

The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

DECEMBER/JANUARY CALENDAR

Sun Dec 17 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
Wed Dec 20 Board+ Meeting at Burnetts' (Christmas Party for all members)
Wed Jan 17 Board Meeting at Burnetts', refreshments by TBD
Thu Jan 18 Program: What's Happening At Ridgecrest BLM
Sat Jan 20 Field Trip: Edwards AFB Piute Ponds with leader John Birsner

DECEMBER FIELD TRIP

61st CHINA LAKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Don't forget to call Peter Woodman and let him know if you plan to participate in this year's Christmas Bird Count.

Continuing with tradition, the count will be the first Sunday of the Count Period, this year on December 17, from 0700 to 1700.

Count week is from December 13 to 20. Species that are seen during Count Week but not on Count Day also get tallied, so keep an eye out for interesting species you see during that period, and note where you see them.

We will meet at Leroy Jackson Park at 0700 on the 17th. The compilation and pizza party will be at 5 pm, at the home of Pat Moore, again continuing a long tradition. (At day's end, the census-takers gather for a traditional pizza dinner, then total up the day's results – species and individuals.

There is always the excitement of reporting rarities – out-of-season warblers or a single Golden Eagle. And finally the summation: did we do better or worse than last year, and what was the effect of a long dry spell or a year of better-than-average rain?)

Bring a picnic for lunch in the park. We convene at noon for a quick survey of species expected but missed, and a plan for an afternoon reconnaissance. (And if you're not an early riser and want to tag along only for an afternoon of birding, that can probably be arranged.)

Please give Peter a call (760-861-3961) or email at (Kivabio@aol.com) and let him know if you plan to participate so he can budget coverage and make assignments, and order pizza.

DECEMBER MEETING CHRISTMAS PARTY

Officially, in December there is only a board meeting, not a general meeting. However, since December's board meeting is so close to Christmas, on December 20th, it has been decided to make it a Christmas Party, open to all. (Actually, all board meetings are open to all, but we don't actively seek your participation. This time we do!)

All come to 735 Sonja Avenue in Ridgecrest at 6pm on Wednesday, December 20th. There will be cookies and eggnog. And if all hang around and get hungry, we'll send out for pizza. Do please RSVP to 760-375-8634 and leave a message letting us know you will be attending.

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

What's Happening Regarding Wildlife at the Ridgecrest BLM Field Office

Caroline Woods, Wildlife Biologist for the BLM Ridgecrest Field Office. Began her career with BLM as a Natural Resource Specialist in late 2007. She has a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Management from Arkansas State and has done graduate work on Gopher tortoises at Georgia Southern.

Caroline will be talking to us about current projects at BLM's Ridgecrest Field Office, probably touching on the Desert Renewable Energy and Conservation Plan, the Erskine Fire related projects, Off-highway Vehicle damage rehab, a native plants program, updates on the status of the Inyo Towhee, and maybe others.

The program will be at 7pm on Thursday, January 18 at the Maturango Museum, 800 E Las Flores Drive in Ridgecrest.

JANUARY FIELD TRIP PIUTE PONDS

John Birsner, expert birder from the Antelope Valley will lead us to Piute Ponds on Edwards Air Force Base on Saturday, January 20th, 2018. These beautiful, natural wetlands, the sink of the Amargosa Creek, are home to tons of wintering waterfowl.

The wetlands are on the Air Force Base, so unless you already have a Civilian Access Card allowing entrance to all military bases, you must do the following:

***First talk with Misty Hailstone on the base by phone at (661) 275-2435 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. before Dec 20 to arrange a required annual pass ***. Tell her your personal information •(legal name, •driver's license number and state issued, •social security number, •date of birth, •email address, and •phone number). Please DO NOT e-mail or leave a message. Access for foreign nationals is trickier but still possible. Cameras O.K

From Ridgecrest or Inyokern, we will meet at the usual 76 station in Inyokern at 8am to form a carpool. For anyone wishing to meet us down the road or at the gate, we have directions to the gate. To sign up, please call Bob Parker at (760) 446-2001 or Brenda Burnett at (760) 382-4935.

