



# The Chat



Kerncrest Audubon Society, Ridgecrest, California

May, 2010

## **MAY CALENDAR**

Sat	May 1	all day	KRP Spring Festival
Tue	May 18	6:00pm	Board Meeting, Robinsons'
Thu	May 20	7:00pm	General Meeting, Ara Marderosian, Sequoia Forestkeepers

## **MAY PROGRAM SEQUOIA FORESTKEEPER**

Do you enjoy recreating in or driving through the scenic Sequoia National Forest of the Southern Sierra Nevada Mountains? Do you like Big Trees? Have you visited the nearby Sequoia National Monument with its many Giant Sequoia groves, thick forests, open meadows and beautiful unspoiled vistas? Our May Program will feature Ara Marderosian, Executive Director of Sequoia Forestkeeper.

Ara will speak about how the Sequoia Forestkeeper, a nonprofit organization watches over the Forest Service's management (or mismanagement in the eye of many) of both the Sequoia National Forest in general and the Sequoia National Monument in particular. He will have many stories to tell of the goings on in our nearby National Forest.

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 20<sup>th</sup>) at our normal time of 7:00 pm. See you there.

Submitted by Lee Sutton

## **BIRDATHON**

In the past, the practice has been to publish the list of birds seen at the annual Birdathon in a separate letter, issued only to those who contributed to the Birdathon, sort of as a "bribe." This practice has been discontinued for the past two years and is not likely to be re-instituted. We realize that people regularly contribute as much as they are able, and should not be excluded from reading about the event because of an inability to contribute.

So the list of birds seen can be found on page 3 of this issue.

As for news of the birdathon itself, it was a very strange one. Spring seems to be late this year. Although the date was only 2 days earlier than the birdathon of 2008, species seen were more winter than migrating. We still had snow geese, and there were almost NO WARBI FRS in the valley. Fortunately, two teams hinded

the Kern River valley and came through with warblers, and more flycatchers than usual. And we almost didn't get a horned lark! We know they're here, but they seem to be dispersed, breeding, and being very, very quiet.

As always, there were some frustrating misses. A male sora was seen in Heritage Village the day before the birdathon but was not spotted on the search. Same for a Canada goose, and a flock of Lesser Nighthawks.

Another reason for the low species count this year was likely the fact that our two best birders were gallivanting around Colorado looking for sage grouse. So we hope that those of you who contribute "per species" will take pity on us and up your pledge per species.

It's still not too late to contribute, of course. You can still mail contributions to PO Box 984. Half of the proceeds go to the Kern River Preserve in Weldon, and the other half to support our education programs here in Ridgecrest, which include 2 Junior Audubon clubs at local schools and a beginning birding class at the library.

## **RIDGECREST SOLAR PROJECT INTERVENTION REPORT**

The Kerncrest Audubon Society (KAS) has intervened in the permitting process for Solar Millennium, LLC, Ridgecrest solar power generating project.

A workshop was held in Ridgecrest by the California Energy Commission (CEC) staff to settle as many issues as possible that remain between the CEC and Solar Millennium. California Law requires that such issues be resolved publicly. KAS participated in this workshop and several members of KAS were present as part of the public during the workshop.

As of the end of the workshop the only major issues remaining "unsettled" or unmitigated are the visual impact and the biological issues. The CEC Staff is opposing the project at this site because the site is a uniquely rich and diverse habitat that should be protected from development. KAS supports the CEC Staff in this conclusion. Other mitigations (water, air, socioeconomic, health, etc.) have been agreed upon in principle, between CEC staff and the applicant. KAS may offer additional mitigations in some of these areas where we feel the present mitigations are not adequate.

Terri Middlemiss, Brenda Burnett and Dan Burnett are the KAS board members working on this issue.

Submitted by Dan Burnett



## Valley Sightings April 2010

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 two lingering **Snow Geese** continued at the old sewage ponds on Apr 3 (DBu).

