



Meetings

Second 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: 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!

November 11

Devil's Postpile: Biodiversity, Challenges and Opportunities

Please join the Superintendent of Devils Postpile for a discussion of the amazing biodiversity of Devils Postpile, and the challenges and opportunities for managing Devils Postpile National Monument (DEPO) in this era of climate change within the setting of the Upper Middle Fork of the San Joaquin. The biological diversity and ecological significance will be presented, along with the geological context that creates the unique setting of the Upper Middle Fork of the San Joaquin.



December 9

Holiday Potluck Candle-lit Dinner and Program



The December 9th meeting is also our annual Holiday potluck candle-lit dinner, held at 6 PM in the dining room of the White Mountain Research Station. Do attend as it is a fun event and bring a friend or neighbor. We often run out of food before everyone is served so we ask each attendee to bring a little extra along with a beverage to share. Please bring your own place setting.

Dive into Winter with Penguins!

After the potluck, we'll be treated to a slide show from Ed and Pat Nahin of Bishop of their images from several Antarctica trips. Ed is an exceptional photographer with a portfolio of beautiful images of both the landscape and the creatures of Antarctica. The Penguins, multiple species, are wonderful. *See you there!*

President's Message

"If you wish to know the divine, feel the wind on your face and the sun on your head" — The Dalai Lama

What gloriously clear and crisp days in the Eastern Sierra Fall. I always look forward to this time of year with thoughts of all the things I want to do outside. As usual, my wish list will exceed my capacity as well as that of the season. Already the morning temperatures are telling me to check the wood supply and make sure things are ready for winter. In any event, we still have tomatoes to make into sauce, we got our CNPS plants safely into the ground, and we have seen many wonderful birds of fall.

This past week saw another of the cooperative planning meetings for Owens Lake. The process has been remarkably productive. The collaborative group finished a series of habitat identifications and has begun to coordinate work to remove tamarisk in the delta area of the lake and catalogue fresh water seeps and springs to develop a comprehensive program for their preservation and enhancement. Most importantly, a commitment by all of the parties has been made to develop a long term vision for Owens Lake which will include the establishment of what representatives of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power describe as a permanent wildlife conservancy. This process will require time, a lot of public participation and open and forthright give and take from a diverse group of stakeholders. However, key stakeholders including the Great Basin Air Pollution Control District, Department of Fish and Game, California State Lands Commission, LADWP, Eastern Sierra Audubon and Audubon California have committed to this process. The key, of course, is the concept of long term commitment which will allow the Department to continue to move forward with its dust suppression obligations while assuring that there will always be sufficient habitat to support the wildlife resources which have returned to the lake. My hat is off to all of those who have participated in this process to date. The results have been very gratifying on many levels. We will continue to provide you with information as things unfold.

Last month, I mentioned an incident which had occurred in the June Lake burn area in which loggers had felled trees containing nesting birds. Although we have yet to receive a formal response to our letter of concern to the Forest Service, I did speak with the District Ranger who acknowledged that problems had occurred because work originally scheduled to be done outside the nesting season had to be performed at a different time and because the contractor who performed the work was not sufficiently aware to be aware of and protect nesting sites. He indicated that revisions would be made in scheduling, work protocols and environmental planning and documentation of future timber projects. ESAS was one of many groups and individuals who contacted the Forest Service in response to the incident and we, along with the others remain ready to assist the USFS in making sure that the situation is not repeated.

Lastly, the Board of Directors has decided that it will discontinue mailing hard copies of the newsletter beginning in 2010. The principal reason for this action is the cost of mailing of hard copies and the financial situation in which the chapter finds itself at this time. In fairness, the production and mailing of paper copies is not an environmentally sound practice and takes a tremendous amount of work from some very dedicated people. Still, this is primarily a reflection of the chapter's need for increased financial resources. There are two important points here. The first is that, as always, the newsletter will be accessible on our website; if you want to receive the newsletter electronically, we need your email address. Please get that address to Chris Howard if you have not already done so. If there is no way that a member can receive or access the newsletter electronically, they should let either Chris or me know.

— **Pete Pumphrey**

ESAS NEEDS YOU! Pledge Your Support Of The Bird-a-thon Today.

This year, the Birdathon is also being held on **December 19th** to coincide with the Christmas Bird Count. You can help by participating in the count (get that species total up there). But more importantly, you can help by making a financial pledge in support of the chapter. Even better, you can make your pledge and then recruit a friend, family member, co-worker, business or organization to match that pledge. The Birdathon is our major fund raising effort and we really need it to be a success.

A pledge form is included in this newsletter and is also available on the website. For years, a core of very special people has supported the bird-a-thon, but they cannot continue to fund the chapter by themselves... everyone needs to help bear the burden. Please pledge your support and ask your friends to sponsor one of the Christmas Bird Count participants. Best of all, join the count and get together a group of supporters. Every little bit counts and is really needed.

– *Pete Pumphrey*

Mystery Bird

Test Your Bird ID Skills!

This bird was photographed by Debby Parker along the Owens River on October 7, 2009

Make your guess (be sure to include your rationale) and email it to Debby Parker at j.parker@cebridge.net

We'll share the answer and analyze the guesses (which will remain anonymous) in the next newsletter!



Can you identify this bird?

Field Trips and Events

November Field Trips

(None planned for November so far, but see the ESAS website for other upcoming field trip announcements.)

December Field Trips

Saturday, December 5-- Crowley Lake Winter Birding.

