



Programs

Second Wednesday of the month,
Every other month
October-June, 7:00 PM,
 White Mountain Research Station
 3 miles east of Bishop
 on East Line Street.
 Check website or local media
 for changes.

ESAS Website: ESAudubon.org Eastern Sierra Bird Sightings: ESAudubon.org/birds/

Evening Programs

Evening programs will be preceded by announcements of interest to the membership, and recent bird sightings and other local natural history news. Come prepared to participate!

Eastern Sierra Audubon Calendar Changes

There are so many things to do in the Eastern Sierra that people are often pulled in many directions at the same time. This has been reflected in attendance at the ESAS monthly programs. In recognition of this, Eastern Sierra Audubon has decided to reduce its 2010-2011 calendar from monthly meetings to every other month. In part, this decision is an attempt to co-ordinate our program dates and content with other groups in order to reduce the level of competition among organizations for attendance. We will also be working on exploring options for more field trip partnerships in the coming year.

This year we will present programs on the second Wednesday of October (13th

- changed to 6th - see below), December (8th), February (9th) and April (13th). This schedule will allow us to hold our very popular holiday dinner in December and we will also hold our annual membership meeting and potluck in June. Programs will continue to be held at the White

Mountain Research facility on East Line Street in Bishop. Please circle these dates, check out our website for program topics and bring a friend.

See esaudubon.org for more info, or call Roberta at 872-7846. Everyone is welcome to attend! Non-members attending the meeting have a chance to win a free 12 month membership to the local chapter of Audubon!



White-tailed Ptarmigan, photo by Bob Steele
 (as mentioned in the "Highlight Birds" article, p. 7)

Fall Program Information

September: Related to the above announcement, **the previously announced September 8th program, *Shape Shifters, Time Travelers, and Innovators: The Origin and Evolution of a Flora*, has been cancelled.** We hope to have Yosemite Ranger and popular Chautauqua presenter Erik Westerlund back another time, as his talks are always interesting and informative!

October: *BREAKING NEWS!* Jack Laws will be the speaker for our general meeting in October! **The date has changed to October 6th** to accommodate his schedule and enable us to have him as our special guest. Details will be announced on the website and in our email newsletters. Don't Miss it!

President's Message

“To trace the history of a river
is to trace the history of the soul”

Gretle Erlich

Suddenly, it is the middle of August. Seems like it was just last week that we gathered to enjoy the warmth and hospitality of Joan Benner's yard for our annual potluck. Now, it is back to school. What happened to the time; what happened in the time. The old magic of the Eastern Sierra has had me in its spell.

Two herons bookend my summer. In June, driving back from an Owens Lake planning meeting in Keeler, those of us in the car were abuzz with the possibilities of habitat designation on the lakebed. At once, we were silenced by the sight of a great blue heron gliding across the highway at the Owens River bridge. This was not a new bird for anyone, and our glimpse was brief, but we all watched, captivated. During a Birds in the Classroom session, a young boy asked me why I cared about birds and I responded that I can't imagine what it would be like to be able to fly.

Our heron was part of the web of living things that has followed the reintroduction of water to the Lower Owens River and Owens Lake playa. It has been a summer of water and birds and the connection between the two. The more I learn about the situation at Owens Lake, the more fascinated I am with possibility. We will soon bring forward an interim report on the progress which has been made toward development of a permanent plan for the lake and its habitat. I marvel at the level of commitment and work displayed by the participants in our many meetings. I am amazed at the speed and dynamism of natural processes. “Just add water.” We do ESWP at the Lower Owens and the changes following the reintroduction of water were swift and dramatic. The aquatic invertebrate populations shifted to reflect the increase in water quality, vegetation began to emerge along the riparian edges, and songbirds increased in numbers and variety. In the same way, flooding the Owens lakebed brought and immediate response from an ever-increasing

population of birds. Nesting numbers grew, additional species appeared and the overall habitat has become more diverse.