The **Mallard x Gadwall** hybrid was at the ponds Apr 6 and 8-9, and a **Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal** hybrid was seen Apr 7 (SLS).

The female **Common Goldeneye** at the ponds was last seen Apr 1 (SLS).

A **Red-breasted Merganser** was at the ponds Apr 11-12 (SLS).

The **Common Loons** at the ponds Apr 1 and 11 were in gorgeous breeding plumage (SLS).

An **Osprey** was at the golf course Apr 1 (SLS).

This year's confirmation of **Cooper's Hawks** nesting at the college came on Apr 12 when the female was seen sitting on the nest (BB).

Seven **Swainson's Hawks** streamed north out of Ridgecrest the morning of Apr 9 (SLS, BS). Our previous high count for the species was two, and they were last noted in the valley April 22, 2007. Two other **Swainson's Hawks** were seen on Apr 12 one at the ponds (SS) and the other in Sand Canyon (LS, BP). The hawk in Sand Canyon was species #148 for that location.

A **Merlin** was at the ponds Apr 13 and a **Peregrine Falcon** was seen the following day (SLS).

FOS for **Semipalmated Plover** was from the ponds Apr 12 (BB).

FOS for **Western Sandpiper** was from the ponds Apr 11 and **Willet** Apr 12 (SLS).

FOS for **Bonaparte's Gull** was from the ponds Apr 13 (SLS).

FOS for **Caspian Tern** was at the ponds Apr 12 (SLS).

While it is an unusual location, it is the second time a **Virginia's Rail** has been found in Indian Wells Canyon (L&SSu). This sighting was on Apr 8, the previous by one of our current reporters was on March 27, 2006.

FOS for **Snowy Plover** and **Long-billed Curlew** (SLS) and **Whimbrel** (BB) was from the ponds Apr 8.

A **Calliope Hummingbird** was in Ridgecrest Apr 5 (JAS).

The **Belted Kingfishers** at the ponds Apr 8-9 and 14 were nicely in the middle of their expected migration window (SLS).

A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was N of Inyokern Apr 1-6 (TM). This is a new last spring sighting date, with the old date being March 22.

FOS for **Gray Flycatcher** was from Indian Wells Canyon Apr 8 (L&SSu).

**Dusky** and **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** FOS sightings were from Sand Canyon Apr 12 (LS, BP).

A **Vermillion Flycatcher** was on the base Apr 12 (SLS).

FOS for **Cassin's Vireo** was from S of Inyokern Apr 11 (SLS).

The first **Bank Swallow** of the spring was at the ponds Apr 5 (SLS).

A **Hermit Thrush** was in SE Ridgecrest Apr 5-6 (SB).

The first **House Wren** of the spring was from SE Ridgecrest Apr 9 (SB). Eighteen! **House Wrens** were found at the college Apr 12 (BB). Our previous high count was a paltry four.

Two eggs were noted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> **LeConte's Thrasher** nest of the year Apr 6 (LK). The first nest successfully fledged three young.

FOS for **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was from the college Apr 10 (JAS).

The first **Townsend's Warbler** this spring arrived in Ridgecrest Apr 9 (DBu). This is near the early end of their local migration, April 7, and we should expect to see them through the end of May.

The first **Wilson's Warbler** of the spring was from Sand Canyon Apr 12 (LS, BP).

A **Fox Sparrow** was S of Inyokern Apr 1 (SLS).

FOS for **Lazuli Bunting** was from Sand Canyon Apr 12 (DBu, LL).

After getting off to a slow start, **Bullock's** and **Hooded Orioles** are now being regularly seen (m.ob).

A **Pine Siskin** was S of Inyokern Apr 13 (SLS).

**Lawrence's Goldfinch** continue at the college being noted on Apr 10 (JAS) and Apr 12 (BB), others were S of Inyokern Apr 9 -13 and on the base Apr 12-13 (SLS).

