

# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

Spring 2013

## Spring CALENDAR

Wed	Mar 20	6 pm	Board Meeting at Brubakers'
Thu	Mar 21	7 pm	General Meeting: J & J Stanek
Sat	Mar 23	??	Field Trip to Panamint Valley
Wed	Apr 17	6 pm	Board Meeting at Villalobos'
Sat	Apr 20	7 am	Field Trip to KRP & Canebrake
Thu	May 2 - Sun	May 5	Kern County Big Weekend
Sat	May 4	whenever	- BIRDATHON
Sat	May 11	8 am	Hike up Cow Heaven Canyon
Wed	May 16	6 pm	Board Meeting at Suttons
Thu	May 17	7 pm	Annual Meeting: Bob Steele

**MARCH GENERAL MEETING**  
**JOHN AND JENNA STANEK**  
**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS and**  
**FLAMMULATED OWLS**

The speakers for our general meeting in March will be John Stanek, biologist with the Southern Sierra Research Station in Weldon, and his wife, Jenna Stanek.

John has a background in wildlife biology and currently conducts Yellow-billed Cuckoo research for SSRS. He received a B.S. in Biology from Western State College of Colorado where he studied Gunnison Sage Grouse, and an M.S. in Zoology from the University of Wyoming where he studied Brown-capped Rosy-finches. His talk will be mainly about the successful habitat restoration efforts on the Lower Colorado River, where new habitat was planted annually starting in 2005. He will also touch on the other two cuckoo major populations in California, SSRS research in the Kern River valley and PRBO research results from the Sacramento River.

Jenna has a background in wildlife biology and multivariate statistics and is involved in conducting research and data analysis for the research station. She received her B.S. in Ecology and Biology from Western State College of Colorado and her M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from Clemson University. Jenna will tell us about her work researching Flammulated Owls in the local mountains. (Kerncrest Audubon Society contributed to the building materials for owl boxes

to be placed in the Greenhorns, and Kerncrest volunteers helped with hanging the boxes.)

Thursday, March 21, 7 pm at the Maturango Museum.

**MARCH FIELD TRIP**  
**PANAMINT WARM SULPHUR SPRINGS**

Leader: Hector Villalobos

Let's meet for departure at 8 am on Saturday, March 23rd from the parking lot located on the NE corner of the intersection of Highway 178 and Richmond Rd, and carpool to Panamint Valley.

We will be headed for a large mesquite grove at the northeast end of Panamint dry lake. Two-wheel drive vehicles are OK but the Briggs Mine and Indian Ranch roads are dusty and bumpy.

The Panamint Warm Sulphur Springs area is a wetland, grassland, dune system that supports a mesquite bosque. Also along Indian Ranch road there are mesquite groves along the edges of several alluvial fans. These small green zones attract birds including songbirds, migrant ducks, wading and shore birds, and occasional marsh hawks and owls.

A short hike (from 0.2 to 0.5 mile) from the parking area will get us close to wetland/grassland area to view some birds. Also, there are several mesquite groves just a few steps from Indian Ranch Road. Be sure to wear good hiking boots, hat, and sun block. We could probably spend several hours exploring the area, so bring plenty of water, and bring your lunch or snacks. Folding chairs might come in handy.

Call Hector at 760-446-4908 to sign up.

**APRIL FIELD TRIP**  
**KERN RIVER & CANEBRAKE PRESERVES**

On Saturday, April 20, the Spring songbird migration should be in full, spectacular swing. Terri Middlemiss will lead a field trip then to Audubon California's Kern River Preserve and to California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Canebrake Preserve in the Kern River Valley.

From Terri: "Meet at 7 am at Inyokern Post Office. Bring snacks and lunch. The morning can

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## Valley Sightings Feb - early Mar 2013

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).

