



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

## 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.

## 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!**

**November 8**

### **Carved Stones, Sacred Mountains, and Andean Traditions**

**Sara Steck**

Join Sara on a virtual expedition to Peru. Peru's pre-Columbian history is woven through the tapestry of its modern life. Modern cities are built on ancient stonework, the high mountains are still worshiped today, ancient beliefs are celebrated in current fiestas, and in some remote areas daily life continues much as it always has. Sara will show photos taken during a period of 10 years when she guided in Peru.

**Refreshments: Sara Steck**

**December 13**

### **6 PM Holiday Potluck, 7 PM Program A Second Chance for Injured and Orphaned Wildlife**

**Cindy Kamler**

Cindy Kamler, wildlife rehabilitator for 21 years, is founder and director of the Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care. This volunteer-based group has helped over 2000 wild birds, mammals and reptiles. The slide show will feature the wide variety of species admitted, why they needed help, and the care ESWC provides in preparing them for a return to the wild. Also learn some ways you can help.

**Refreshments: Pot luck!**



Sara Steck photo

## **President's Message – Big News for Willow Flycatchers**

Chapter president Chris Howard has left on fall migration, but not before forwarding an exciting message he just received:

Dear Chris, Thank you for submitting a grant application for Collaborating Funding FY2007. We are pleased to be able to grant your request for \$2,500 for the Mono Basin Willow Flycatcher Project. This project has great potential for improving the populations of Willow Flycatchers and riparian conservation. We are also pleased with the project's design that includes and trains local birders as well as shares the information with the larger community.... I look forward to working more closely with Eastern Sierra Audubon. Best regards,  
Claudia Eyzaguirre - Chapter Coordinator, Audubon California

When Chris McCreedy, the project lead with PRBO Conservation Science, got the news he replied:

Hey Chris,  
That's really exciting. It is a thrill to succeed in a competitive process, and it's always great when they fund you for what you've asked for. Thanks for all of your help with the proposal, this project means a lot to me. And if any of you would like to band nestlings or look for dispersing adults in 2007, please keep in touch.  
Chris

Congratulations, Chris and Chris and all ESAS – and the lucky Willow Flycatchers. – *Editor*

## **November and December Field Trips and Events**

**Tuesday November 28 – Book Signing with Jon Dunn – National Geographic Field Guide to North American Birds** Spellbinder Books and Eastern Sierra Audubon are excited to host a book signing for Jon Dunn's new 5th edition National Geographic Field Guide to North American Birds on Tuesday, November 28th. Feel free to drop by the coffee bar behind Spellbinder anytime between 5PM and 8PM. Appetizers will be served. Jon, a leading expert on the identification and distribution of North American birds, has served as chief consultant on all four previous editions of this book. He is also a consultant for the American Birding Association magazine, *Birding*, and the former chair of the ABA Checklist Committee, as well as a member of the California Bird Records Committee and the AOU Committee on Taxonomy and Nomenclature. When Jon isn't leading birding tours in distant lands, we are fortunate that he has chosen to live in the Owens Valley. Jon is a volunteer field trip leader for two of our most popular field trips. The 5th edition, to be released in early November, is a significant revision, with newly updated range maps, a durable cover, quick-reference flaps that double as placemarkers, plus thumbtabs that make locating key sections faster and easier. Come meet Jon, chit-chat about birds, and perhaps purchase a new signed 5th edition NGS! For more information, see the Events page at <http://spellbinder.booksense.com>.

**Saturday December 2 – Winter Birding with Jon Dunn** Crowley Lake in early winter is a fantastic place for a variety of gulls, ducks, eagles, swans, and geese. If Crowley is snowed in, we'll spend the day birding the Owens Valley, perhaps going to Tinemaha Reservoir and Klondike or looking for longspurs. Reservations are required for this trip. Contact Chris at 873-7422 or [chris93514@gmail.com](mailto:chris93514@gmail.com) for reservations, trip info, and meeting time and location.