Leader Jon Dunn

Eagles and wintering ducks are likely on this popular outing, but rarer species, rarer sights occur every year. In 2008, for example, birders were treated to swallows and to a magpie preparing to devour a rat. Meet at the Green Church at 8:30 a.m. Bring warm clothes, binoculars, scopes, water and lunch. In case of bad weather meet in Bishop at the Y for birding at Tinemaha Reservoir.



For more information please contact Chris Howard at 873-7422.

Bishop Christmas Bird Count

The 28th annual Bishop Christmas Bird Count is **Saturday, December 19th, 2009**. All skill levels are invited to participate. This long-standing tradition is a great opportunity to observe wintering birds in the Bishop area and collect valuable bird census data. Please RSVP as soon as possible if you plan to help out. In 2008 we collectively observed 103 species including rarities such as a Long-tailed Duck at Pleasant Valley Reservoir, a flock of ten Marbled Godwits circling over Round Valley, and three Tree Swallows foraging over the Owens River. If you'd like to join the fun, please contact Chris Howard at chris93514@gmail.com or (760)873-7422 as soon as possible.

— ***Chris Howard, Bishop CBC Coordinator***

Fundraiser

Eastern Sierra Audubon Yard Sale to Be held in Spring 2010

There had been discussion of a yard sale to support chapter finances this fall, but it has been put off until the spring of next year. A date will be announced for either March or April. Please begin to set aside your "extras," the things you find as you get out the holiday decorations and resolve to simplify your life in celebration of spring as well as help keep ESAS moving forward.

Winter is an Unpredictable Avian Season

By Tom and Jo Heindel



Vermillion Flycatcher
 Photo by Santiago Escruceria

With the approach of fall and winter in the Eastern Sierra, we bid farewell to species that arrived six months ago and won't be seen for another six months. Virtually all flycatchers, vireos, swallows,

There is a long list of ducks that winter in the area but the highlights to look for are Eurasian Wigeon, Greater



Long-tailed Duck Photo by Jo Heindel

warblers, and buntings move south towards milder temperatures and where insect food remains available all year. While a significant portion of the avifauna leaves, it is replaced by a suite of late fall migrants and winter visitors that spent the summer to the north of our area, some as far north as the Arctic.



Surf Scoter Photo by Jo Heindel

Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, and all three species of scoters. Tundra Swans regularly return in early November but observers are encouraged to scrutinize all swans closely so that the very similar Trumpeter Swan doesn't visit without leaving a record! Three loons can occur in one year with Common Loon a regular visitor in fall, Pacific Loon is seen a couple of times each year, and

Winter is the most unpredictable season, not just measured by how much or how little snow has fallen, but by how many of which bird species have occurred. Some species can be common one year and absent the next. The only predictability is that there will always be a few gems that delight the observers.



Pacific Loon Photo by Tom Heindel

every few years a Red-throated Loon is documented. Not yet recorded is the Yellow-billed Loon, which has been found several times in nearby Nevada and is a definite possibility in the Eastern Sierra.

Unpredictable Season, continued

Raptor species are few in number but their bearing and style captures birders' attention. Bald Eagles typically appear in early November and while Ferruginous Hawks have become more regular than in the past Rough-legged Hawks have become more scarce. Winter is an exciting time for gull-lovers with a few reports of Thayer's Western, and Glaucous-winged Gulls and one report each of Lesser Black-backed and Glaucous Gulls. All Loggerhead Shrikes should be given full attention so that a Northern Shrike doesn't evade 'capture.'



Ferruginous Hawk

Photo by Tom Heindel

lake margins, and barren ground. McCown's and Smith's Longspurs are extremely rare but have occurred. Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks occasionally appear in good numbers... or not at all!

Some years many montane species descend to lower elevations and these invasions and their extent add to ornithological knowledge as well as provide birders with memo-

The little-brown-jobs, LBJs, can provide excitement as well. American Tree Sparrows and Harris's Sparrows are probably here every year. Flocks of Oregon Juncos may be hiding Slate-colored, Pink-sided and Gray-headed Juncos and if one is really lucky, the 2nd Inyo County record of a White-winged Junco may be found. Lapland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs are in alfalfa fields, golf courses,

orable experiences. Now is the time to review the birds mentioned so that when they cross your path you'll be ready! Remember that many of these species are rare and require far more than raising your hand and saying, "I had a Warbling Widget!" to be considered a record in the ornithological history of the Eastern



Chestnut-collared Longspur

Photo by Chris Howard

Sierra. Be ready to document your sighting with a photograph, a picture really is worth a thousand words, corroboration by other observers, or be willing to write a detailed description. It is a myth that this is a painful exercise!

Birder's Tea Party!



Local birders take a break from birding along the Owens River

(Bill Mitchel, Debby Parker, Jan Bowers, Steve McLaughlin, Kathy Duvall - photo by Nancy Overholtz)

This group meets once a week and birdwatches in order to learn their birds and help out with the local annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count and International Migratory Bird Day that is held each spring.

From the Editor

Due to an injury, I've turned over this issue of the Wave to my nominee for next editor, Maggie Wolfe Riley. I know you'll be as pleased as I am! - **Joy Fatooh**

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This will be one of the last paper issues you will receive: the WAVE is going electronic - please send your email address to Chris Howard at chris93514@gmail.com so we can notify you when the newsletter is online and you won't miss an issue.

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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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



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