Yesterday, I was helping lead a Mono Lake Committee field seminar, teaching folks to fly fish. We were at Rush Creek, looking at the relationship between healthy watershed and fish. In reality, though, we were demonstrating the power of a miracle. The first time I saw the creek, there was only a creekbed. I wondered where the water went. I knew the answer, but the vision of a dead streamcourse be-

low the snow-clad Sierra crest did not compute for me. It was simply “not right.” Now, Rush Creek is vibrant and holds a population of strong, beautiful and finicky fish. I won't tell you where they are. You'll have to thrash your own legs if you fish wearing shorts. Swallows cruised the water surface feeding on emerging mayflies. We walked through an area in which Roberta and I had helped plant Jeffrey Pines and found that some of our seedlings

were now more than four feet tall. At one point, as I pushed my way through lush thickets of willow and wild rose and other vegetation, I looked up and saw a Black-crowned Night Heron perched on a snag above the creek. The bird glanced in my direction and seemed pretty unimpressed. Its gaze returned to the water. This is its home and it knows I will be moving on.

Rush Creek is both a monument and a promise. Its rebirth from the dead is a memorial to people with the vision and savvy to recognize an opportunity and work through all of the obstacles to the realization of an objective that many dismissed as impossible. The creek is also a promise that the past, present and future work at the Lower Owens River and Owens Lake will yield a strong, sustainable area in which the dance of life can continue to move forward.

— **Pete Pumphrey**



Black-crowned Night Heron
(Wikimedia Commons)

Eastern Sierra Audubon Brings Jack Laws To Area Schools

The Eastern Sierra Audubon Society is bringing noted educator and artist Jack Laws to Alpine, Mono and Inyo County schools for two weeks in September and October. Partnering with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Sorensen's Resort, we are funding Jack for a full day in ten schools from Markleeville to Lone Pine.

He will bring his incredible talents to interactions with both students and faculty in each school. Programs will be tailored to the curriculum of each school. In addition, the schools will receive copies of the Laws Field Guide to the Eastern Sierra for their libraries and classrooms.

Special thanks go out to John Brisenden of Sorensen's Resort and Julie Bear of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for securing funding for the project and to Barbara Kelley for doing the vast amount of work required to recruit the individual schools and coordinate the scheduling.

As a part of his visit, Jack will present a program at his namesake Laws Railroad Museum on Sunday, October 3rd. There will be a morning and afternoon program.

The day will start with an initial session in which he will conduct his famous birding and sketching class. The class will be conducted among the artifacts and structure of the museum which includes the stationmaster's home which once was home to Jack's great grandfather. Participants will learn to draw and sketch birds. They will be taught basic shapes and methods for capturing the form and movement of birds. Many different birds are found at the museum and its surroundings. Attendees will gain an understanding of which critical details to check as a part of mastering the one-minute sketch technique. Even if you do not fancy yourself as artistic, this is a great way to learn quick references for bird identification.

Following a pot-luck picnic with the instructor, the afternoon session will move to a consideration of water color and colored pencil techniques, composition and color theory.

The day with Jack Laws is sponsored by the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, Laws Museum and the Inyo Council for the Arts. Registration and cost information can be found at the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society website (www.esaudubon.org) and a registration form is in this newsletter (pp 5-6). Contact Pete Pumphrey at 760-872-7846 for more details.

Field Trip Report, Conway Meadows, August 14, 2010

By: Larry Nahm

Our many eastside dendroglyphs encourage wonder at the shepherds who made them. Sixteen enthusiasts from our chapter and the Bristlecone Chapter of the Native Plant Society walked near Conway Summit to learn about aspen grove ecology and Basque culture.

Leaders Richard Potashin and Nancy Hadlock attempt to understand and document as much as possible before time's scythe has moved on. In short, we located abundant messages from lonely men far away from home. We marvelled at the calligraphy, the names, the dates (spanning most of the last century), the representations of their loved ones, and the phalli. Outside the groves, pinkish bog mallow seemed most striking among the several blooms. Inside, sapsuckers noticeably absented themselves, but we did record chickadee and yellow-rumped warbler--and an immense raptors' nest.



Recycling Reminder: We'd like to remind the membership that if people **bring their recyclables to Manor Market and specify a donation to Audubon**, we will get the proceeds.

Field Trips

Check ESAudubon.org for up-to-date event information

Friday, September 17--Pine Creek Birding Leaders: Larry Nahm and Carolyn Gann

Any stray migrants passing through? If not, the residents may entertain us. Join us for an amble through the forest along Pine Creek, northwest of Bishop. Bring ample fluids, snacks, binoculars. No pets, please. Meet in the Pine Creek Trailhead parking lot adjacent to the pack station at 8:30 a.m. Carpoolers can assemble in the lot in Bishop west of Joseph's Market at 7:50 a.m. The walk should end by noon. Phone 872-4125 for more information.

