

The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

October, 2015

OCTOBER CALENDAR

Wed Oct 14 6 pm Board Meeting: Gravelles'
Sat Oct 24 8 am Field Trip: Picnic at Cerro Coso

FIELD TRIP

BREAKFAST PICNIC AT CERRO COSO

The weather has cooled off a bit, and mornings seem a pleasant time to go do some local birding and noshing. Bring a breakfast picnic and join us at Cerro Coso College to see what is migrating through and arriving for the winter.

Since it's a local outing, it's also a good time to invite family and non-birding friends for an introduction to birding, with lots of intermediate to almost-expert birders to help.

Meet at 8 at the BLM trailhead parking just south of the gym, at the end of College Heights Boulevard.

Call Bob Parker at 760-446-2001 if you have any questions, or if you would like a ride to the college.

BIRD FESTIVALS COMING UP

Central Valley Birding Symposium

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 19th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 19-22, 2015 at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton, CA.

To register and find out more, visit

<http://www.cvbsreg.org>

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, January 15-18, 2016. This year's festival has expanded field trips and events. To register and for more information, visit www.morrobaybirdfestival.org. Registration starts on November 7.

Flyers are even out for the San Diego Bird Festival March 3-6! It's at Marina Village Park. Registration is open and detailed event information is available at www.sandiegoaudubon.org.

SAVE THE DATES:

Tentatively planned field trips for Kerncrest Audubon Society for the season are:

November 15: Owens Lake Mitigation Ponds

December 13: IWW Christmas Bird Count

February 20: Pixley National Wildlife Refuge

March 19: Lake Isabella & Tilley Creek Campground

April 22-24: Owens Lake Bird Festival

May 21: Inyokern to Red Mt Breeding Bird Survey Route

SAVE THE DATES, continued

Our November program will be the movie, *The Big Year*, starring Steve Martin, Jack Black and Owen Wilson, on Thursday, November 19. Save the date and tell your friends! If you missed it in the theater or want to see it again, don't forget!

FEEDING HUMMINGBIRDS

Hummingbirds are migrating through our area now, and you may be putting out hummingbird food and wondering about the feeding habits of these miraculous creatures. The May 1993 edition of WildBird Magazine contained an article by Ph.D.s Reed Hainsworth and Larry Wolf on the results of laboratory studies they did to learn about hummingbird feeding that answers some questions you might have. Here is a recap of their article:

A hummingbird meal is about 1/100 of an ounce. A meal may vary from 10 to 82 calories per meal, when obtained from flower nectar. Artificial nectar of 1 part water to 1 part sugar yields a 60 calorie meal.

In a laboratory experiment, an adult three-gram male hummingbird ate about 5 meals an hour of a relatively rich mixture. When the sugar water was diluted by half, the hummingbird ate the same size meal but consumed 14 meals per hour. At this rate the bird was consuming more than its weight in food each hour. Hummingbirds use 15 times as much energy to hover as they do to perch so frequent trips for food increase their energy consumption -- thus the necessity to eat more than twice as often when the caloric content of the food was halved.

Hummingbirds save some energy from each meal to carry them through the night. Energy rich food increases a hummingbird's survival chances through the night.

A 1 part sugar to 4 parts water mixture results in more feeding activity because the birds have to eat more to maintain the energy they need to live. A mixture of 1 part sugar to 2 parts water, however, is close to the average richness of nectar from plants.

(The Burnetts have switched to a mixture of 1 sugar to 3 water at our house, and will likely go to at least the 1 sugar to 2 water for the winter, when the birds need more stored energy to survive the longer night.)

(The current conventional wisdom has it that mixtures richer than 1 sugar to 4 water do kidney damage. If anyone can find a scientific study showing those results, please let me know! -- editor --)



Valley Sightings – early Fall 2015

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

August

The juvenile **White-faced Ibis** at Pearson Park on Aug 22 and 24 was unexpected for that location (LA).

Our only report of **Baird's Sandpiper** was from the ponds Aug 3 (SLS).

White-winged Doves were at the ponds Aug 1 (AS) and a pair spent the last two summers between Kinnett and Ward, west of Downs (LA).

The **Acorn Woodpecker** at the ponds Aug 7 was the 287th species for that location (SLS).

Ladder-backed Woodpeckers were seen in many places this fall – SE Ridgecrest Aug 22 (L&SSu) and multiple birds were SW of Inyokern from Aug 8 to the end of the month (LK).