**Saturday December 16 – Bishop Christmas Bird Count (CBC)** Time and place TBA. Call Chris at 873-7422 for more information, or email him at [chris93514@gmail.com](mailto:chris93514@gmail.com)

**Friday December 22 – Death Valley Christmas Bird Count (CBC)** Probably meeting at 7 AM, Furnace Creek golf course; details to be confirmed at a later date. For more information, call Gerry or Vicki at 786-2108 or email [devawolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:devawolfe@yahoo.com)

## Fall Starts in Spring

### Tom and Jo Heindel

When most people think of fall, visions of falling multicolored leaves, the World Series or football come to mind. Conversely, when birders think of fall they have visions of vagrants (unexpected species) dancing in their heads.

The calendar concept of fall has little to do with fall for birds and birders. Fall begins in early June when the first female Wilson's Phalaropes arrive from their northern breeding grounds. The females lay their eggs and then depart leaving the domestic duties to the males as they head for the high Andean lakes of South America. By late June the first Rufous Hummingbirds return to Inyo from as far north as Alaska. For some species (e.g., shorebirds) the adults depart the northern tundra before the young who make their way without help and reach the wintering grounds on their own. Fall migration can extend into December with a few birds lingering into January. This is especially true for some ducks, such as White-winged Scoters and Barrow's Goldeneyes, who visit for a time, then continue their southward journey.

Each species has a 'window' or period of time during which they are expected to occur here. For some species it is very short, perhaps less than two weeks, while others move through during a two- to three-month span. The Connecticut Warbler, not surprising based on its name, is an eastern and northern species that is a vagrant to Inyo County. All five records are between 20 September and 1 October for one of the briefest windows for a bird occurring that "often". Most migrants pass through quickly in spring and more leisurely in fall, often taking three months or more to reach their wintering grounds in southern California, South America or points in between.

The finding of an unexpected species is cause for a great deal of excitement among the birding community. The resulting behavior cannot be explained to nor understood by a non-birder but it requires no apology or accounting to compatriots. Vagrant fever has many bizarre side effects causing the afflicted to drive all night through rain and snow or fly a red-eye special to reach the location where a vagrant was reputed to be the previous day. The more rare the species, the more bizarre the behavior. There is no known cure nor is anybody working to find one. One could say that migrating birds often cause birders to migrate with them!

As just one example, on 19 August 2006 visiting birder Bill Deppe went to Crystal Spring southeast of Tecopa and China Ranch. It is an innocuous, small

spring in a trashed mining site but there are water, bugs, and cover, making it perfect if you are a bird! Bill found and photographed a Wood Thrush, an eastern vagrant that had only been recorded once before in the county when Brian Daniels of Long Beach photographed one at Furnace Creek Ranch 15 November 1986. Shortly after its initial appearance it lost its tail and was forced to remain while it molted in a new one because a bird cannot migrate without its 'rudder.' Birders from all over the state came to this out-of-the-way spot to see and be a part of an amazing avian event. Birders know that vagrants are in the county waiting to be found and that the more time they spend looking the greater are their chances of being rewarded with a gem...and it may be a diamond!



Wood Thrush, Jim Pike photo; Crystal Spring, Chris Howard



## 50,000 Volunteers, 500,000 Pounds of Trash, but Only One Singing Gorilla



The 3rd annual Bishop Creek Drainage Cleanup sponsored by the California Coastal Commission was a great success. On October 7, fourteen volunteers showed up on a chilly, beautiful fall day to clean up our local waters. About four and a quarter miles of stream banks and lake shorelines were cleaned and 68 pounds of trash and recyclables were picked up in the basin. The recyclables totaled 26 pounds. The trash mostly included fishing line, worm containers, and food wrappers; the recyclables were mostly bottles and cans. Here in Bishop we did not win the \$100 prize awarded to the inland area that found the most unusual item. The winner was a volunteer in Yolo County who found a first edition of a book titled "Sheep Management and Disease." Tucked inside the book was a news clipping from the San Francisco Examiner's editorial page dated February 2, 1951. Harder to compete with was the northern California team who won the prize with a toy gorilla clad in a sequined dress that sings in Spanish. We can try for next year's prize.