No doubt a surprise were two lingering **Canada Geese** in a suburban yard in Ridgecrest on Feb 28 and Mar 1 (LB, DB)

A **greater White-fronted Goose** was spotted among a large flock of Snow Geese on 20 February and again on the 2nd of March at the Park south of the High School. (L&SSu)

A first for the Inyokern Sewage Ponds was a **Wilson's Snipe** on Feb 17. (BB)

A 3:45am-7:45am visit to the Greenhorn Mountains on Feb 28 produced excellent results: two **Mountain Quail**, two **Western Screech-Owl**, two **Great Horned Owl**, one **Northern Pygmy-Owl**, one **Spotted Owl**, three **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, four **White-headed Woodpecker**, one **Pileated Woodpecker**, one **Pacific Wren**, three **Townsend's Solitaire**, and one **Varied Thrush**. (BB, JSc)

A **Western Sandpiper** was at Isabella Reservoir's Kissack Cove on Feb 9 (AS) with one at the China Lake ponds on Feb 20. (BB) They are rarely reported for either location in February.

A **Williamson's Sapsucker** continued at Scodie County Park in Onyx on Feb 10. (BB)

A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** continued at Desert Memorial Park (AKA the cemetery) in Ridgecrest on Feb 1. (AS, DB)

One **Mountain Chickadee** was at Scodie Park in Onyx on Feb 6 (BB) with two there on Feb 17. (BB)

A pair of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** have been hanging around a SE Ridgecrest yard all winter. On Feb. 12 and again on Mar. 2nd, one of the pair was seen stripping fibers from the limb of a Pomegranate tree and flying off with the fibers in its beak. (L&SSu)

A very early **Hermit Thrush** appeared in a SE Ridgecrest yard on the 9th of February. (L&SSu)

Five FOS (First of Season/"spring" migration) **Sage Thrashers** were seen on adjacent barbed-wire fence posts along Fay Ranch Rd in Weldon on Feb 17. (BB)

A **Slate-colored Dark-eyed Junco** has been present since the first of the year (latest sighting is 3 March) in company with 2 female and one male Oregon subspecies in SE Ridgecrest. (L&SSu)

Desert Memorial Park continued to host wintering **Red Crossbill** with twelve on Feb 7

(Jsw), seventeen on Feb 19 (JM), and eight on Mar 2. (TF)

Thanks to the following observers: **Bob Barnes David Blue, Linda Blue, Tom Fellenbaum, Jimmy McMorrان, John Schmitt, Alison Sheehey, Lee and Shirley Sutton, Jesse Swift**

Note this "Sightings" article was prepared by Bob Barnes, with extra input from Lee Sutton and formatting by Brenda Burnett, who thanks Bob and Lee for the extra effort in filling in for Susan Steele, who is on vacation.

## MAY FIELD TRIP #1 BIRDATHON

The Kerncrest Audubon Society BIRDATHON this year coincides with the Kern County Big Weekend on Saturday, May 4th. (The weekend begins on the previous Thursday. Call Bob Barnes at for more info.) See the letter enclosed for more information on the BIRDATHON.

## MAY FIELD TRIP #2 HIKE UP COW HEAVEN CANYON

Saturday, May 11 is International Migratory Bird Day. In celebration, Kerncrest Audubon Society will join with the Ridgecrest Field Office, Bureau of Land Management in conducting a hike up Cow Heaven Canyon in the local southern Sierra Nevada.

Meet at 8 am at the Inyokern Post Office. Bring a picnic and wear layered clothing and sturdy shoes. We'll car pool in high-clearance vehicles and park near the wilderness boundary. The distance you hike from there will depend on stamina and preference. Some of us may just lounge about and bird not far from the cars. If you plan to do that, bring a chair, in addition to the picnic and layered clothing (sturdy shoes not so important.)

Call Bob Parker at 760-446-2001 to sign up.

