festival at the Kern River Preserve! And this is not the way we like to see Turkey Vultures. But it is a photo of a Turkey Vulture that tried to fly through Ridgecrest this migration season.

Shelley Ellis saw it near her house in NW Ridgecrest. She writes:

"In the next Audubon newsletter, I would like to recommend that members choose a set of poles or a street likely to be used by vultures or other raptors and monitor them for raptor use. If raptors are seen on a particular set of poles, get a photo and write down the pole number. Also monitor the area for dead raptors. Within 2 days scavengers had completely eaten or removed the vulture carcass, so I was glad I saw it when I did. SCE is going to take care of the problem, but if no one is reporting problems, raptors will continue to die needlessly."

If you see raptors using or roosting near a pole or set of poles, report the information gathered to Kara Donohue, Senior Biologist, Southern California Edison, 1218 S. Fifth Avenue

Monrovia, CA 91016
626-462-8613

There is now a guard that can be installed on the offending poles to keep the raptors from reaching 2 lines at once and being electrocuted.

October Field Trip

LITTLE LAKE OVERLOOK

On Saturday, October 20th, Lee Sutton will lead a field trip to the overlook above Little Lake. We have visited this site several times since we helped construct it, but never in the Fall. It will be interesting to see what comes through then.

We will meet at 8:00 AM at the Inyokern 76 station for car pooling. Bring lunch or a snack, hats, sun block, and binoculars and your scope. We will probably stop at the Fossil Falls campground for potty breaks either going or coming back as needed. We should see migrating and early wintering waterfowl. Swallows and swifts should be passing through. Pelicans and Gulls may be seen winging their way south. For further information and to sign up, call Lee at 760-375-1981.

BLM RADEMACHER HILLS CLEANUP DAY

Meet on Saturday Oct. 13, 2012 at 8:00 a.m., at the main parking lot at the end of the pavement on College Heights Blvd. We'll gather trash until noon, then grill some food! Call: 760-384-5447 before Oct. 11, 2012 to sign up.

BLM Workshop for El Paso and Ridgecrest Travel Management Subregion

BLM has scheduled four public workshops for the El Paso and Ridgecrest travel management subregions. Area residents and interested members of the public are encouraged to attend. The BLM will solicit input relative to local area knowledge, issues and opportunities, including changes to route access and effects on all forms of recreational use. The Ridgecrest sessions will be Thursday, Oct 25, 6-9 pm and Saturday, Nov. 17, 9 am to noon at the Carriage Inn.



Valley Sightings September 2012

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



The valley list is now at 370 species with the addition of **Philadelphia Vireo** at the college on Sep 29 (BB).

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was at the ponds Sep 6 (SLS).

Sanderlings were noted at the ponds Sep 10, 17 and 25 (SLS).

A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at the ponds Sep 5-7 (SLS).

A **Stilt Sandpiper** was at the ponds Sep 21 (SLS).

Our 8th valley record of **Ruff** was at the ponds Sep 24-27 (SLS). The last one seen in the valley was back on Sep 17, 2007.

White-winged Doves continue to be seen in Ridgecrest though at least the 24th (BB, EC).

Belted Kingfishers were at the college Sep 11 and at the ponds Sep 25 (SLS).

Red-breasted Nuthatches are putting on a good show this fall and have been seen all month in multiple locations (L&SSu, SLS, BB, SE).

Our first **Swainson's Thrush** of the fall was from the college Sep 25 (SLS).

A **Sage Thrasher** was at the ponds Sep 11 (SLS).

A **Virginia's Warbler** was at the college Sep 10 (DLaB).

The **Magnolia Warbler** at the college Sep 7-9 was the 4th valley record (SLS).

A **Palm Warbler** was discovered at the college Sep 23 (DVB) and remained through Sep 27, and at a separate location what is believed to be another bird was seen at the college Sep 25 (SLS).

A **Black-and-white Warbler** was in SE Ridgecrest Sep 7 (L&SSu).

An **American Redstart** was in SE Ridgecrest Sep 12-14 (L&SSu).

Yellow-breasted Chats put in a good show this week being noted in SE Ridgecrest Sep 4, 7, 9 and 17, S of Inyokern Sep 6 (SLS), and In Ridgecrest Sep 29 (SE).

Clay-colored Sparrows were noted at the college Sep 19 and at the ponds Sep 20 (SLS).

Our first **Vesper Sparrow** of the fall was at the college Sep 22 (DVB).

The 3rd valley record of **Lark Bunting** was at the evaporation fields Sep 15 (L&SSu).

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was at the college Sep 29 (DG).

The 4th valley record of **Dickcissel** was at the ponds Sep 20 (SLS).

Bobolinks were at the ponds Sep 15-20 (SK).

The last report of **Hooded Oriole** this fall was from S of Inyokern Sep 18 (SLS) and the last report for **Bullock's Oriole** was from SW of Inyokern Sep 7 (LK).

The **Baltimore Oriole** in SE Ridgecrest Sep 27 was the 7th valley record (L&SSu).

Pine Siskins were at the college Sep 11 (SLS).

American Goldfinches were first reported this fall by the Junior Auduboners at Inyokern School on Sep 13.