Bring a lunch. To do a good job of seeing all these beautiful wetlands takes about 4 hours. And there may be those who want to go on to other sites in the vicinity. Apollo Park? Cal City? Even Ave. I and 110th St East for Ferruginous Hawk and Mountain Plover.

ROOKIES WELCOME! John has said he would like rookies to be in his car.

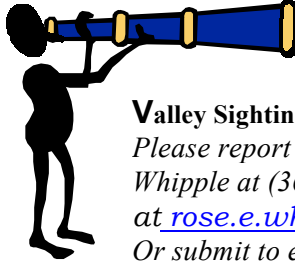
OTHER KERNCREST AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Saturday, Dec. 30: Red Rock Canyon: Jean Rhyne & Alexia Svejda: Phone (661) 810-6268

Saturday, Dec. 30: South Fork Valley: compiler Denise LaBerteaux, Phone (760) 378-4278

Sunday, Dec. 31: Kern River Valley: compiler Tim Ludwick, email tjludwick@gmail.com

A complete list of California Counts, their dates and contacts may be found on Alison Sheehey's website, at <http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm> .



Valley Sightings – Nov 2017

Please report unusual sightings to Rose Whipple at (360) 348-1609, or by email at rose.e.whipple@gmail.com. Or submit to ebird for Rose to glean.

November Sightings:

Some Bonaparte's Gulls at the Ridgecrest Watchable Wildlife Park on Nov 11 (BG, DLB)

A Fox Sparrow in SE Ridgecrest on Nov 12 (LS)

About 50 American White Pelicans flying over NW Ridgecrest on Nov 15th (DB)

A Harris's Sparrow in Inyokern on Nov 16 (SSt) and again on Nov 17 (BBu, RW).

A Juvenile Blue Morph Snow Goose, an Aleutian Cackling Goose, a White-winged Dove, and some Mountain Bluebirds (the first of fall) at the China Lake Golf Course on Nov 18 (BB)

A Sagebrush Sparrow in Noname Canyon on Nov 22 (SSt)

A Red-breasted Sapsucker, Vermilion flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, Herring Gull, and continuing White-winged Dove at the China Lake Sewage Ponds on Nov 23 (SSt)

Two Peregrine Falcons South of Inyokern on Nov 24 (SSt)

A Red Crossbill in Sand Canyon on Nov 24 (SSt)

A Ferruginous Hawk at the Ridgecrest Watchable Wildlife Park on Nov 25 (LS)

A Burrowing Owl in Freeman Canyon on Nov 28 (SSt, BB)

A Ross's Goose at the China Lake Golf Course on Nov 28 (ST)

Thanks to the following observers: Bob Barnes (BB); Brenda Burnett (BBu); Dan Burnett (DB); Bruce Garlinger (BG); Denise LaBerteaux (DLB); Susan Steele (SSt); Lee Sutton (LS); Sherry Thornburg (ST and Rose Whipple (RW).

RENEWALS

It has come to our attention that there is no opportunity, if you attempt to renew your National Audubon Society membership online, to enter your subscription number. If you try to renew there anyway, you will be assigned a new membership number and sent an additional magazine until the overlapping membership expires. We recommend you renew by mail. If you do opt to go ahead and accept the new membership designation, please indicate chapter C45 as your preference, so maybe we will get a cut of the fee.

Regarding Kerncrest memberships: it is time to renew those. Though we will not stop sending you a newsletter unless you ask us to, an annual membership donation of \$15 is always appreciated. Please mail that to Kerncrest Audubon Society, PO Box 984, Ridgecrest CA 93556. (Disregard this request if you are a regular donor to our Birdathon, or if making a donation is a problem for you.)

THANK YOU, WACOM

WACOM, the Women's Auxiliary, Commissioned Officers' Mess, has generously granted us \$500! We will use that money primarily for supplies for our Junior Audubon Clubs at Faller and Inyokern schools. If you know and/or are related to any members of WACOM, please thank them.

