



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: ESAudubon.org *ES 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!

September 8

Update on Local Conservation Easements: LADWP Lands and Elsewhere

Throughout the summer, rumors and an occasional fact have been circulating in the Owens Valley about a conservation easement on LADWP property. The Mayor of Los Angeles and the LA City Council are revisiting the idea of permanent protection from subdivision and urban sprawl in our region. The Eastern Sierra Land Trust, based in Bishop, has been informing the public and local governments about the realities and practicalities of conservation easements. Julie Bear, Executive Director, and Mark Schlenz, Director of Outreach and Development, will provide a brief overview and the current status of the easement proposal. You will learn about easements for land conservation and the simple form that has been suggested for LADWP lands.



Owens River from Volcanic Tableland

Daniel Mayer photo

October 13

The Other Winged Flyers Paul McFarland

When the weather warms up and the flowers bloom again, there will be more on the wing than just the birds. Learn about the ecology, conservation and basic identification of some of these other winged wonders, with a focus on the common butterflies of the Eastern Sierra. Paul is the director of Friends of the Inyo, a group working to preserve the public lands and wildlife of the Eastern Sierra.



Tiger Swallowtail - drawing by Joy Fatooh

The Eighth Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium will be hosted by the Central Valley Bird Club Nov. 18-21 at the Radisson Hotel in Stockton, CA with new field trips and speakers, workshops, vendors and a Birding Nature Fair and Art Show. See <http://cvbs.org> or call Frances Oliver at (209) 369-2010.

President's Message – Cast a Ballot, Carry a Book

It is mid August and I am above 11,000 feet in Bishop Creek, swatting an occasional mosquito, and watching the billowing white clouds scudding across the sky. Morning awoke with a curious long tailed weasel 50 feet from our tent. A perfect day follows with my wife Kay and daughter Rosanne watching birds, and touring cliffs, meadows, lakes, and tarns. We have a short bird list, but some fine close looks. Lunch is near a small lake at 11,600 feet with caddis flies emerging. Audubon Warblers and Oregon Juncos pick the insects from water and air as they emerge. A pair of Dippers chase the caddis flies here and there. Sometimes the Dippers work from rocks, sometimes under the surface, and sometimes they bob like teeny brown ducks.



American Dipper

It has been a fine summer with lots of walking and creatures. And my concern for the habitat of wild animals remains. With that in mind I would encourage all who read this newsletter to register and vote in the upcoming election. Encourage your friends, neighbors, and relatives to vote also. ESAS does not endorse parties or candidates, but I encourage you to consider how all the candidates stand on issues that concern lovers of the natural world. Where do they stand on clean air, clean water, toxics, the rights of wildlife, and the importance of our ever-shrinking wild lands? What is their position on drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge? Between the candidates there are differences; please consider them, and VOTE.

And on a different note, while taking a class at the Mono Lake Bird Chautauqua I discovered a nifty new bird book, "Sierra Birds, A Hikers Guide" by John Muir Laws. John gave a presentation on sketching birds at the event, which was most pleasant both for the sketching instruction, and in lessons on how to look at bird's shape and posture. In taking the class I discovered his book, which has delightful drawings, a spare but adequate text, and a light slim profile. Its light weight meets a need as you can now take a Sierra bird guide with you without the weight penalty. In fact it is too light to leave home.

James

September and October Field Trips and Events

Saturday, September 11- California Coastal Cleanup Day on the coast of a creek near you

Sara Steck is organizing this California Coastal Commission annual event for the first time in Inyo County on Saturday, September 11th, 2004 from 9 a.m. to noon in the Bishop Creek Drainage. Prizes will be raffled after the cleanup. Inyo National Forest, Friends of the Inyo and ESAS are sponsors. Contact Sara at (760) 873-4320 for more information, and see page 4 for the statewide and international reach of the event. Do something positive on this infamous date!

Sunday, September 12th - Fall Shorebird Migration on Owens Lake Join Mike Prather to see the fall shorebird migration spectacle at Owens Lake. And with the new shallow flooding projects, shorebirds are flocking by the thousands. Mike will show us the best spots on the lake for birds. Meet at 8:00AM at the Diaz Lake parking lot 3 miles south of Lone Pine. Bring a lunch, binoculars, scope, hat, sunscreen etc. Call Mike for more info at (760) 876-5807.

Saturday, October 2nd - Fall Migration in Death Valley Furnace Creek Ranch is a resort oasis and has a reputation as a birder's paradise. And with special permission to bird the temporarily closed golf course, participants in this trip are bound to see some good birds, including rare eastern vagrants. Meet at 7:00 AM at the Furnace Creek Ranch golf course parking lot. Expect temperatures of 100F. Call Chris at (760)873-7422 for more information.

