



# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

September 2009

## SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Tue	Sep 15	6pm	Board Meeting, Brubakers'
Thu	Sep 17	7pm	General Meeting, Maturango Museum
Sat	Sep 26	9am	Turkey Vulture Festival, and 27 Audubon Kern River Preserve

## SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

### EASTERN SIERRA LAND TRUST

Do you enjoy recreating or driving through the scenic Eastern Sierra? Do you like the open space and the beautiful and mostly unspoiled vistas? Our September Program will feature Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Executive Director of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT), one of the organizations helping to preserve the open space and scenic vistas.

Karen, of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust will inform us about land trusts in general and how they partner to preserve habitat through land trust tools. She will also detail some of their efforts in the Eastern Sierra as examples.

Karen has been part of the Lands Program for the Eastern Sierra Land Trust since early 2005. She was a founding Board member of this organization in 2001 and served as secretary, Projects Committee chair and on the Executive Committee until accepting a staff position. Karen and her husband, Stephen Ingram, donated the first conservation easement to the ESLT, which protects a critical wildlife migration corridor found on their twenty acres in Swall Meadows, southern Mono County.

Before returning to her hometown of Bishop in 1994, Karen was a teaching tennis professional in California, Alaska and Germany. She also worked as an orchid propagator and researcher in California, Costa Rica and Florida. Once back in the Eastern Sierra, she spent about ten years learning about and propagating native plants for restoration and home garden purposes. Karen graduated with a degree in English from California State University, Chico.

This informative program will be held in our normal location, the Maturango Museum on our normal evening, the third Thursday of the month (in this case, the 17<sup>th</sup>) at our normal time of 7:00 PM. See you there.

Lee Sutton  
Programs Chair

## TURKEY VULTURE FESTIVAL

*YOU ARE INVITED* to the 15th Annual Kern Valley Autumn Nature & Vulture Festival September 26-27, 2009, 9am – 3pm

This annual festival celebrates the beauty of autumn in the Kern River Valley as well as the annual migration of Turkey Vultures. Children's activities, music, workshops, and hikes are planned.

LOCATION: Audubon Kern River Preserve  
18747 Highway 178, Weldon, CA

FOR INFORMATION VISIT:

<http://kern.audubon.org/tvfest.htm>

or PHONE: 760-378-2029

## KERNCREST AUDUBON SOCIETY 2009-2010 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Well, not really the whole calendar, because it's not likely you care where all of the board meetings are. But here are the field trips and programs for the year.

Our Programs Chair has already lined up a great season of presentations for us! You already know September's. In November, it will be Shelley Ellis and Larry Boyer telling us about all the guzzlers they maintain and manage for local wildlife. (And if I know Shelley, there'll be lots of gorgeous photographs.) Bob Steele will fill the room to capacity in January, whatever he talks about. In March, Mary Whitfield will describe the work of the Southern Sierra Research Station, including her research on the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. And in May, Ara Marderosian will tell of the work of Sequoia ForestKeeper and how they help preserve the giant trees.

Field trips planned are for Owens Lake in October, the Kern River Preserve and Lake Isabella in November, the Christmas Bird Count in December, the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival in January, the Birdathon in April, and Galileo Hill in May. *Note no trips are yet planned for February or March. If you have any ideas or wishes for trips, please contact a board member!*



## Valley Sightings June-July 2009

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).

The hybrid **Cinnamon Teal x Blue-winged Teal** was seen again at the ponds June 9 and 15 (SS).

Unusual summering duck species include **Ring-necked Duck** and **Bufflehead**. Both were first seen June 5 and have been noted intermittently since (SS). The Bufflehead sightings are our first in July.

The **Clark's Grebe** at the pond June 5-9 was our latest spring record (SS).

The three **Cooper's Hawks** chicks at the college fledged on June 14 (JS).

**Red-shouldered Hawks** were at the ponds July 16-21 (SS).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was at the ponds June 15 (DLaB).

Three **Virginia's Rail** chicks were at the ponds June 8 (SS).

The juvenile **Common Moorhen** at the ponds July 14 indicates local breeding (SS).

The **Solitary Sandpiper** at the ponds July 3 was earlier than expected (TW).

The **Whimbrel** at the ponds July 23 was only our 3<sup>rd</sup> July record (SS).

A **Long-billed Curlew** was seen flying over the desert S of Inyokern July 17 (BG, SE).

An adult **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at the ponds July 20 (SS).

At least six **Bonaparte's Gulls** summered at the ponds (SS).

A **White-winged Dove** was in Ridgecrest June 2 (MA).

Three **Burrowing Owl** nests on base produced four chicks apiece and all eighteen birds were seen on June 23 (SS).

Three brancher **Long-eared Owls** (chicks just fledged and sitting on branches outside the nest) were at the college June 6 (AH).

The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the fall was SW of Inyokern July 27 (LK).

June 30 was a good day for Myiarchus flycatchers at the ponds with both an **Ash-throated** and **Brown-crested Flycatcher** seen (SS). The

**Brown-crested Flycatcher** was the 4<sup>th</sup> valley record and species # 290 for the ponds.

A **Bell's Vireo** with several characteristics of the Arizona race was N of Inyokern June 25 (BB). It would presumably be more likely for a Least Bell's Vireo, *Vireo bellii pusillus*, the western-most subspecies, to occur than *Vireo bellii arizonae*, which has a limited distribution in California along the lower Colorado River. This is only the 4th time a Bell's Vireo has been seen in the valley.

A **Red-eyed Vireo** was at the college June 4 (JS).

**Phainopeplas** were seen intermittently SW of Inyokern June 4 – July (LK). Another Phainopepla was N of Inyokern June 25 (BB).

