



## 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!**

**May 11**

### **A New Road to the Future**

**Paul McFarland**



Munching contentedly on a phacelia, this soldier blister beetle ponders the future of desert wetlands. Paul McFarland photo

Since the days of President Nixon, users of public lands have been waiting for a designated system of roads and trails. Over the next 3 years, all the National Forests in California will be defining the roads less graveled – the two-tracks, 4wd trails, and singletracks criss-crossing our public forest lands. Paul McFarland of Friends of the Inyo will provide a beetle, butterfly and bristlecone packed update of this ongoing route designation process, why it is so important and what you can do to help design a sustainable and enjoyable network of frontcountry roads and trails. (Refreshments: Kathy Duvall)

**June 8**

### **Spring Potluck Picnic**

The spring potluck picnic will be held at the home of Mary and Derrick Vocolka, at 2433 Apache Drive in Bishop. We will gather at 6 pm. Bring a friend, a dish and a beverage to share, and enjoy an evening of great food and conversation in a beautiful garden. For more information, contact Mary or Derrick at 873-4480.

### **The Colorful, Tree-Friendly e-Wave Option**

If you're not seeing brilliant red and purple in the photo at left, you're missing an opportunity to save trees and your Audubon chapter's printing and mailing costs! Just contact Chris Howard at [choward@telis.org](mailto:choward@telis.org) to receive an e-mail link to the beautiful full-color, electronic version of each new issue of this newsletter instead of getting a drab, guilt-inducing paper copy in your mailbox several days later. – *Editor*

## **President's Message – Mending our treasured tapestry**

Good things are happening with Eastern Sierra Audubon Society. At our annual meeting in June we will elect a new president and new board members. We have a very capable slate of officers that you will find listed elsewhere in this Wave. People have stepped forward and offered to be officers, board members and committee chairs. This is heartening. Wild places and wild creatures face troubling times in the near future. The political climate is frequently not friendly to critters and places that are important to us. Effective local groups will be important. Eastern California is blessed to have a wide variety of groups that do care. Some of them are Eastern Sierra Audubon, Range of Light Chapter of the Sierra Club, Bristlecone Chapter of California Native Plant Society, Eastern Sierra Land Trust, the Owens Valley Committee, Friends of the Inyo, and the Mono Lake Committee. These groups work to try and maintain our lands.

One of the wonders of living in Eastern California is that our landscape is still functional for animals. Deer with mountain lions migrate from west slope to the eastside, and then back again. Bighorn sheep can do their seasonal altitudinal migration. An occasional bighorn ram can even change mountain ranges, bringing new genetic vigor with him. The fabric of life still clings together,

but there are holes and threats to its overall integrity. Some of these threats are bigger and wider roads, the growth in our towns and airports, water export, and habitat fragmentation due to expansion of recreation. It is our job as citizens and as activists to try to keep the fabric whole. A quilt or a tapestry can lose some threads and still be beautiful, but at some point, if not cared for and treasured, it will lose its integrity and be just another rag. We must keep it whole. So support those groups I mentioned above, not only with your money, but also more importantly with your time. Let your voice be heard for the wild that remains.

This will be my last Wave message as president. I will continue to be the conservation chair, and so you will see me around. I would like to thank all those have been on the ESAS board with me, and those who have helped with our projects.

And don't forget, every day, to look at a flower, watch a butterfly, or talk to a chickadee.

Thank you.

James Wilson, President

## **May Field Trip and Bird-A-Thon**

**Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> - Baker Meadow Birding** Spring migration in the Owens Valley at its finest: Baker Creek above Big Pine. Expect warblers, vireos, flycatchers, tanagers, and orioles in breeding plumage. A great trip for beginners and children. Meet at Glacier View Campground at the junction of Highways 395 and 168, at the north end of Big Pine at 7:00AM. Bring snacks, water, and wear shoes that can get damp. Should last until noon. Call Chris at 873-7422 for more information.