14th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium

Hey, fellow bird lovers! It's time to get ready for the 14th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium to be held at the Hilton in Stockton, CA, Nov. 18-21, 2010.

This year for our evening programs we have dynamic photographer and author Paul Bannick giving a program based on his research on "Owls and Woodpeckers of the West". Author of dozens of books and articles and award-winning photographer Moose Petersen will give a presentation on "California's Threatened and Endangered Birds".



*Rose-breasted Grosbeak, by Beverly Schroeder
(as mentioned in the "Highlight Birds" article, p. 7)*



*Summer Tanager, by Ron Overholtz
(as mentioned in the "Highlight Birds" article, p. 7)*

Workshops include Jon Dunn on sparrows and Joe Morlan's shorebird ID workshop focusing on loons and grebes. There are many others, ranging from Central Valley Raptors to Beginning Birding and digiscoping to bird sketching.

Our field trips always turn up exciting birds. Add in the always entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful display of art and gifts for yourself or others at the Birder's Market and the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks, and you know you'll have a good time!

For more information or registration go to the website at www.cvbs.org or contact Frances Oliver at hummer52@sbcglobal.net See you there!

A Day with Jack Laws

Two Drawing and Sketching Classes

At Laws Railroad Museum and Historic Site, Sunday October 3, 2010

On Sunday October 3, 2010, celebrated author, artist and nature educator Jack Laws, great grandson of the R. J. Laws of Laws CA, will be at the Laws Railroad Museum to conduct a one day program concentrating on wildlife interpretation, bird sketching, drawing and painting techniques. There will be two individual sessions and a pot-luck picnic for participants to meet and talk with Mr. Laws.

The day will start with a morning session **Drawing Birds in the Western Landscape**. Learn to draw and sketch birds among the artifacts and structures of the museum which includes the stationmaster's home which once was home to Jack's great grandfather. While observing the birds of Laws, you will be taught how to sketch these fascinating creatures. As over 50 different species of birds can be found at the museum ranging from hummers to raptors there will be quite a range of subjects to pick from. Participants will be taught basic shapes and methods for capturing the form and movement of birds and animals while understanding which critical details to check when you see a bird. Attendees will master the one-minute sketch technique. Even if you do not fancy yourself as artistic, this is a great way to learn quick references for bird identification. This class is suitable for children. Bring your favorite drawing and sketching materials and something to share for a potluck lunch.

If after lunch you find yourself wanting to know more about sketching, coloring your sketches with various media or just general art education then the afternoon session **Techniques and Tricks** is the class for you! In the afternoon Jack will move on to a consideration of water color and colored pencil techniques, perspective, composition, Plein Air techniques and some new thoughts color theory while using the museum's buildings, artifacts and landscapes as inspiration. As these techniques work for all medium from pencils to pastels, acrylics to watercolor, so bring whatever medium(s) you wish to work in and walk out of the class armed with more tools to create the art you want to see.

Participants can register for one or both of these classes. Registrants of **either** class will be able to attend the pot luck picnic and enjoy the wit and wisdom of Jack Laws.

Biography

Naturalist, educator and artist John (Jack) Muir Laws delights in exploring the natural world and sharing this love with others. Laws has worked as an environmental educator for over 25 years in California, Wyoming, and Alaska. He teaches classes on natural history, conservation biology, scientific illustration, and field sketching. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is an associate of the California Academy of Sciences. In 2009, he received the Terwilliger Environmental Award for outstanding service in Environmental Education.

Laws has written and illustrated books about the natural history of California including *Sierra Birds: a Hiker's Guide* (2004), *The Laws Guide to the Sierra Nevada* (2007), and *The Laws Pocket Guide Set to the San Francisco Bay Area* (2009). He is a regular contributor to *Bay Nature* magazine with his "Naturalists Notebook" column. His illustrations are informed by extensive field experience and capture the feeling of the living plant or animal, while also including details critical for identification. See his website, www.johnmuirlaws.com for more details.

