



ESAS Website: ESAudubon.org *ES 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 9

Seven Weeks in Tibet

Barbara Schuck



Barbara Schuck photo

Barbara Schuck, a local teacher with a lifelong interest in Tibet, found one of her dreams fulfilled this summer when she was invited to teach English in a remote hamlet in the mountains of Eastern Tibet. She discovered there a school that is helping to transform a powerless minority into a community with self-determination; a people and a culture on the cusp of balancing a truly traditional lifestyle with the modern world that is beginning to filter its way into the gorges of this area. Come see beautiful pictures and hear stories about Chungba and its spirited people, and an education on the roof of the world. **Refreshments: Sally Gaines**

Christmas Potluck Dinner December 14

6 PM, White Mountain Research Station dining room, before the meeting. Please bring your favorite beverage and a main dish, salad or dessert to share. Invite a friend. Remember to bring your own table setting.

November/December 2005

December 14

Owls of Yosemite

Joe Lane

Owl biologist Joe Lane will present a slide show and stories from the 2005 season working with spotted owls in Yosemite National Park. Part of the talk will casually describe the project and unofficial results. There will also be some stories related to the fun of hooting in the forest at 2 AM.



Volume 24, No. 2

President's Message – A Holiday Tradition

Way back on December 21 1982, the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society conducted the first Bishop Christmas Bird Count (CBC). On that day, 8 intrepid Audubon members tallied every bird in the predetermined count circle, a 7.5 mile radius around the intersection of Ed Powers Road and Red Hill Road. After a long day of birding and counting, they met over dinner, shared stories, and produced a final tally. That day, a Bishop tradition was born.

This year, the 24th consecutive Bishop CBC will be held on Saturday, December 17. With 23 years behind us, we can start to see patterns in the data and annual fluctuations, and pose questions about the upcoming count: Will White-headed Woodpeckers move down from the mountains like in 2004? Will we find more Cassin's Finches than House Finches like in 2000? Will last years' drake Eurasian Wigeon return to the Bishop City Park? Will flocks of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings be found feasting on berries? Great-tailed Grackles have become scarce... will we find any? Will a Varied Thrush be found in a backyard on Elm Street?

A Call for Cookies

We are asking our members to help by signing up to bring cookies or cake to our monthly meetings. By not having to buy cookies, your Chapter can spend more money on educational and resource protection projects. We provide coffee, juice and tea and just need your help with the cookie goodies. To sign up, contact Joan Benner at our next meeting or at 938-2929.



But it's not just the scientific observations that make a CBC worthwhile. I look forward to the camaraderie of the day and at the evening tally. It's nice to come in from a cold, long day of counting birds to a group of smiling faces with good stories. Thank you, James and Kay Wilson, for graciously offering your home for the potluck again. What better way to end a full day of birding than to enjoy the suspense of what will be tallied? We fill ourselves with food, enjoy each other's company, and settle into James and Kay's cozy living room to finally crack the suspense of what birds were seen.

There are three CBCs planned in the Eastern Sierra this year (see below). All interested birders of any skill level are welcome to participate. Beginning birders get the opportunity to learn the field marks of the more common birds. Seasoned birders get to fine tune their skills and perhaps find a rarity. I hope to see you out there at a CBC... you never know what you're going to find!

Chris Howard



Eastern Sierra Ornithology Quiz: The Answer



Last issue's question: What percentage of Willow Flycatchers nesting at recently-rewatered Rush Creek in the Mono Basin establish their nests in willows? Answer: zero! As of the 2005 nesting season, 100% – 50 out of 50 – have nested in Wood's Rose.

November/December Field Trips and Christmas Bird Counts

Saturday, November 5 - Crowley Reservoir Winter Birding Leader: Jon Dunn. A great chance to see Bald Eagles, geese, and wintering ducks. Meet at the Green Church at 8:30AM. Bring binoculars, scopes, water, lunch, and wear clothes for the potentially cold weather. Snowy roads cancel. Call Chris for more information at 873-7422.

Saturday, December 17 - Bishop CBC Chris Howard (760) 873-7422 or choward@telis.org

Monday, January 2 - Death Valley CBC Vicki & Gerry Wolfe (760) 786-2108 or devawolfe@yahoo.com

TBA – Mono Basin CBC

A Colonist from Eurasia Immigrates to Inyo County

Tom and Jo Heindel

About three years ago we began to get calls from people in the Owens Valley who recognized that they had a bird species in their yard that they had never seen before. One even began the conversation with, "I have not been drinking but I have a bird at my feeder that I've never seen before and it isn't in my bird book!" Some were able to imitate the vocalization it made: "coo-COO-coo." They were all thrilled that they could believe what they were seeing because they were playing host a new colonist in Inyo County, the Eurasian Collared-Dove. The name itself awakens an interest because birds with "Eurasian" are found in Eurasia, not in North America!