**Bird-A-Thon - May 14, 2005** The Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, in conjunction with International Migratory Bird Day, announces its 2005 Bird-A-Thon fundraiser to take place Saturday, May 14, 2005. The event is a celebration of Inyo County's diverse habitats and the wonder of bird migration. Groups of birders will comb Inyo County in an effort to identify as many species of birds as possible in a 24 hour period. Our record for one 24 hour period within Inyo County is 219species. Eastern Sierra Audubon invites all of Inyo County to make a pledge of 10, 20 or 30 cents per species seen on May 14th. Money raised supports Audubon's "Birds in the Classroom" program, restoration efforts on the Lower Owens River and wildlife protection at Owens Lake. Those who pledge will receive a list of all birds seen May 14th as well as a narrative of the day's chase. Please send your pledge today to Bird-A-Thon, Drawer D, LonePine, CA 93545 or phone 876-5807 to pledge or to join the hunt.

## Winter Birding Highlights in Inyo County, 2004-2005 Tom and Jo Heindel

One of the wettest winters on record brought three times as much rainfall to Death Valley National Park and almost two times the expected snowfall to the Sierra. It was an interesting winter for birds as well. Many species who regularly winter in the Sierra moved to the lowlands where food was easier to find and other species who are rarely reported in winter occurred.

A Common Loon was at Pleasant Valley Reservoir (PVR) on 29 Jan (SS) and a Horned Grebe was at Tinemaha Reservoir (TR) on 5 Dec (T&JH). American White Pelicans appeared early when three were found at TR on 16 Feb (T&JH). An unexpected and early Turkey Vulture was found 11 Jan at Bishop (J&DP) followed by two more at PVR 29 Jan (SS). The most surprising bird of the winter was an immature male Eurasian Wigeon in the Bishop City Park pond 12 Jan (JZ) that has continued to 16 Apr. One to two Greater Scaup were reported by many observers at PVR and TR throughout the winter.

A very rare White-tailed Kite was found near Laws 5 Feb (AZ) and was seen there again 26 Feb (SS). A Rough-legged Hawk was at Laws 5 Feb (J&DP) and was the only one reported the entire winter. There were days in the 1970s when this species was as abundant as Red-tailed Hawks. Another exciting highlight was a Sandhill Crane found on the Bishop Christmas Count on 18 Dec (M&NP). Birders drove by the alfalfa fields along Sunland, Bishop, and regularly saw the bird until late Feb. A Black-bellied Plover at Bishop Sewer Ponds 19 Feb (J&DP) was three weeks earlier than the earliest record in a century of data.

One to three Herring Gulls were reported at TR throughout the winter. Two Northern Pygmy-Owls were found, one east of Bishop 6 Jan (JZ) and one at Power Plant #4 on 27 Feb (SS). A Costa's Hummingbird at Bishop 5-21 Dec (CA) was most unusual and only the second Dec record for the Owens Valley ever. On 9 Feb a male Williamson's Sapsucker was found at Mendenhall Park, Big Pine (T&JH) and an adult male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a vagrant from the East, was found at the Bishop County Club on 18 Dec (C&RH, JDeM). This was the first ever Dec record and only the third record ever during the winter season. White-headed Woodpeckers are very rare and usually found only occasionally in the Sierra but this winter the numbers on the valley floor were unprecedented. Birds were found at Rovana (JD, SS), Bishop City Park (KD, C&CE, MTH), Bishop Elementary (C&RH), and Independence (LK).

Also unprecedented was a Hammond's Flycatcher at Round Valley 18 Dec (JD, DH) establishing the first winter record for the county. Steller's Jays, Western Scrub-Jays and Mountain Chickadees were widely reported from feeders throughout the Owens Valley and a few Clark's Nutcrackers were found in Bishop (C&RH) and Big Pine (T&JH). Also noteworthy were a White-breasted Nuthatch in Bishop during Dec (C&RH) and a Brown Creeper at Bishop City Park all winter. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at TR on 5 Dec (J&DP) was a late bird and a male Wilson's Warbler at Furnace Creek Ranch 19 Dec-2 Jan (V&GW) was the first documented winter record for the county. A Swamp Sparrow in north Bishop 18 Dec (KN) and 2 Jan (J&DP) was one of very few winter records for the Owens Valley. Another surprise was a male Rusty Blackbird at TR 5-7 Dec (T&JH), one of the very few found recently in the county and the first for the Owens Valley.