### Kerncrest Audubon Society Board of Directors

Brenda Burnett	President	375-8634
Lee Sutton	Vice President	375-1981
Sherry Brubaker	Secretary	375-7245
Dan Burnett	Treasurer & Education	375-8634
Robert Parker	Field Trips & Conservation	446-2001
Terri Middlemiss	Publications	377-5192
Noel Gravelle	Membership	375-2325
Lee Sutton	Birdathon	375-1981
Hector Villalobos	Alternative Energy	446-4908
Lloyd Brubaker	Member at Large	375-7245
Shelley Ellis	Member at Large	446-5012
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Webmaster	Noel Gravelle	375-2325
website:	<a href="http://www.kerncrestaudubon.org">www.kerncrestaudubon.org</a>	

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be quite cool, then warming into the morning. Migration should be in full swing with all the usual suspects, plus any unusual species on the move then.

Canebrake has great riparian areas, rebounding from cow exclusion. Also, a 10+ year replanted riparian forest, plus open fields. The walk is wheelchair-accessible and quite scenic.

Kern River Preserve is always a treat with its varied established habitats.

Leader - Terri Middlemiss 760-377-5192

[catbird4@earthlink.net](mailto:catbird4@earthlink.net)

Please call and let me know if you are coming and if you have any questions. This is a very casual outing."

### **KERN COUNTY BIG WEEKEND**

The Kern America's Birdiest Inland County Big Birding "Weekend" dates have been set. Please mark your calendars with the hopefulness of your participation.

3:30pm, Thursday, 2 May 13 to 3:30pm, Sunday, 5 May 13 - 72 Hour Kern County Big Weekend of Birding

With lingering winter birds, early arriving nesting season birds, plentiful migrants, good weather, good access, and lots of participation, we might even break the all time Kern County record of 246 species achieved in 2006 and 2009.

Since the annual Kerncrest Audubon Society Bird-a-thon interfaces on Saturday, May 4, 2013, the bird-a-thon results will likely add a significant number of species to the overall total as in past years. Even if you participate in the bird-a-thon on Saturday, be sure to note and report to me any additional species seen between 3:30 pm Thursday and 3:30pm Sunday.

NOTE: 242 species was the Kern total for 2012 which once again led the nation for inland counties and was second in the nation overall. Los Angeles County earned America's Birdiest County overall recognition in 2012 with 264 species

Bob Barnes, Ridgecrest (Cell: 760-382-1260, Email: [bbarnes@lightspeed.net](mailto:bbarnes@lightspeed.net))

### **ELECTION**

The meeting of May 17 will be the Kerncrest Audubon Society annual meeting. A nominating committee has proposed the following slate of officers to be voted on at that meeting:

President, Brenda Burnett (incumbent)

Vice President, Hector Villalobos

Treasurer, Dan Burnett (incumbent)

Secretary, Sherry Brubaker

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

### **MAY GENERAL (ANNUAL) MEETING**

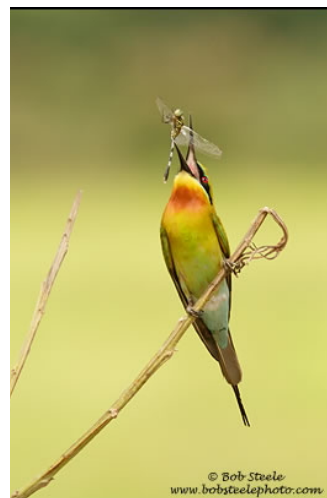
#### **BOB STEELE**

#### **BIRDS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA II**

Target bird - one of the rarest on the planet - Spoon-billed Sandpiper. This is the prize for most birders who venture to Thailand. But that is only the start of a wonderful birding adventure in Southeast Asia. Join professional bird photographer Bob Steele as we explore several of the best birding locations in Thailand, with a few species from Malaysia and Singapore as well. Thailand, a country about the size of California has recorded well over 1000 species. From coastal wetlands and beaches, to tropical forested mountains, the bird life is amazingly diverse.

Bob and his wife Susan traveled to Southeast Asia in 2012 and 2013. They spend the work-week in Inyokern and weekends in Aspendell.

Thursday, May 16 at 7 pm, Maturango Museum, 100 E Las Flores Dr.



See more of Bob's photos at:  
[www.bobsteelephoto.com](http://www.bobsteelephoto.com).

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Newsletter of the Kerncrest Audubon society  
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*Spring, 2013*