A **Downy Woodpecker** at Pearson Park on Aug 25 was a couple of weeks early than expected on the valley floor (LA).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was at the ponds Aug 1 (AS).

FOF for **Western Wood-Pewee** was from SE Ridgecrest Aug 21 (L&SSu).

FOF for **Willow Flycatcher** was from the ponds Aug 7 (SLS).

FOF for **Dusky Flycatcher** was from SE Ridgecrest Aug 20 (L&SSu).

FOF for **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was from the ponds Aug 7 (SLS).

FOF for **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was from the ponds Aug 7 (SLS).

It looks like it will be another invasion year for **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. They were noted at Ridgecrest Aug 6 (BB), Ridgecrest Aug 24 (LL), and SE Ridgecrest and the old sewage ponds Aug 17 (L&SSu, SLS), and have been seen in many places since.

The **White-breasted Nuthatch** in SE Ridgecrest Aug 8 was the 165th yard list bird for that location. It was first spotted by Ellene Gravelle. Another White-breasted Nuthatch was at the college Aug 4 (SLS).

FOF for **Orange-crowned Warbler** was in Ridgecrest Aug 16 (L&SSu, BB).

FOF for **Nashville Warbler** was from the ponds Aug 29 (BB).

FOF for **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was from Ridgecrest Aug 25 (LA).

FOF for **Wilson's Warbler** was from SE Ridgecrest Aug 8 (L&SSu).

FOF for **Yellow-breasted Chat** was from SE Ridgecrest Aug 5 (L&SSu).

FOF for **Western Tanager** was from the old sewage ponds Aug 4 (SLS).

FOF for **Black-headed Grosbeak** was from the cemetery Aug 4 (SLS).

FOF for **Lazuli Bunting** was in Ridgecrest Aug 16 (L&SSu).

Two **Scott's Orioles** were SW of Inyokern Aug 7 (LK).

Thanks to the following observers: *Linda Anderson, Bob Barnes, Louise Knecht, Lisa Lavelle, Alison Sheehey, Lee and Shirley Sutton*

September

FOF for **Snow Geese** was from the ponds Sep 29 (SLS).

A **Common Tern** was at the ponds Sep 17 (SLS).

The **Common Ground-Dove** at the ponds Sep 17 was the 288th species for that location (SLS). It was also a new species, #371, for the valley.

Belted Kingfishers were at the ponds Sep 5 (BB), and Sep 19 (AS), and another was at the college Sep 5 (MW).

An **Acorn Woodpecker** was at the college Sep 5 (MW).

A **Ladder-backed Woodpecker** was at the college Sep 24 (SLS), multiple birds were seen SW of Inyokern throughout the month (LK), and one was in Ridgecrest Sep 10 (JS).

Peregrine Falcons were at the ponds Sep 5 (BB), and Sep 17 (SLS).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported in greater numbers and from more locations this month (m.ob).

A **White-breasted Nuthatch** was in Ridgecrest Sep 10 (LT).

A **Gray Catbird** was photographed at the college Sep 24 (SLS). This is the 7th valley record with three from the college. Another Gray Catbird was reported taking a bath in a backyard bird bath Sep 27 (L&SSu).

Phainopeplas were in SE Ridgecrest Sep 13 (L&SSu).

A **Northern Waterthrush** was N of Inyokern Sep 14 (LB).

FOF for **Nashville Warbler** was at the college Sep 5 (MW).

FOF for **MacGillvray's Warbler** was from SE Ridgecrest Sep 18 (L&SSu).

A **Blackpoll Warbler** was at the ponds Sep 17 (SLS) and the same or a different bird was there Sep 24 (BrS).

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was in Ridgecrest Sep 5-6 (JS).

FOF for **Chipping Sparrow** was from the college Sep 24 (SLS).

FOF for **Lark Sparrow** was from Ridgecrest Sep 7 (BB). This was the 90th species for that location.

FOF for **White-crowned Sparrow** was from Ridgecrest Sep 8 (BB).

Thanks to the following observers: *Linda Bates, Bob Barnes, Louise Knecht, Joyce Seibold, Alison Sheehey, Brad Singer, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Lynne Thompson, Michael Woodruff*

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

All, I am looking for someone willing to take over writing the Valley Sightings column. If you are interested, please let me know. Susan