



## Meetings

2nd Wednesday of the month,  
September-June, 7:00 PM,  
usually at  
White Mountain Research Station  
3 miles east of Bishop on  
East Line Street.  
Check local media for possible  
changes.

*ESAS Website:* <http://ESAudubon.org> *ES Bird Sightings:* <http://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!**

**September 14**

### **The Salton Sea Ecosystem – It's Worth Saving!**

**Kathie Satterfield**

400+ bird species, 100+ breeding species, 124,000 shorebirds, 30,000 Cattle Egret in a single nesting colony, 25,000+ Snow & Ross' Geese, 45% of all Yuma Clapper Rails! But plans are underway to reduce the size of the Salton Sea by approximately half. This has many ramifications, for the birds using the Sea itself and for those using other habitats that make up the ecosystem.



Black-crowned Night Heron Chris Howard photo

How this is accomplished and how much water is transferred from the Imperial Valley will affect millions of birds and hundreds of species. Please join Audubon California's Salton Sea Campaign Coordinator to learn what is at stake and how you can help save and restore California's "Crown Jewel of Avian Biodiversity."

**October 12**

### **The Galapagos Islands: What Darwin Saw**

**Kerry Lozito**

Charles Darwin spent five years aboard the H.M.S. Beagle, studying natural history as he circumnavigated the world. Of all the places he visited, the Galapagos Islands provided the most compelling evidence for his theories on evolution and natural selection—theories that changed Western thought forever. Join BUHS biology teacher Kerry Lozito for a slide show designed to help you see what Darwin saw in the flora, fauna, and geology of these enchanting islands.



Frigatebird

Kerry Lozito photo

## **President's Message – A Peregrine Perspective**

I hope you have all had a good summer and you were able to enjoy our beautiful Eastern Sierra. I sure did, and, if you are like me you also took a vacation to a far away land. Traveling is such a great chance to learn about other cultures, eat different food, and, of course, see some life birds. Traveling gives you a perspective that you cannot get without leaving the Eastern Sierra. It's a chance to compare the environment and culture you are visiting to those that await back home. Traveling provides a chance to consider those things that are important to you. It makes you realize how fortunate we are to call the Eastern Sierra home.

Of course, our "home" does not simply consist of mountains and deserts. It's community, too. And to me, the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society is an integral and important part of our community. The ESAS is a great group of people who enjoy mountains, deserts, birds, and each other. We are in third grade classrooms

every year teaching children bird identification and the wonder of migration, the value of habitat, and the importance of keeping our environment healthy. Through our conservation efforts, we provide a voice for our natural resources. We lead outstanding field trips that showcase the most awe-inspiring parts of the Eastern Sierra. Our monthly programs are varied and sensational. Of course, this is only possible with the unending support of ESAS members and volunteers who make the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society what it is today.

It's good to be home, and now that it's September, I hope to see you at our monthly programs on the second Wednesday of each month or on one of our outstanding Field Trips. And of course, the Christmas Bird Counts are right around the corner!

Chris Howard

## **September/October Field Trips**

**Saturday, September 10 – Fall Shorebird Migration on Owens Lake** Join Mike Prather to see the fall shorebird migration at Owens Lake and to check out the best spots on the lake for birds. Meet at 9:00 AM at Diaz Lake parking lot (three miles south of Lone Pine on Hwy 395). Bring a lunch, binoculars, scope, hat, sunscreen etc. Call Mike at 876-5807 for more information.

**Saturday, September 10 – Bishop Creek Cleanup** The California Coastal Commission, Inyo National Forest, Friends of the Inyo, Eastern Sierra Audubon, and Eastern Sierra Land Trust will hold a cleanup of the Bishop Creek Drainage from 9 a.m. to noon. Sign in at Intake II (just past the South Lake turn off on the Sabrina/North Lake Road). Bring water bottles, snacks, sun cream, protective clothing, wear closed toe shoes. Latex glove provided; bring heavy work gloves if desired. Raffle for participants will be held right after the cleanup. For more information contact Sara Steck at 873-4320 or Kendrah Madrid at 876-6206.

