

## BIRDS

continued from page 14



PHOTO: TOM HEINDEL

A Western Grebe

will cross the area over Tinemaha Reservoir and Klondike Lake, while colorful Western Tanagers, Yellow-rumped Audubon Warblers, and bright blue-headed Lazuli and Indigo Buntings will begin their own southern journeys. "Migration is a wonder," Prather said. "Birds go the complete length of the western hemisphere every year. It's awe-inspiring."

A good place to see these vast numbers of migratory birds, particularly ducks and shorebirds, will be at the Owen's Lake Fall Big Day, Tuesday Aug. 21. During the spring survey in April, 20 birders counted about 75,000 birds and 81 species, Prather said. This data will be used in the management of the birds and their habitat at Owen's Lake; just one way birders have of not only enjoying but also protecting the birds they love.

Don't expect winter to end opportunities for birding, as some northern birds, including the Ferruginous hawk, which nests in the Great Plains and Canada, will come to stay in the Eastern Sierra's relatively milder climate.

The change of seasons in spring and fall can also bring unexpected visitors to the region. Birds that are lost during migration and end up far afield of their typical migratory path are known as "vagrants." "My wife and I lived in Death Valley for 8 years in the 1970s," Prather said. "That area is known as a vagrant trap. We saw dozens and dozens of birds from the east." But one of Prather's all-time favorite sightings: a lost flamingo at Owen's Lake.

Meanwhile James Wilson reported his own recent encounter with 2 Sandhill Cranes flying north in spring. These birds breed in the Northern U.S., Canada, Alaska, and Siberia, and travel south each winter to Florida, Texas, Utah, and California. According to National Geographic, more than three-fourths of the cranes use migratory staging areas in a single 75-mile stretch along the Platte River in Nebraska, so spotting them in this part of California

is rare. "That was really neat," Wilson said.

As for the Heindels, "We've seen some species in Inyo County that are rare throughout the state, such as Varied Bunting, Streak-backed Oriole, Red-faced Warbler, and many more," they said.

Chance sightings like these keep a birder's passion alive. "I've been birding for 40 years and I still enjoy it," Prather said. Wilson, who co-founded the ESAS over 25 years ago, recalled the first

bird he can remember seeing: "I was 3, and a Steller's Jay landed on the picnic table and stole my pancake." Decades later, Wilson still believes in the value of birding. "Birding is important," he said. "To be close physically or through binoculars to something that's interesting and beautiful can be a really positive experience."

To that end, the ESAS continues to provide birding events for Inyo and Mono communities, including an upcoming Mono Lake bird walk on Saturday, Aug. 11 led by Mono Lake Committee member Santiago Escruce-

ria. Participants may have a chance to see migrants coming from the north, among them Eared Grebes, Red-necked Phalaropes, and Sandpipers. More information is available at <http://esaudubon.org/events/calendar.php>.

Whether a birder attends a walk along the shores of Mono Lake, or ventures out to one of the many other birding destinations in Inyo and Mono counties, he or she will quickly discover the vast diversity of the Eastern Sierra. For novices and experts alike, birding offers an activity to challenge and reward for many seasons to come.

**MOUNTAIN MOJO**  
SUNDAYS  
on the deck 4:30 to 7:30 P.M.  
HAPPY HOUR ALL NIGHT!

## LIVE MUSIC

**EDDY EVANS**  
AUGUST 16  
on the deck  
4:30 to 7:30 P.M.

**LAVA MOON**  
AUGUST 18  
**LUAU DECK PARTY**  
at 4:30 P.M.

**TWOFR TUESDAYS**  
BUY ONE – GET ONE FREE  
**Hurricane Hoover & Friends**  
at 7 P.M.

**Dine on our deck this summer and enjoy mountain views!**  
**DRINK & APPETIZER SPECIALS 4:30 to 6:30 P.M.**  
**BISTRO HOURS: DAILY 4:30 to Close**

**the bistro**  
sports bar & restaurant

Located Inside Snowcreek Athletic Club  
51 CLUB DRIVE | MAMMOTH LAKES | OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
760-934-8511 | [SnowcreekAthleticClub.com](http://SnowcreekAthleticClub.com)

**MAMMOTH LAKES TRAIL SYSTEM**  
**SUMMER OF STEWARDSHIP**  
**Coldwater Trailheads**

**Help beautify the gateway to the Mammoth Crest!**

**WHAT:** Spend the morning on trail cleanup and treadwork, then join us for a free lunch and giveaways for volunteers!

**SATURDAY, August 11**  
**8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

**WHERE:** Meet at the Duck Pass Trailhead for a bagel breakfast, safety talk and work assignments. Parking is limited, so please carpool.

**WHO:** Volunteers of all ages and abilities are welcome! Please wear sturdy close-toed shoes, long pants and a long-sleeve shirt, and bring water. Gloves and tools provided.

Visit [www.mltpa.org](http://www.mltpa.org) or call (760) 873-6500 for the latest info.

## WINE DINNER

melville

Whitebark Restaurant, Bar & Lounge is hosting a Melville Wine Dinner

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16<sup>TH</sup>, 6:00 PM

WELCOME RECEPTION  
FIVE-COURSE DINNER  
WITH WINE PAIRINGS  
**\$85 PER PERSON**

COMPLIMENTARY VALET PARKING

RESERVATIONS MAY BE  
MADE THROUGH OPENTABLE  
OR BY CALLING 760.934.0460

**whitebark**  
restaurant, bar & lounge

50 HILLSIDE DR, MAMMOTH LAKES, CA

© 2012 Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. All Rights reserved. SPG, Preferred Guest, Westin and their logos are the trademarks of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., or its affiliates.

**THE WESTIN**  
MONACHE  
RESORT  
MAMMOTH