A Day with Jack Laws is sponsored by the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society (www.esaudubon.org), Laws Railroad Museum and Historic Site (www.lawsmuseum.org) and the Inyo Council for the Arts. Registration and cost information can be found at the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society website or contact Pete Pumphrey at 760-872-7846 for more details. **Registration is limited - Registration Form Next Page.**

Registration for A Day with Jack Laws

Drawing Birds in the Western Landscape Sunday October 3 from 9:30 to 12:00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Laws Museum and/or Eastern Sierra Audubon Society Members	\$60.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-members	\$85.00

Pot-luck with Jack Laws Included with either registration

Techniques and Tricks Sunday October 3 from 1:00-3:30	
<input type="checkbox"/> Laws Museum and/or Eastern Sierra Audubon Society Members	\$60.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-members	\$85.00

Both Classes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Laws Museum and/or Eastern Sierra Audubon Society Members	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-members	\$150.00

<input type="checkbox"/> Add a child accompanied by a paid registration adult:	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Add a child accompanied by a paid registration adult:	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Add an Eastern Sierra Audubon Membership	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Add a Laws Museum Membership	\$20.00
Total registration paid Please make checks payable to Eastern Sierra Audubon Society	\$

Name _____

Children _____

Address _____

Phone _____ email _____

Please mail to Eastern Sierra Audubon Society P.O. Box 624 Bishop, Ca 93514

Questions? Please call 760 872 7846

Spring 2010: Highlight Birds in Inyo County

By Tom and Jo Heindel

Our harsh winters are reflected in the few bird species that share the chill with us but the thought that spring will soon come, bringing the migration of birds, warms the cold cockles of our hearts. Birders follow a slightly different calendar than most people. The Spring season is March, April, and May, although some species jump-the-gun, like Cinnamon Teal which typically returns in January and the swallows by February.

Spring can start slowly with fancy birds being reported to the south of Inyo County for the first few weeks, causing the Eastern Sierra birders extreme agitation but by May the exciting gems, vagrants from the East, begin to arrive. A search of past May posts to Eastern Sierra Birds dramatically displays this annual phenomenon. This year the most exciting record was a Black Rosy-Finch that Bob & Susan Steele hosted at their feeders 7 March. They placed calls and posted the information so other birders were able to see the bird before it departed. The documentation and excellent photographs are circulating through the California Bird Records Committee, Record # 2010-022, and if accepted will be the fifteenth State record, all from either Mono or Inyo County.

This was a banner spring for Summer Tanagers with thirteen reported between 7 May and early Jun and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks with eight reported, four photographed, between 18 and 30 May. Greater Scaup, always rare in our area, were photographed at Owens Lake 1 May (C&RH) and 8 May (KHL). After a strenuous hike into Brown Lake on 15 May, six White-tailed Ptarmigan were found and photographed (B&SS). This species was introduced from Colorado into Mono County almost forty years ago and gradually spread south into Inyo County.

Bald Eagles, not expected after April, were reported from Round Valley 10 May (J&DP) and Bishop Creek 28 May (B&SS, WHM, KAD). A Common Moorhen, not at all common in the Eastern Sierra, was at Black Rock 4 Jun (DJH, CEA).



Band-tailed Pigeon, photo by Connie Engelhardt



© 2010 Bob Steele
www.bobsteelephoto.com

Black Rosy-Finch, photo by Bob Steele

A Band-tailed Pigeon, casual on the East Slope, was photographed at Division Creek 19 Apr (C&CE). White-winged Doves, casual visitors from south of here, were at Furnace Creek Ranch 8 May and two more were at Shoshone 23 May, all photographed (CGL). The only Lewis's Woodpecker was reported at Sage Flat, southwest of Olancho, 8 May (KHL) and Acorn Woodpeckers, away from known occupied areas with oaks, were reported at Birchim Canyon 8 May (J&DP), on Hwy 168 west of Bishop at 6300ft 14 May (B&SS) and Division Creek 16 May where there are oaks (B&SS). Brown-crested Flycatchers, expected at China Ranch in the southeastern point of the county, were unexpected at Mesquite Springs 8 May (CGL) and Scotty's Castle 29 May (AH) in Death Valley National Park.

Continued Next Page

Highlight Birds in Inyo County, continued

For the third year, a singing male Bell's Vireo returned to Big Pine 14 Apr (TSH) and a Red-eyed Vireo was photographed at Shepherd Creek, northwest of Manzanar 4 Jun (JMH). A male Purple Martin was at Haiwee Reservoir 1 May (ADeM) and was the first record since 2006.