In California, beach and inland waterway cleanups took place up and down the California coast, from Mexico to the Oregon border, around San Francisco Bay, and at sites as far inland as Lake Tahoe, the Salton Sea, and Bishop.

With 70% of the cleanup sites reporting, the statewide count stands at 36,093 volunteers, which should approach the event goal of 50,000 volunteers. Those volunteers picked up 510,326 pounds of trash and an additional 50,126 pounds of recyclable materials, for a total of 560,451 pounds. We are still awaiting the final count.

Past Coastal Cleanup Day data tell us that most (between 60-80 percent) of the debris on our beaches and shorelines comes from inland sources, traveling through storm drains or creeks out to the beaches and ocean. Rain – or even something as simple as hosing down a sidewalk – can wash cigarette butts, bits of styrofoam, pesticides, and oil into the storm drains and out to the ocean. The California Coastal Commission is asking all Californians to take responsibility for making sure trash goes where it belongs: securely in a trashcan, recycling bin, or a hazardous waste dump when appropriate.

In the Bishop Creek Drainage while cleaning up amid the beautiful fall colors, volunteers enjoyed bagels, muffins and coffee provided by Great Basin Bakery and a drawing of items from artist Nancy Overholtz, the Manzanar History Association, and Spellbinder Books. And they fulfilled the mission of the California Coastal Commission: to encourage Californians to clean their local beaches, shorelines, and inland waterways while raising awareness about the connection between personal responsibility for one's trash and the health of our waterways and wildlife. – **Sara Steck, Inyo County Coordinator for the California Coastal Commission Cleanup**

**Where will you be November 16-19?** How about learning the story of *Birds on the Wind* – the “where, why, and when” of bird migration with Kevin Karlson - or taking his workshop on *Birding Made Simpler*? Marvel at the *Falcons of North America* by noted photographer John Hendrickson and consider the environmental implications of *\$4.00 a Gallon Birding* discussed by Kimball Garrett. Interested in raptors? Simone Whitecloud will help you out with *Raptors Demystified*. How about attending a program by Joe Morlan about the *Birds and Wildlife of Eastern Australia* if you want to wander farther afield? If not, Ed Harper's program on *Sharing the Experience of Central Valley Birding* will be a delight.

Have you guessed yet? Come to the Tenth Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton, CA November 16-19 and experience all these things as well as field trips, the “Birder's Market,” and more. Brochures will be on the way soon, and advance information will be available at our website, <http://cvbs.org>

Hope to see you there! – **Cheri Pillsbury, Central Valley Birding Symposium**

## Owens Lake – Nationally Significant Important Bird Area

Eastern Sierra Audubon's own Jon Dunn led 30 eager birders August 26<sup>th</sup> to this resurging wildlife location. And the participants were not disappointed. Twenty species of shorebirds were identified. As hoped for, Jon spent hours teaching identification skills such as the timing of a bird's appearance (juveniles, males, females), its molting condition (juvenile or adult) and its behavior. All of these are clues to knowing what bird you are studying.

Species of note on this day were Semipalmated Sandpiper, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover, Snowy Plover, Marbled Godwit and Bairds Sandpiper. While the Godwit and Snowy Plover will winter along the coast, the Semipalmated Sandpiper, Sanderling, Black-Bellied Plover and Bairds Sandpiper will migrate far into southern South America... the Pampas of Argentina or Tierra Del Fuego. With a tail wind they can average 45 mph and fly continuously for 60 or 70 hours. Spending time with these birds you feel genuine awe realizing that many have come to Owens Lake from the high Arctic and have so much farther to travel on their fat deposits. They rely on Owens Lake and other similar sites in North America for energy. Their populations cannot long survive if these places are lost or harmed. In the case of Owens Lake, habitat is being restored to historic levels.