International Migratory Bird Day: Inyo County Shines in 2004

Tom and Jo Heindel

On May 8th thirty-five participants joined the international celebration of migratory birds and scoured hills and dales, valleys and mountains, lakes, streams, and the Owens River from Round Valley south to Little Lake, east to China Ranch, and north to Deep Springs, Wyman Canyon and the White Mountains. Last year Inyo County received national recognition as the Inland County with the second most bird species found in one day - 219. Because this year's count was so early - it is always the second Saturday in May - the expectations were not high that the group would come even close to last year's record. But what a magnificent excuse to arise early, tramp long, and celebrate the return of our visitors who winter south of us from Mexico to southern South America!

While there were five fewer observers than last year, they put in over 331 hours of birding in one day! That is like one person birding non-stop for 13.8 days! In order for 35 people to gain as much coverage as possible in the state's second largest county (many other counties have nearly 100 people covering much smaller areas), the group was divided into 19 parties with 7 parties made up of one person, 10 parties of two people, and 2 parties of four. Two parties even hog-tied visiting relatives into spending Saturday in celebration of birds!

The weather was delightful, the energy was high, and the birds were incredibly cooperative as 13,124 let the celebrants find them! Six new species were added to the IMBD count: Mike and Nancy Prather found a very late Marbled Godwit at Owens Lake, Larry Nahm and Carolyn Gann saw a very late Common Goldeneye at Black Rock Fish Hatchery, Chris and Rosie Howard were shocked to see a Lesser Yellowlegs in Wyman Canyon, Bob Mauer, Jr. located a Bendire's Thrasher at Lee Flat, Debby Parker and her mom and Vicki and Gerry Wolfe spied Eurasian Collared-Doves in Bishop and Death Valley, and Kay Wilson and Jo Heindel stumbled upon a totally unexpected Hooded Warbler, a vagrant from the East.

The final tally was 213 species, far more than expected and second only to last year's record. Forty-seven of those species were seen by only one party, indicating that "One" can make the difference! Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Bonaparte's Gull, Forster's Tern, Barn Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Dipper, & Sage Thrasher were seen by Jim & Debby Parker, Sandy Scofield & Andy Zdon. Swainson's Hawk, Gambel's Quail, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Black-tailed

Gnatcatcher, Crissal Thrasher, Lucy's Warbler, & Hooded Oriole were found by Tom Heindel. Semipalmated Plover, Willet, Long-billed Curlew, Franklin's Gull, Marbled Godwit, & American Pipit were located by Mike & Nancy Prather and Common Moorhen, Short-billed Dowitcher, White-winged Dove, & Plumbeous Vireo were noted by Vickie & Gerry Wolfe. American Wigeon, Lesser Yellowlegs, Vaux's Swift, & Broad-tailed Hummingbird showed off to Chris, Rosie, Barry & Bonnie Howard. Western & Clark's Grebes, & California Thrasher were pulled out by Kelli Levinson and Least Bittern, Acorn Woodpecker, & Le Conte's Thrasher were observed by Andrew & Leah Kirk. Calliope Hummingbird, Willow Flycatcher, & Hooded Warbler were sighted by Kay Wilson & Jo Heindel while Cooper's Hawk & Common Goldeneye were spotted by Larry Nahm & Carolyn Gann. Bendire's Thrasher & Golden-crowned Sparrow were examined by Bob Mauer, Jr. and the lone Wrentit was ferreted out by Judy Wickman & Bob Hudson. One Ring-billed Gull was identified by John Williams and a Hermit Warbler was discovered by Debbie House. Others who added numbers and were often only the second party to find a certain species were Kathy Duvall, John & Ros Gorham, Steve Holland, Phill Kiddoo, Paul McFarland, Bill Mitchel, Todd Vogel, James Wilson, and Jerry Zatorski.

The hundreds of hours of birding resulted in Inyo County receiving National Recognition again! And again, as the second birdiest inland county but this time second to our neighbor to the south...Kern County! Just think what the possibilities would be if the lower Owens River was flowing and we had a few dozen more indefatigable birders!



Female Hooded Warbler

Jo Heindel photo

Birding

Tern, Tern Again

Chris Howard



Arctic Terns Public domain photo from Wikipedia

On 14 August 2004, Jon Dunn led an ESAS field trip to Crowley Reservoir. The highlight of the trip: two adult Arctic Terns Jon identified as they flew by on the northwest arm of Crowley. It was easy to see some of the notable characteristics in flight as Jon and Kristie Nelson so aptly described them: Rather long translucent wings appearing silvery at times as the light shown through them accentuating the narrow black trailing edges of the undersides of the primaries. The birds had short heads with very little body extending in front of the wings. In contrast, the backs of their bodies behind the wings were long, trailing a long forked tail. Short orange-red bill. Linting, buoyant flight, with frequent plunges. Both had black caps and were pale gray underneath. These birds had just traveled 2,500 miles to get here from the Arctic...only 10,000 miles to go before winter in Antarctica!