**Saturday, September 17 – Crowley Reservoir Shorebirds** Crowley Reservoir is an exceptional place to find many species of shorebirds. Also, keep your fingers crossed for Sabine's Gull or even a jaeger! Join leader Jon Dunn at the Green Church at 9:00 AM. Bring mud-worthy shoes, water, hat, sun and insect protection, lunch, scopes, and binoculars. Call Chris at 873-7422 for more information.

**Saturday, October 1 – Fall Migration in Death Valley** Furnace Creek Ranch is a resort oasis and has a reputation as a birder's paradise. With special permission to bird the temporarily closed golf course, join leaders Gerry and Vicki to look for some good birds—perhaps some rare eastern vagrants. Meet at 7:00 AM at the Death Valley Visitor Center parking lot at Furnace Creek. Bring lunch, water, binoculars, hat, sunscreen etc. For more information, call Gerry or Vicki at 786-2108.

**Saturday, October 22 – Bishop Birding** Meet at the west end of Dixon Lane at 8:00 AM and walk along tree-lined canals both north and south of this area to look for sparrows, warblers and migrating birds. We should be finished by noon. Bring binoculars, hats and water. Inclement weather will cancel. For more information, phone Parkers at 872-4447.

**(Central Valley Birding Symposium** announces the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual, November 17-20 in Stockton, at [cvbs.org](http://cvbs.org) )

## Summer 2005 in Inyo County Tom and Jo Heindel

The summer of 2005 has come and gone leaving only memories of the coolest June most locals can ever remember. July, with temperatures in excess of 100°F, quickly brought us back to the reality of an Eastern Sierra summer followed by the hot muggy days during the expected monsoons of August.

Each season provides bird surprises and this summer was no exception. A Common Loon at Furnace Creek Ranch from 6-11 June was a very late spring migrant. Least Bitterns raised young at Nik & Nik's gravel quarry near Bishop, extending the known Inyo County breeding location further north. A male Bufflehead chose to summer at Nik & Nik's gravel quarry instead of breeding far to the north.

A Greater Scaup dropped in to the sewer ponds at Stovepipe Wells in late May and remained through 10 June while the tenth Least Tern to occur in Inyo, a one-year-old bird, was found at Tinemaha Reservoir on 16 June. Panamint Springs was host to a White-winged Dove on 2 June and three Vermilion Flycatchers, including one brilliant male, were at Furnace Creek Ranch 11 June. American Crows are regular in the Owens Valley towns but rare elsewhere making the two at Furnace Creek Ranch from late May to mid June noteworthy. A Winter Wren returned to Pine Creek just above the pack station for the 4<sup>th</sup> summer. There he sang his heart out and again locals were unable to prove that he had a girlfriend with him.

The most spectacular visitor of the summer was a singing male Yellow-throated Warbler in north Bishop on 17 June. This was only the 7<sup>th</sup> time this eastern visitor has been documented for Inyo County. Found by Debby Parker, it was seen and documented by the Parkers, Chris & Rosie Howard and Jon Dunn, ensuring its acceptance as a scientific record. It was not found again the following day but in its place was a singing male Summer Tanager. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Birchim Canyon on 10 June and a male Indigo Bunting was in Bishop on 9 June.

With just ten previous records for Inyo, the second most amazing record occurred when Jim & Debby Parker found an adult male Tricolored Blackbird near their Bishop backyard which remained 18-24 June. It also was well photographed and documented. Finally, a very rare Lawrence's Goldfinch was at Mahogany Flat in the Panamint Mountains on 11 June, providing a group celebrating Kathy Duvall's birthday with a very special gift!

Again these enjoyable sightings would be but ephemeral events if it weren't for the extra effort many

birders put into ensuring their acceptance as records in perpetuity. These summer records are immutable due to the efforts of Jon Dunn, Chris & Rosie Howard, Jim & Debby Parker, Susan Steele, Vicki & Gerry Wolfe, and Jerry Zatorski.



Least Bittern at Nik & Nik Debbie Parker photo

Fall migration is already underway and exciting surprises will be there for the finding. We can predict the appearance of many species that are rare but seen each year. We cannot predict the special few that will make the observer drop their jaw and start dialing their birding friends to help them verify their vision and produce yet another county record.