The uniqueness of Owens Lake is due to the fact that it is the largest inland nesting site for the Snowy

Plover, and it has been designated by the National Audubon Society as a Nationally Significant Important Bird Area. Literally thousands of shorebirds can be seen during spring and fall migration. The most numerous species that migrate through Owens Lake are American Avocets, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope (heading for Bolivia and Argentina) and Red-necked Phalarope (will spend the winter in the open ocean of the South Pacific). Peaking in April and August, shorebirds crowd each other while feeding across the lake bed. As in the historic past, birds put on layers of fat to power vast distances of flight by consuming brine flies thriving on algae spawned by the water used by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to control the regional dust health hazard.

Once or twice a year, usually during migration time, Eastern Sierra Audubon invites members and the public out onto Owens Lake. Since access to the general public isn't allowed in the dust control project areas due to safety concerns, this is a rare opportunity to find hundreds if not thousands of shorebirds representing various species. Look for our next trip in April and again next August or September.

Special thanks to Wayne Bamossy of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Walt Sharer of CH2MHILL for assisting Eastern Sierra Audubon trips out to Owens Lake.

**Mike Prather**

## New Members!

Are you wondering why your name is on the new members welcome list so long after the fact? The reason is twofold.

First, your Membership Chair missed the September newsletter deadline (my apologies). Second, we don't receive membership lists from Audubon National until several months after you join. That doesn't mean we don't appreciate you!

We would love to see you at our meetings. So, **Welcome To ESAS!** – Kay Wilson, Membership Chair

**Lillian A. Altman  
M. Ambrose  
Connie Arechiga  
Ted Carleton  
Andy Cheeseman  
Thomas W. Crowe**

**Betty Diegel  
Lyn Haber  
Scott Hetzler  
Rosemary Jarrett  
Betty Knapp  
Victor B. Link  
Doris M. Link**

**Ronald & Barbara Oriti  
Michele Rehman  
Norman Roe  
A. Stankowicz  
Jeanne Walter  
Sandra Whitehouse**

## Chapter Officers

President: Chris Howard 873-7422  
Vice- President: Joan Benner 938-2929  
Secretary: Mary Vocelka 873-4480  
Treasurer: Bill Mitchel 872-4774  
Board members: Kathy Duvall Connie Engelhardt  
Sally Gaines Chris Howard  
Phil Kiddoo Roberta Lagomarsini  
Ron Smith Sara Steck  
James Wilson

## Committee Chairs

Adopt-a-Hwy: John & Ros Gorham 938-2023  
Birdathon: Michael Prather 876-5807  
Conservation: James Wilson 873-3859  
Peter Pumphreys 872-7846  
Education: Michael Prather 876-5807  
Sara Steck 873-4320  
Field trips: Connie Engelhardt 872-4596  
Fish Slough: Sam Glasser 873-3111  
Historian: Mary Vocelka 873-4480  
Membership: Kay Wilson 873-3859  
WAVE editor: Joy Fatooh 933-2205  
WAVE mailing: Mary Vocelka 873-4480  
Programs: Chris Howard 873-7422  
Publicity: Roberta Lagomarsini 872-7846  
Refreshments: Joan Benner 938-2929  
T-shirts: Sarah Sheehan 872-4039



The WAVE is now printed on recycled paper!

## Eastern Sierra Audubon

P.O. Box 624

Bishop, CA 93515

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Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care photo

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION		
<b>Join National Audubon and Affiliate with our Chapter</b> \$20 / yr [\$15 SENIORS (62+) / STUDENTS] Receive <b>Audubon Magazine</b> and the <b>WAVE</b>		
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National Audubon Society	Your Address	
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P.O. Box 51003		
Boulder, CO 80323		
		<b>7XCH</b>
<b>OR, Join the Chapter only</b> \$12 / yr - full Chapter Benefits and the <b>WAVE</b>		
Send check to:	Membership Chair Eastern Sierra Audubon P.O. Box 624 Bishop, CA 93515	

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**With their future in our hands, what can we learn and do? - Inside!**