It is fun to go out into the field and enjoy finding exciting and unexpected birds but it is hard work to document a personal sighting, to ensure its acceptance as a scientific record. We are extremely grateful to the following observers for their contributions to the knowledge of bird distribution this past winter season: Chris Allen, Justin DeMoss, Jon Dunn, Kathy Duvall, Claus and Connie Engelhardt, Matt Heindel, Debbie House, Chris & Rosie Howard, Leah Kirk, Kristie Nelson, Jim & Debby Parker, Mike & Nancy Prather, Susan Steele, Vicki & Gerry Wolfe, Jerry Zatorski, and Andy Zdon.

Spring has sprung and all these observers plus many others are already scouring the county for other surprising and exciting bird finds. If you decide to join us, bring, along with your binocs, a camera and/or pen and paper to document your finds. Become a part of the growing body of citizen scientists who are making significant contributions to the knowledge of the status and distribution of birds in Inyo County.



Sandhill Crane

Chris Howard photo

## **Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua not your ordinary bird festival**

Registration opened April 15th for the Fourth Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua to be held June 17, 18, and 19 in Lee Vining.

Chautauqua is an institution that began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to provide higher education opportunities through the combination of lectures, concerts, and public events. Today, PRBO Conservation Science, US Forest Service, Mono Lake Committee, California State Parks, and the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society continue this tradition by sponsoring a bird festival in the spirit of Chautauqua.

The 2005 Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua will include workshops, children's activities, field trips, presentations and special events. Presenters will include Jon Dunn, Scott Stine, Ph.D., and David Winkler, Ph.D. Workshops and field trips will be taught by Sacha Heath, Debbie House, Burleigh Lockwood, David Lukas, Mike Prather, Ane Carla Rovetta, David Wimpfheimer, Dr. David Herbst, Rich Stallcup and many others.

Special events this year include a Friday night welcome dinner, Saturday afternoon's Mono Lake Wine Flight: A Wine Tasting Benefit and Silent Auction, an evening of storytelling and of course, the annual Sunday picnic, bird calling contest and this year's outdoor concert by the Celtic group Cíúnas.

Over 40 presentations, workshops, field trips and special events will be offered from June 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>. Learn about the habits of owls, swallows, flycatchers and other birds. Bird walks will be held in a variety of habitats, including Lundy Canyon, Horse Meadows, June Lake Loop, and the Tioga Crest. An all day birding event will be offered for the stout of heart, or you can slow down the pace with a field trip that will guide you through the basics of identifying butterflies or wildflowers.

Hands-on participation is offered in workshops on mist netting and bird banding. Learn how to design and build your own bird house with your children, or discover how to make art materials from what Mother Nature offers around you. Have an itch to break out your sketching pencil and pad? Learn how to sketch birds on a fieldtrip focused on both bird identification and creating artwork.

After a long day of birding, come and relax at one of the many afternoon and evening programs being offered this year. Included this year is a special presentation by Dr. Scott Stine, a geomorphologist and paleoclimatologist whose melding of the Mono Basin's

climate, ecology, and "Earthtime" gives him the ability to share some startling discoveries about the Mono Basin. Other presentations will include talks about the birds of Chile, comparing the parallels and differences between our two hemispheres. Or learn about Willow Flycatchers and how stream restoration has helped to re-establish nesting areas for these endangered birds.

After the last three years of overwhelming response to the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, it's anticipated that most events will fill again this year. Pre-registration is highly encouraged. Reservations will be made first come—first served, so don't miss out.

Basic Bird Chautauqua registration is \$35—this price will allow up to 4 presentations, workshops, and/or field trips.

A higher level of registration is available for \$55—allowing you to sign up for as many programs as you wish.

There are 3 ways to register:

1. On-line at [www.birdchautauqua.org](http://www.birdchautauqua.org) and register on the secure site for the events you wish to participate in along with your complete contact and payment information. You will be registered for the events of your choice based on availability.
2. Call or email Chautauqua organizers to request a program be mailed to you. Complete the registration form and mail or fax it back. You can also print the registration form from the Bird Chautauqua web page.
3. If you do not have access to the internet, do not despair. Please call Douglas Dunaway at (760) 647-6595 for assistance. Please request this service only if you are unable to register via your computer as it will only prevent Chautauqua staff from expeditiously working through registration requests.