## Eastern Sierra Audubon welcomes new members

**James Archer**  
**H. H. Costamagna**  
**Karen Edwards**  
**Lacey Greene**  
**Sherry Grob**  
**Marian Lemke**  
**Lorraine Masten**  
**Cynthia Mayworn**  
**Laura Mogg**  
**Mike Philip**  
**Katy Reid**  
**Debbie Shafer**  
**Diana Stevens**  
**Dr. Suzanne A. M. Stokes**



### **Eastern Sierra Audubon 2005 Bird-A-Thon A Huge Success!**

Your chapter's 2005 Bird-A-Thon on International Migratory Bird Day was a record breaker for fund raising. Our total in pledges and donations was \$1226! On that single day in May several dozen of us fanned out over Inyo County and identified 209 species of birds. Wow. Thank you to all of our pledgers and donors for helping ESA continue to fund its many activities for the coming year. These activities include students learning birding, Audubon conservation work on the Lower Owens River and at Owens Lake, issues of the WAVE newsletter, monthly programs and much more. What a chapter. Wait till next year.

**Mike Prather**

**Bird-A-Thon coordinator**

### **On the coast of Bishop Creek**

The 21st Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day will take place September 10 at over 700 locations around the state. Volunteers will clean trash from 1,100 miles of coast and another 1,000 miles along the inland shorelines of bays, creeks, rivers, and lakes. The 2005 Cleanup will continue an expansion into new areas far from the actual coastline, underscoring the sad fact that the vast majority of trash along California's coast comes from non-point source pollution originating from inland areas. "Between 60 and 80% of the trash we find on Coastal Cleanup Day comes from inland areas," says Eben Schwartz, Outreach Manager for the California Coastal Commission. "When we remove that debris before it can enter a waterway and make its way out to the coast, we're helping to educate Californians throughout the state about what they can do to help prevent marine debris" – and the same is true for our inland seas.

In 2004, 50,753 volunteers turned out in 47 counties, making it the largest single volunteer event in the state and accounting for 17% of worldwide participation in the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by The Ocean

### **Owens Valley Committee Opens Visitor Center in Lone Pine**

Come and visit the new OVC Visitor Center in Lone Pine. Opened humbly in February, it contains interpretation of Owens Valley land and water history related to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Learn about the importance of Owens Lake as a migratory wildlife stopover and critical nesting location for snowy plovers. Appreciate the tremendous promise of the Lower Owens River Project that will create 62 miles of rich riparian habitat for wildlife of all kinds. Come to understand the disaster of the 2nd Los Angeles Aqueduct and the groundwater pumping destruction used to fill it.

Where are the well fields? Where are the canals and ditches? What are the impacts of groundwater pumping? How can you join OVC and become involved in the defense of the Owens Valley? Use the OVC library or our high speed internet for research on water and land questions. The Center also has meeting and office space and is always looking for volunteers and docents. Come visit at 134 E. Bush St. across from the Post Office. Monday-Friday 9AM-3PM. Call ahead to make sure we aren't out on a field trip, cutting salt cedar, doing bird baseline surveys on the LORP or at Owens Lake or even in court sometimes (see the p.5 article on our recent huge Lower Owens River victory!).

(760)263-9689 or

[ovc@lonepinetv.org](mailto:ovc@lonepinetv.org)

**Mike Prather**

Conservancy, [www.oceanconservancy.org](http://www.oceanconservancy.org). In fact all 50 states, over 90 countries, and more than 305,000 volunteers made it the largest marine-related volunteer event in the world. In addition to trash, volunteers also collect data, providing important clues as to the nature and source of the trash.

This year the organizers embarked on a new effort to create images that strengthen the link between the debris that volunteers remove and the harm that debris can cause. The pro bono campaign, created by San Francisco advertising agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, features California wildlife – an egret, a shore crab and a sea bass – in a world in which marine debris has overtaken the native wildlife. Look for posters in the windows of local businesses or visit [www.coastforyou.org](http://www.coastforyou.org).