This Eurasian species was imported to the Bahamas in the mid-1970s. It is not certain if the birds escaped or were released but they became common in the wild there. In the early 1980s they were first reported in Florida where they quickly adapted to their new home. A decade later the population had expanded rapidly both north and west and the new century found them in the Far West. By 2002 this species had been added to the state lists of Arizona, Oregon, and Washington. The 2002 report of the California Bird Records Committee (*Western Birds* 35:14) accepted this species on the state list, which now stands at 620 species, noting that it is the 10th non-native species added to the list.

The Eurasian Collared-Dove was officially added to the Inyo County list when Debby Parker thoroughly documented and photographed a bird in Bishop on 8 March 2002. Since that time this species has been reported from all the towns in the Owens Valley as well as Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley National Park. A few others had been reported earlier in Bishop but lacked documentation or photographic evidence. There is a look-alike domesticated dove, the Ringed Turtle-Dove, that is kept in cages in Bishop and the earlier sightings did not eliminate the possibility of an escaped turtle-dove. A recent edition of the *Sierra Reader* offered turtle-doves for sale.

How can we be sure we are looking at Eurasian Collared-Dove and not an escaped Ringed Turtle-Dove? The newer field guides, National Geographic Society's *Field Guide* or Sibley's *Guide to Birds*, have pictures that will be helpful. The Eurasian Collared-Dove is the size of a Rock Pigeon (Rock Dove) that is common in most towns. It is pale gray with a black half-collar around the back of the neck. The back, wings, and tail

are mostly pale brown; the primaries (the longest, outer wing feathers) are black as is the base of the underside of the tail. The outer tail feathers are broadly tipped white. The Ringed Turtle-Dove is a smaller and paler version with the primaries dull gray and the base of the undertail has very little or no black. The main vocalizations are very different. The Eurasian Collared-Dove gives a series of 3 to 4 "coo" notes with the middle one(s) emphasized. The Ringed Turtle-Dove gives a soft, rolling series of "coo's."

While some people disdain non-native species these birds have become part of the avifauna and should not be ignored. It is important that we learn as much as we can about them. Will they withstand our hardest winters? Can they survive an abundance of winter hawks that love to eat dove? How high into the mountains will they venture? Will they displace our native doves or pigeons? Where will they nest? Will they brave the temperatures of Mammoth Lakes? Will their choice of food items impact other species of birds? How regularly will they hybridize with turtle-doves? If there are many of their own species to mate with, will they hybridize? The slate is almost blank on the Inyo County biology of this newcomer. What interesting facts are you going to discover?



Eurasian Collared-Dove Debby Parker photo

Eastern Sierra Audubon welcomes new members

**Gary Post
Donalda Day
Aino Vimb**

**Save a tree and Chapter mailing costs -
get your Sierra Wave in full color,
online! Contact Chris Howard,
choward@telis.org**

Fish Slough Volunteers, we need you

The Eastern Sierra Audubon Society assists the Bureau of Land Management with a Citizen Volunteer patrol of the Fish Slough area in the Tablelands, north of Bishop. The Volunteers have provided valuable visitor contacts that demonstrate an interest and concern for a special place, and because of our presence many have noted the area being treated with more respect. Audubon members can take pride in this ongoing long term Award Winning project.

Gordon Nelson shepherded the project for many years before handing the reins to Sam Glasser. Patrol responsibilities include noting the condition of the numerous archaeology sites, recording rain gauge data, assisting with the maintenance of the Owens Valley Pupfish habitat, recording wildlife and bird sightings, picking up litter, and observing and reporting visitation and use patterns. The BLM provides a truck for use on the day of the patrol.

The most attractive attribute for the individual volunteer is the ability to contribute in a very practical way to the protection of a unique environment and to engage the public in a positive and educational setting. We are always looking to improve our effectiveness, and towards that end we would be glad add new individuals to the program, with the goal of scheduling each person/couple about once every two months.

Contact Derrick Vocelka at dvocelka@inreach.com or (873-4480) if you are interested in the program, or pull him aside at the next ESAS meeting. He's the guy standing next to the refreshment table most of the meeting. Derrick is temporarily filling in for Sam Glasser for a few months as Coordinator.