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, David Blue, Encar Card, Shelley Ellis, Dave Woodward, Sandy Koonce, Louise Knecht, Denise LaBerteaux, Tim Ludwick, Pat Moore, Joyce Seibold, Bob Steele, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Tom Wurster*

FREE ROAMING CATS POSE SERIOUS HEALTH THREAT

A study published in the peer-reviewed public health journal *Zoonoses and Public Health*, has found that free-roaming cats pose serious health threat to humans, domestic animals, and wildlife. The study also found that "capture, spay, and release programs" for free roaming cats result in increased populations of these animals where diseases are readily transmitted. Thirty percent of human rabies cases result from free-roaming cats. Many other diseases are transmitted to humans by free-roaming cats.

Another significant disease threat cited by the study is a parasite frequently found in water or soil contaminated by cat feces. This parasite is responsible for causing the disease toxoplasmosis. Consequences of contracting this parasitic infection are most serious if you are either pregnant, HIV positive, or are undergoing chemo-therapy treatment, and range from significant to severe to

fatal. The report cited a 2011 study that found that 63 percent of the patients with acute toxoplasmosis had become infected through cat feces.

The authors conclude by saying that their study "...highlights the serious public health diseases associated with free-roaming cats and underscores the need for increased public health attention directed towards free-roaming cats." The fact that rabies exposure in humans is disproportionately associated with free-roaming cats "...should be of paramount concern to health officials because of the high mortality rate of clinical rabies..."

Thankfully, there is no capture, spay and release program in Ridgecrest, so there is also no sizable population of feral cats. But there are now Brown Rats, and they, too, can transmit rabies.

Yet another reason to keep your cats indoors.

JR. AUDUBON CLUBS START AGAIN

Local teachers at Inyokern School and at Faller school have once again sponsored Jr. Audubon classes this school year. About eighty 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders showed up before school on Tuesdays to attend the first club meetings. These programs introduce kids to nature and teach them to be aware of the wildlife around them.

Many thanks go out to tireless teachers Annie Jorgensen at Inyokern School and Shirley Crouse and Teri McGuire at Faller School for bringing these popular programs to their schools. These clubs would not exist without the contribution of time and effort by Kerncrest Audubon volunteers Brenda Burnett, Dan Burnett, Terri Middlemiss, Bob Parker, and Elaine Wiley.

Kerncrest Audubon sets aside half the proceeds from its annual Bird-A-Thon to pay for the birdseed, feeders, copying, project supplies, and other expenses of these programs. Due to the increased attendance this year we anticipate a shortfall in funding. We can always use contributions to our education and outreach programs. We can also always put volunteer help to good use.

GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT

There has been some good news for animals lately. Among good news items is this announcement from the Center for Biological Diversity:

"A critical corridor connecting two wildlife areas in Southern California has new protections as part of a settlement reached by the Center for Biological Diversity and allies. The deal gives safeguards to a strip of land linking the 1,500-acre Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park and the 649-acre March Stephens' kangaroo rat conservation area in Riverside County. The settlement, approved last week, is our third legal victory in two

years and protects more than 800 acres in an effort to help imperiled local wildlife like bobcats, burrowing owls and coast horned lizards. It also caps a series of successful settlements orchestrated by the Center dedicating wildlife habitat in Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park and protecting habitat on Riverside County's former March Air Force Base property."

Another item was hidden in an LA Times article on bills signed by Governor Brown recently. The title of the article was "Brown signs bill to protect parks" and began with a description of a bill authored by Assemblyman Jared Huffman of San Rafael that set a moratorium on closing state parks "in the wake of a scandal in which some parks officials had surplus funds while facilities were threatened with being shuttered."

That issue had actually been well covered by the news media, and we had all likely heard about it. But the really good news was further on in the article and read:

"Brown also signed another Huffman bill reshaping the state Department of Fish and Game to provide greater emphasis on conservation, including a change in its name to the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"The bill ... also provides for creating an environmental crimes task force to help prosecute crimes against wildlife, and authorizes the department to partner with nonprofit groups and accept funds for additional conservation programs. Brown signed AB 2402 'to improve the management of state fish and wildlife resources,' according to a statement by his office."

Maybe we can hope there will finally be prosecution of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for the Golden Eagle kills at Pine Tree wind farm.

BED AND BUGLE

Come spend the night among the Elk at the Tule Elk State Natural Reserve! For the first time ever California State Parks is opening the Tule Elk SNR to camping and nighttime programs! 6 pm, October 27, Tule Elk State Natural Reserve, 8653 Station Rd., Buttonwillow CA.

Guided tours of the Reserve (Sunset and Sunrise), Campfire program, stargazing, puppet show and more. The cost is \$8 per person (including camping fee). Children 12 and under free. Limited space; please RSVP by October 15. bmoftat@parks.ca.gov or 661-764-6881.

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Or go to our website at www.kerncrestaudubon.org, click on "Membership" in the right-hand column of the page, then click on the Audubon logo with the flying egret. When filling in the form, select the chapter C45 KERNCREST AUDUBON SOCIETY from the pull-down menu to have your first year's dues credited directly to our chapter, please.

By joining on line, you may pay by credit card.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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(Includes subscription to *The Chat*)

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Please enclose a check payable to Kerncrest Audubon Society.

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.

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