This event is supported by the California Coastal Commission, California State Parks Foundation, The Ocean Conservancy, Albertsons and Sav-on Drugs. See Field Trips (p.2) for local cleanup information. Great raffle prizes are being donated by watercolor artist Nancy Overholtz, Wilson's Eastside Sports, Spellbinder Books, and Manzanar History Association. **Sara Steck**

## The Owens Valley: A River Will Run Through It!

**Derrick Vocelka and Mark Bagley**

The Owens Valley Committee and the Sierra Club have been engaged in a gargantuan struggle with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) to fulfill Los Angeles' obligations in Inyo County, as detailed in legal agreements, memoranda and court rulings, for 25 years or more. In the last year the State of California, representing the Department of Fish and Game and State Lands, joined the two citizens' groups in a lawsuit to implement the Lower Owens River Project (LORP), which would restore 62 miles of the Lower Owens River.

In a July 25, 2005 hearing to discuss sanctions against LADWP for delays in implementing LORP, Inyo County Superior Court Judge Lee Cooper, Jr., outlined an order that will stop water exports from the Owens Valley to Los Angeles via Los Angeles' second aqueduct if Los Angeles fails to commence flows to the Lower Owens River by January 25, 2007. The long-delayed project is partial mitigation for decades of groundwater pumping to fill the second aqueduct. Los Angeles diverted the Lower Owens River to its first aqueduct in 1913.

Cooper ordered that until flows in the river reach 40 cubic feet per second – the level agreed upon in a 1997 Memorandum of Understanding – LADWP will provide 16,294 acre feet of water a year to replenish groundwater tables in the Owens Valley, restrict groundwater pumping to 57,412 acre feet per year, and beginning September 5, 2005 – the most recent deadline for flows to the river to commence – pay \$5,000 per day until base flows in the river reach agreed-upon levels. If LADWP does not meet these conditions in addition to commencing flows by January 25, 2007, the judge's order to enjoin and restrain LADWP from exporting water from the Owens Valley through its second aqueduct will be implemented permanently.

"No excuses will be accepted," Cooper said. He added that it was "incredible" that LADWP had been in violation of the California Environmental Quality Act for more than 30 years.

The California Attorney General's Office, the Sierra Club, and the Owens Valley Committee (OVC) all requested during the hearing that the judge implement both deadlines and groundwater sanctions against LADWP. Gordon Burns, Deputy Attorney General for California, observed that LADWP had a "perverse incentive" to miss deadlines because the agency saved

millions of dollars from delays. "Now is not the time to take the foot off the gas," he said, pointing out that LADWP had become much more "creative" in seeking solutions since Cooper's June 24 ruling that LADWP should face sanctions for delays.

Los Angeles Deputy City Attorney argued that sanctions against LADWP were inappropriate because it was other parties who were slowing the project. "Lead, follow, or get out of the way," he said. "...We're prepared to lead if others will get out of the way." If LADWP was, after years of delay, now prepared to lead, replied OVC attorney Don Mooney, it was "because we're behind them pushing."

Ultimately, Cooper concluded that "virtually every order had been violated" by LADWP. "It's time that stopped," he said.

Certainly this is a great achievement by and for the citizens of Inyo County as represented by the OVC and the Sierra Club. Both remain committed to pursuing fair and just resolutions to long term damage brought to the Owens Valley by excessive groundwater pumping and the detrimental export of water. The OVC and the Sierra Club pass along their thanks to Audubon Members who assisted with habitat and bird data over the years.

You can learn how to help and keep apprised by visiting the Owens Valley Committee Visitor Center in Lone Pine across from the Post Office or check out [www.ovcweb.org](http://www.ovcweb.org) on the internet.

## Eastern Sierra Ornithology Quiz



What percentage of Willow Flycatchers nesting at recently-rewatered Rush Creek in the Mono Basin establish their nests in willows? To find a clue, go to [www.monobasinresearch.org](http://www.monobasinresearch.org) – click on "Reports & Studies Online" – and then on "PRBO's Eastern Sierra Projects." Look for an updated answer in our next issue.

## Chapter Officers

President: Chris Howard 873-3859  
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Treasurer: Bill Mitchel 872-4774  
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## Committee Chairs

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