Thanks to the following observers: *Bob Barnes, Dan and Brenda Burnett, Sherry Brubaker, Louise Knecht, Lisa Lavelle, Terri Middlemiss, Bob Parker, Joyce Seibold, Bob Steele, Lee and Shirley Sutton,*

## BIRDATHON 2010 APRIL 23-24

Pied-billed Grebe  
Eared Grebe  
Western Grebe\*  
Clark's Grebe\*  
American White Pelican  
Double-crested Cormorant\*  
Great Blue Heron\*  
Great Egret  
Snowy Egret  
Green Heron  
Black-crowned Night-Heron  
White-faced Ibis  
Snow Goose  
Green-winged Teal  
Mallard  
Northern Pintail  
Blue-winged Teal  
Cinnamon Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Gadwall  
American Wigeon  
Redhead  
Ring-necked Duck  
Ruddy Duck  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey\*  
Northern Harrier  
Red-shouldered Hawk\*  
Red-tailed Hawk\*  
American Kestrel  
Prairie Falcon  
Chukar  
California Quail  
Mountain Quail  
Common Moorhen  
American Coot  
Killdeer  
Black-necked Stilt  
American Avocet  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Western Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Common Snipe  
Wilson's Phalarope  
Red-necked Phalarope  
Bonaparte's Gull  
California Gull  
Rock Dove  
Mourning Dove

Eurasian Collared-dove  
Greater Roadrunner  
Burrowing Owl  
Long-eared Owl  
Black-chinned Hummingbird  
Anna's Hummingbird  
Costa's Hummingbird  
Belted Kingfisher  
Acorn Woodpecker\*  
Ladder-backed Woodpecker\*  
Nuttall's Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker\*  
Hairy Woodpecker\*  
White-headed Woodpecker\*  
Northern Flicker\*  
Willow Flycatcher  
Hammond's Flycatcher  
Dusky Flycatcher  
Gray Flycatcher\*  
Pacific-slope Flycatcher  
Black Phoebe  
Says' Phoebe  
Ash-throated Flycatcher  
Western Kingbird  
Horned Lark  
Tree Swallow\*  
Violet-green Swallow\*  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow\*  
Cliff Swallow\*  
Barn Swallow  
Steller's Jay\*  
Scrub Jay  
Common Raven  
American Crow\*  
Mountain Chickadee\*  
Oak Titmouse\*  
Verdin  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
White-breasted Nuthatch\*  
Pygmy Nuthatch  
Brown Creeper\*  
Cactus Wren\*  
Rock Wren  
Bewick's Wren  
House Wren\*  
Marsh Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher\*  
Western Bluebird\*  
Hermit Thrush\*  
American Robin

Northern Mockingbird  
California Thrasher  
Le Conte's Thrasher  
Phainopepla  
Loggerhead Shrike  
European Starling  
Cassin's Vireo\*  
Warbling Vireo\*  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Yellow Warbler\*  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Black-throated Gray Warbler  
Townsend's Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat\*  
Wilson's Warbler  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Summer Tanager\*  
Western Tanager\*  
Green-tailed Towhee  
Spotted Towhee  
California Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow\*  
Brewer's Sparrow\*  
Black-chinned Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow  
Black-throated Sparrow  
Sage Sparrow  
Fox Sparrow  
Song Sparrow\*  
Lincoln's Sparrow\*  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco\*  
Black-headed Grosbeak\*  
Lazuli Bunting\*  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Tricolored Blackbird\*  
Western Meadowlark  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Great-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Hooded Oriole  
Bullock's Oriole  
Scott's Oriole  
Cassin's Finch\*  
House Finch  
Pine Siskin  
Lesser Goldfinch  
Lawrence's Goldfinch\*  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow  
**Total Species: 155**

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**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Kerncrest Audubon Society

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(Includes subscription to *The Chat*)

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Please enclose a check payable to Kerncrest Audubon Society.

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P.O. Box 984

Ridgecrest CA 93556

Kerncrest Audubon Society

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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***

Newsletter of the Kerncrest Audubon society  
P.O. Box 984, Ridgecrest, CA 93556

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