In the shorebird department, there were excellent comparative views of juvenile Baird's sandpipers with Westerns, and a handful of Least's. Amazing were more than a hundred White-faced Ibis. A few Willets, many Eared Grebes, some with fledgelings on their backs, many nesting Western Grebes, one nesting Clark's Grebe. Many Gadwall with young. Thousands of waterfowl. Also in great numbers were American White Pelicans and Canada Geese.



Eared Grebe with young Courtesy of Mono Lake Committee

Conservation California Coastal Cleanup Day

2004 marks the 20th anniversary of the California Coastal Commission's California Coastal Cleanup Day program, making this one of the longest running volunteer events in the state as well as the largest.

Over 48,000 people participated in California Coastal Cleanup Day last year, accounting for over 12 percent worldwide participation in the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by The Ocean Conservancy (www.oceanconservancy.org). All 50 states and over 100 countries take part, making this effort the largest marine-related volunteer event in the world. Volunteers collect both trash and data, providing important clues as to the nature and source of the trash. Data from past cleanups have shown that over 60 percent of the trash picked up on Coastal Cleanup Day probably originated from an inland source and was washed onto the beach through a creek or river. The Coastal Commission has sought to push the cleanup further and further inland in order to stop that trash where it starts, before it hits our coast and ocean. (And although our Inyo and Mono County creeks don't drain to the ocean, we care too!)

Coastal Cleanup Day 2004 is supported by the California Coastal Commission, California State Parks Foundation, and The Ocean Conservancy.

Conservation

Native Plant Sale on September 25

The Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is sponsoring their 8th annual Native Plant Sale on Saturday, September 25. The sale will be held at White Mountain Research Station on East Line Street in Bishop at 9:00 AM. Arrive early for best selection and time to browse.

Some of the plants that will be available include Nuttall sunflower (*Helianthus nuttallii*), Soft arnica (*Arnica mollis*), Chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*), Great basin wild rye (*Leymus cinereus*), and White evening primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa* ssp. *marginata*), among many others.

Proceeds from the plant sale go to the Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant Program, which supports native plant research, outreach, and horticultural activities. Proposals for the annual grant program will be accepted through December of this year.

Preview on Tuesday, September 21

To help get an understanding of what will be available, come to the plant sale preview on Tuesday September 21 at 7:00 PM at White Mountain Research Station, 3000 E. Line Street in Bishop.

To get a plant list or more information, contact Karen Ferrell-Ingram at ingram@telis.org or 387-2913. Thanks for your support!



Aspen leaves – painting by Joy Fatooh

A Laundry Quandary

It's been a year and a half since I received this letter from a WAVE subscriber living in Santa Ana whose family has a home in Aspendell:

Dear Joy Fatooh,

Thank you for the recent article on organics. I try to buy organic when I can, but must balance the use of gas and time between the value of organic produce. If I am near a place that carries organic, then I naturally will take advantage of that. But if it means a trip out of my way I shop at the local market. So it goes.

I find that many things in life are a trade-off. For instance, I am typing on an ancient 1947 upright Smith-Corona. It is hard to find a repairman and ribbons for old machines. On the other hand, it uses no electricity and makes my fingers work harder.

Maybe you can clarify a confusing issue for me. I debate whether to use cloth napkins or paper. Cloth ones require more water for washing. Paper uses trees. Should I try to save water or trees? Also, washing requires electricity and paper adds to our land-fills. What a quandary! I realize this is "small potatoes," but I do try to conserve even if it is a drop in the bucket.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Honer

With six billion of us riding this little planet, every drop in the bucket makes a difference! My hat is off to Carolyn Honer for keeping conservation in mind with every small action she takes. If we all do that, maybe we'll make a good choice more often than not, by virtue of trying our best even when it isn't simple.

Personally, I follow the lead of my friend Joan Grantz when it comes to paper vs. cloth towels and napkins. "I figure I'm doing laundry anyway," Joan told me. "It doesn't make much difference if I throw a few napkins and kitchen towels into every load."

In putting out this newsletter, we send a paper copy to each of our readers – which is vital for those who still live in the Age of Typewriters. But if you have a computer, and turn it on and read your email anyway, wouldn't you like to get a link to a full-color electronic copy instead? My hope is that the majority of ESAS members will soon insist on this! – Editor

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The beauty of books and ballots, birds and butterflies – Inside!