Sierra Nevada License Plate

Woops, we made a mistake at the meeting in October- the legislation did not get signed but will be pending for next session- sorry about the misinformation. However, you can still show your support and enthusiasm by pre-registering for a Sierra Nevada License Plate to let your legislators know your interest. By pre-registering to purchase a Sierra Nevada License Plate you will join thousands of visionary Californians in a statewide effort to protect and restore this cherished place.

Sierra Nevada License plates will be issued by the CA DMV. These are official license plates available for all vehicles registered in California and can be personalized as well.

Proceeds from the sales and renewal of these plates will directly fund the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Pre-registration is free and easy. You can register on-line at www.sierralicenseplate.org They need 7500 pre-registrants to qualify when the bill passes. You will be notified by email and mail when they are available for purchase. – **Roberta Lagomarsini**

The perfect October field trip

Warm, clear and calm weather made perfect conditions for the good turnout of 15 folks to check for birds. Probably the best bird was a female Red-naped Sapsucker that let us watch her in a cottonwood as she pecked holes neatly in a row. She had the white in the chin and red below this with a patch of red in the nape and crown. A bit on the brown side overall; was she a first fall bird born this spring east of Owens Valley in the White Mountains or Great Basin somewhere? Many YRWA to hear and see, and Lincoln, White-crowned and Song Sparrows. Kathy Duvall found a Red-winged Blackbird nest in the canal reeds left over from summer. Great Horned Owl and a juvenile Cooper's Hawk were fun to see too. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were singing also. Super trip! – **Debby Parker**



Red-naped Sapsucker

Nancy Overholtz



Mulholland Returns To The Owens Valley!

The Owens Valley Committee is bringing Theatre of NOTE's performance of the award-winning musical satire "A Mulholland Christmas Carol" to the Owens Valley from Los Angeles. The story returns to its source.

Imagine a foot-tapping, laugh-out-loud afternoon of music and dance based on our own Owens Valley's history (with some artistic license, of course). With William Mulholland as Scrooge, Fred Eaton as Jacob Marley, and a host of other historical characters from Teddy Roosevelt to the Watterson brothers, you can imagine what's in store for you. A cast of 17 performers and a four member band promise to keep everyone singing and smiling.

This outstanding show won the 2002 LA Weekly Theater Awards for Musical of the Year, Best Director, Best Comedy Ensemble and Best Adaptation. Theatre of NOTE has been an award-winning arts institution in Hollywood for 24 years. They describe themselves as "a non-profit, democratic company dedicated to exploring the theatrical event through original and innovative works. We serve an adventurous community seeking alternative live performance."

Mark your calendars and order your tickets for November 19 at the Lone Pine High School auditorium or November 20 at the Bishop Union High School auditorium, both at 4:00 PM. Tickets can be mailed to you, or you can pick them up at the door. Only 300 will be available for each performance so don't wait! Adults are \$15, Seniors and Students are \$10. For tickets or more information call Mike Prather at (760) 264-9689 or email outreach@ovcweb.org. Sorry, but we can only take cash or check. Make checks payable to Owens Valley Committee and mail to OVC Mulholland Tickets, Drawer D, Lone Pine, CA 93545.

Vintage J.J. Audubon Calendar Bird Prints Offered

Eastern Sierra Audubon Society is offering 14 different vintage Audubon Calendar bird prints ready for framing as a fundraiser for Cindy Kamler's nonprofit Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care Center. These prints are from calendars made in the 1950s on heavy paper. They were donated to our chapter by an anonymous local supporter. Some have minor wear around the edges which will not show when framed; below the print are tiny staple holes, and all are in good condition, having been saved with care for all these years. A Google search on the bird and Audubon's name can show you what each looks like.

We are asking a donation of \$15 per print with all funds going to Cindy's program. She and her trained crew rehabilitate injured birds, including owls, hawks and eagles, and small mammals. Her costs include food, building shelters, and driving sometimes long distances to retrieve injured creatures and to release them back to a good spot. We thank Cindy for all of her work and hope that the money raised will help ease her funding woes.

To purchase these prints please phone Jim and Debby Parker at 872-4447. Also, we hope to have any that haven't already sold by then on display at the next ESAS meeting, November 9.



26x19 inch: Yellow-breasted Chat (above), Wild Turkey, Ruffed Grouse, Columbia Jay, Cardinal.

20x16: American Robin.

27x16: Flamingo, Barn Swallow, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Towhee, Red-Winged Blackbird, Canada Jay, Catbird, Red-shouldered Hawk

Chapter Officers

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J.J. Audubon's Columbia Jay - see page 5

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