Warblers, the most reliable vagrants, made their spectacular showing throughout May. Although

Virginia's Warblers are regular breeders in the White Mountains, they are not often seen in migration so the one at Scotty's Castle 8 May (CGL) was a surprise. Lucy's Warblers are common in the southeast region of Inyo County but seen behaving territorially in the Panamint Valley 18 Apr (C&RH) and another one near Independence 19 May (JTZ) were unexpected. Three Northern Parula, two photographed, were found near Bishop, all different individuals, between 18 and 31 May (CBG, C&RH, DJH). A very rare in spring Hermit Warbler was photographed at Bishop 6 May (J&DP). Black-and-white Warblers were at Deep Springs photographed 8 May (C&RH) and east of Independence 20 May (DJH). American Redstarts were at Birch Creek 22 May (JEB, SMcL) and Shepherd Creek photographed 4 Jun (JMH). Hooded Warblers, both photographed were at Birchim Canyon 22 Apr (C&CE) and Bishop 24-28 May (J&DP, C&RH).



Northern Parula, photo by Chris Howard

It was a good spring for Black-chinned Sparrows with eight singing males at Surprise Canyon, Panamint Mountains 17 Apr (C&RH), a single singing male at Division Creek 25 Apr (C&RH) and two-three singing males there 7 May (DJH) with four photographed 16 May (B&SS, ph.). The only Harris's Sparrow was photographed at Furnace Creek Ranch 18 Mar (J&DP) and a Dark-eyed "Gray-headed" Junco was along Tinemaha Creek 13 Apr (JEB, SMcL). And last, but certainly not least, was an Indigo Bunting photographed at Shepherd Creek 4 Jun (JMH).

We have an excellent picture of what happened Spring 2010 in Inyo County because of all the people cited above. They are an amazing, special group of birders who have fully embraced the concept of citizen scientist and have gone the extra mile to provide evidence to substantiate their claims. The photographic file they provide often exceeds one hundred pictures in spring and for the rarities they can't photograph, they write detailed descriptions to convince others, and others not-yet-born, that their claim is credible and could not have been any other species.



Black-chinned Sparrow, photo by Bob Steele

Our respect, admiration, and gratitude go to: Al DeMartini (ADeM), Andrew Howe (AH), Bill Mitchel (WHM), Bob & Susan Steele (B&SS), Carl Lundblad (CGL), Carolyn Gann (CBG), Chris Allen (CEA), Chris & Rosie Howard (C&RH), Claus & Connie Engelhardt (C&CE), Debbie House (DJH), Jan Bowers (JEB), Jerry Zatorski (JTZ), Jim & Debby Parker (J&DP), Justin Hite (JMH), Kathy Duvall (KAD), Kelli Levinson (KHL), Steve McLaughlin (SMcL) and Tom Heindel (TSH).

Eastern Sierra Audubon Board:

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From the New Old Editor

Well that has to be the shortest position I've held! I am happy to have been able to be part of the tradition of the Wave newsletter - even if only for three issues. Eastern Sierra Audubon will be moving toward a better way to keep their members informed, using Constant Contact email newsletters instead of print-formatted newsletters. That will be a big time-saver for us busy volunteers, but will also benefit the members because you will receive reminders about things like field trips when you need them. Don't worry - we won't be spamming your inboxes with constant emails - only when needed or warranted by timely information and enough enjoyable articles to share. They will be in full color and include the same gorgeous photos our members send for the newsletter, but information may be broken up into two or three smaller emails over the time that a normal two month newsletter would cover. The same excellent content (provided by our amazing members) broken into more "bite-size" chunks, and delivered to your inbox in a timely manner. We hope you like the change - I know I will have more time to go watch birds without having to assemble a full newsletter in this format every two months!

~Maggie Wolfe Riley

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Join National Audubon and Affiliate with our Chapter

\$20/year, benefits: receive **Audubon Magazine** and the **WAVE**

Name _____ (*please print*)

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Mail Application To: National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

OR, Join the Chapter only - \$20 / year - full Chapter Benefits and the WAVE

Send check to: Membership Chair, Eastern Sierra Audubon, PO box 624, Bishop, CA 93515