For the first time in five years **Lucy's Warblers** have been seen in the valley. A worn plumaged bird was seen at the ponds June 29, then on July 2 a bird was in the same area singing. To top off this intriguing chain an adult was observed feeding a juvenile that was capable of flight on July 21 near the original sighting location (SS).

**Yellow Warblers** can be late spring migrants, June 24, and early fall migrants, July 23, both at the ponds (SS).

The 5<sup>th</sup> valley record of **Kentucky Warbler** was at the college June 3 (JS).

Several male **Common Yellowthroats** established territories at the ponds and at least one pair successfully fledged chicks on July 22 (SS).

A **Summer Tanager** was at the college June 6 (AH).

The **Spotted Towhee** SW of Inyokern July 16-17 was our first record of this species on the valley floor in the summer (LK).

It was a good spring for **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** with six in the valley. The last sightings were at the college June 3 (JS), and June 7 (SS), and in SE Ridgecrest June 30 (LS).

The last **Black-headed Grosbeak** of the spring was June 7 and the first of the fall birds was seen on July 12 (LK). Both sightings were from SW of Inyokern.

An immature male **Blue Grosbeak** staked out a territory at the ponds June 11 and continued to sing and defend it until July 23 (SS).

A female **Indigo Bunting** was at the ponds June 8-11 (SS).

Up to two male **Tri-colored Blackbirds** were at the ponds June 24 – July 20 (SS). Thirteen of our 27 sightings of this species have been in June and July.

The **Scott's Oriole** SW of Inyokern June and July 12-16 was unusual on the valley floor (LK).

**Lawrence's Goldfinches** remained at the college through Jun5 (JS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Marge Anderson, Bob Barnes, Shelley Ellis, Bruce Garlinger, Andrew Howe, Louise Knecht, Denise LaBerteaux, Lee Sutton, Tom Wurster*

## CONSERVATION CORNER

by Terri Middlemiss

Fall migration is in full swing in my yard and in the skies with the Vultures. The migrants are not as vocal as in spring, but a "whit" here, a snippet of song there, and kettling in the air make me want to grab my bins and go look.

Reading the latest from The Mono Lake Committee made me pause, because for all the incredible good that they do, they have only 16,000 members! There are major ongoing battles still being fought for the lake and its surroundings and will continue to be. This is such a "local" success story that has become national and international in scope. I hope that all of you are members, and if not, become one right away. [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org), 760.647.6595, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining 93541

Another "local" group that needs our support is Friends of the Swainson's Hawk founded in 1994. "The Central Valley of California *is the reproductive epicenter* for California's Swainson's Hawks." Threats include Elk Grove wanting to expand the city into prime foraging and nesting territory. Sacramento is doing the same, as is Sacramento County. In addition, there is not adequate mitigation for developments. The birds depend on agricultural fields, so buying products from local farms helps the farmers and the hawks.

[www.swainsonshawk.org](http://www.swainsonshawk.org) 916.447.4956, 915 L Street, C-425, Sacramento 95814

Friends of the Kern River Preserve are also very worthy of your support. This ultra-birdy preserve is underestimated and under-visited by us locals because it is "too close." People come from other countries as well as other states to visit this jewel of riparian corridor. 3,000 acres and growing, it is a "globally important watershed and mountainous migration corridor." It is not just birds who benefit, but endangered pond turtles and all of the other wildlife who need such habitat. I have helped to bird band in the area for over a decade and know the huge variety of birds we capture and observe.

I have seen the effects of replanting forests, and removing exotic plants, as well as new awareness by the locals about their natural bounty. Their marvelous schedule of events offers "an excuse" to go visit year-round. Hummingbirds, butterflies, Turkey Vultures and more are showcased at these events. <http://kern.audubon.org>, P.O. Box 833, Weldon 93283.

Also local, the Owens Valley Committee has had phenomenal success at Owens Lake with monitoring DWP's rewatering ponds and getting public access to them, overseeing the Lower Owens River Project (where water once again flows), and watch dogging the Inyo County and Los Angeles water agreement. A small, but avid group that will benefit from large numbers of members. [www.ovcweb.org](http://www.ovcweb.org), 760.876.5807, P.O. Box 77, Bishop 93515.

Political clout comes from large memberships, strong activists, lawyers and money.

Birds need our help from many different directions, and I feel that my membership in many organizations lends help over a broad base. Many bird populations are in serious declines (except for Starlings, House Sparrows, etc) and we can help by being part of organizations that are working energetically to stop that. Memberships are tax-deductible when you itemize.

From the Editor --

I believe another local organization well worth supporting is Friends of the Inyo. This organization conducts work parties performing clean-up and restoration work around lakes and along trails and streams in both Inyo and Mono counties (where Dan and I became acquainted with them while we were working as campground hosts at Convict Lake).

In spite of their stated mission as being dedicated to the eastern Sierra Nevada, one of their recent projects, ongoing for four years, was the removal of Tamarisk trees in Surprise Canyon, in the Panamints. (It is in Inyo County.) I'm sure they will also come to our aid in fighting any possible future efforts by extreme off-road vehicle users to reopen that canyon to them.

A perk of membership here is that you are invited to participate in their fun hikes into the Sierras and the White Mountains!

See their web site at [www.friendsoftheinyo.org/foi/front](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org/foi/front)

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(Includes subscription to *The Chat*)

\_\_\_\_ yr Subscription to *The Chat* only @ \$7/year

\_\_\_\_ Please request the National Audubon Society to exclude my name from promotional mailing lists.

Please enclose a check payable to Kerncrest Audubon Society.

Clip out and mail to: Kerncrest Audubon Society

P.O. Box 984

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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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