Walk-in registration will be offered concurrently with check-in throughout the event, but do not count on getting your first choice of field trips and events if you wait until the beginning of the Chautauqua.

For more information, call the Mono Lake Committee at (760) 647-6595 or go on-line at [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org) and follow the birding links.

## Eastern Sierra Audubon welcomes new members

Loretta Baxter  
 Frances F. Brewster  
 Del Chambers  
 Patti Cole  
 Syla Colton  
 Gary Fandrich  
 Curtis Milliron  
 Valerie Ortmayer  
 Robert Peek  
 Thomas Petersen  
 Jerry Rupp  
 Robert Schroeder  
 Peter Tracy  
 Howard Walker  
 Jeanne Walter

## Mono Lake Needs You! Volunteer Program at Mono Lake this summer Training Begins in Late May

The Mono Lake Committee, US Forest Service, and California State Parks are teaming up to sponsor a volunteer program at Mono Lake this summer. Volunteers will have the opportunity to meet people from all over the world and share their knowledge of the Eastern Sierra. Participants may staff information desks and/or rove and answer questions at the lakeshore. With additional training, volunteers may also get involved in guiding formal tours for groups.

Free training will be held during the last week of May and the first 2 weeks of June in the Mono Basin. Volunteers are required to attend six half-day training sessions and are asked to donate 8 hours per month from June through September. Participants must be at least 18 years old, and be able to walk short distances and stand for 2 hours.

Please contact Janet Carle at 760-647-6431 or Fran at [frances@monolake.org](mailto:frances@monolake.org) for more information or to sign up. You will be sent details and a training schedule.

### Correction: ESWC data

Cindy Kamler sent correction and clarification to data she reported in the last issue regarding the 360 patients attended by Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care in 2004: Of the animals that died, 80% died within 24 hours; 9% were euthanized. Of those that lived, 85% were released.

## Orphaned Badger helped by Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care

ESWC Director Cindy Kamler answered an early morning call on April 4 from a visitor from the Bay Area. He reported he had rescued a baby badger the evening before on the side of the Death Valley Road. There was no sign of the mother, and the cub was frightened, cold and distressed.

Kamler called Assistant Animal Care Director Nina Gaylord. Nina works at Pet Friendly and was close to the Motel 6 where the badger was being kept. She picked up the youngster and brought it to the store. Kamler soon arrived with fluids and the proper formula (thanks to the ESWC library). Already warmed up in the heating-pad-lined carrier, the badger was given subcutaneous fluids to help with dehydration and shock.

Badgers are rarely seen in a rehab setting, although they are found in much of the US. Baby badgers are even more rare. There is almost nothing in rehabilitation literature on North American badgers, and ESWC could locate only one rehabilitator who had raised a baby badger.

The badger appeared to be between 5-6 weeks of age. Her eyes were open, but only the tips of her canine teeth were coming through. Within 24 hours, she was playing with her bedding and a stuffed toy. Under Nina's excellent care, the badger gained a pound her first week and continues to put on weight and muscle.

ESWC is looking forward to the challenge of making sure that this young badger has the proper skills to make a living when she is released in the late summer or early fall. Badgers' primary prey is gophers, followed by ground squirrels and other rodents, and the occasional snake, lizard, and insect. An adult badger can dig itself into the ground (if not too rocky) in 1½ minutes!



## Chapter Officers

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 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

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 Birdathon: Michael Prather 876-5807  
 Conservation: James Wilson  
 Education: Michael Prather 876-5807  
 Rosie Beach 873-7422  
 Sara Steck 873-4320  
 Field trips: Chris Howard 873-7422  
 Fish Slough: Sam Glasser 873-3111  
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 WAVE editor: Joy Fatooh 933-2205  
 WAVE mailing: Mary Vocelka 873-4480  
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Eurasian Wigeon Chris Howard photo

**Birds, badgers, beetles – *Inside!***