



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WINGS OF CHANGE
FRIENDS OF THE INYO TO CELEBRATE FIRST-EVER OWENS LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL
APRIL 24 AND 25, 2015**

Contact:

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Lone Pine, CA - Each year in spring and fall Owens Lake, at the terminus of the Owens River near Lone Pine, CA, supports hundreds of thousands of shorebirds during their annual migrations between continents. Dried by drastic diversions to bring water to the people of Los Angeles, today dust mitigation and restoration efforts have returned water, creating habitat and attracting birds to the lake once again. Designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society in 2001, it is the largest and richest wildlife area in Inyo County.

This April, Friends of the Inyo invites all birders and lovers of wildlife to celebrate the spring migration during the Owens Lake Bird Festival, April 24th and 25th. In its first year, the Owens Lake Bird Festival promises to honor this extraordinary place and the huge migrating flocks of birds that depend on it for rest and nourishment. It will also celebrate the communities of the Southern Owens Valley and their ties, through the watershed, to Los Angeles.

The festival begins Friday evening with a reception at the Lone Pine Film History Museum featuring the Audubon-California's short film *The Legacy of Owens Lake*. On Saturday, expert guides will lead morning and afternoon field trips to Owens Lake with explorations for beginners through experts in bird identification, avian photography, a tour of the invertebrate food web, discussions of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Master Project (dust control and wildlife), and the wonders of migration. Lunch will include several short talks about the lake including 'Owens Lake Master Project' by Jeff Nordin of LADWP, 'Audubon's Important Bird Areas' by Andrea Jones of Audubon-California, 'Why is that Lake Red?' by Dave Herbst, PhD of the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory, and 'The Magic and Wonder of Owens Lake' by influential friend of the lake, Michael Prather. The festival will close with a reception at the Interagency Visitor Center featuring the photography exhibit "The Owens Lake Project" by Robin Black.

"This will be a brand new bird festival in a spectacular, world-class location," promises organizer and speaker Michael Prather. "Birds from as far away as South America will be coming through to see us."

Friends of the Inyo is honored to be working with several supporters and partners to host the Owens Lake Bird Festival including The Metabolic Studio, Inyo County,

Audubon- California, the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association, Eastern Sierra Audubon, and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power among others.

“Hosting the Owens Lake Bird Festival is a natural extension of our work to inspire people to care for and preserve the outstanding beauty, recreation opportunities, and natural resources of the Eastern Sierra’s public lands,” says Friends of the Inyo’s Executive Director Laura Beardsley. “We’re excited to kick off what we hope will become an annual festival.”

EVENT DETAILS:

Friday, April 24 through Saturday, April 25, 2015

Tickets – \$35; Students – \$20; Children under 12 – free with an adult
Registration includes evening receptions, a continental breakfast, lunch with inspiring speakers, and in-depth tours with expert guides.

For more information or to register, visit
www.friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/owenslakefestival or call (760) 873-6500.

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Founded in 1986, Friends of the Inyo is a Bishop, CA-based non profit organization that works to care for and protect public lands in the Eastern Sierra while inspiring others to do the same. Friends of the Inyo connects thousands of people to their public lands each year through hikes, tours, volunteer opportunities, habitat restoration, trail maintenance, civic engagement, and educational programs.
www.friendsoftheinyo.org.