



## **Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua—Not Your Ordinary Bird Festival!**



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### **For Immediate Release**

Mark your calendars now and plan on heading to Mono Lake for the Fourth Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua—June 17, 18, and 19. Twenty-six years ago birds became a rallying point for the protection of Mono Lake. Today we celebrate the area's rich bird life and its historical and scientific significance.

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, the Mono Lake Committee, PRBO Conservation Science, US Forest Service, Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, and the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society continue this tradition by sponsoring this 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, Burliegh Lockwood, David Lukas, Mike Prather, Ane Carla Rovetta, David Wimpfheimer, Dr. David Herbst and many others!

Special events this year include a Friday night welcome reception and dinner, Saturday night's Mono Lake Wine Flight—a wine tasting benefit and silent auction—and of course, the annual Sunday picnic, bird calling contest and this year's outdoor concert by the Celtic group Ciúnas!

Over 40 presentations, workshops, field trips, and special events will be offered between June 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Learn about the habits of owls, swallows, and gulls. 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 wildflowers, where you might even be zoomed by a hummingbird defending its flower territory.

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. Included this year is a special presentation by Dr. Scott Stine, a geomorphologist and paleoclimatologist who's melding of the Mono Basin's climate, ecology, and "Earthtime" gives him the ability to share some startling discoveries about the Mono Basin. Additional 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. This is definitely not your ordinary bird festival!

On-line registration opens April 15<sup>th</sup>. After the last three years of overwhelming response to the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, we're anticipating a full weekend once again. Pre-registration is highly encouraged. Reservations will be made first come—first served! Don't miss out!

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

Advanced registration is \$55—allowing you to sign up for as many programs as you wish.

There are 3 ways to register starting April 15th...

1. On-line at [www.birdchautauqua.org](http://www.birdchautauqua.org) and register on the secure site for the events you wish participate in. You will be registered for the events of your choice based on availability.
2. Call or email us to request a program be mailed to you. Complete the registration form and mail it back to The Mono Lake Committee, PO Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541 or fax it to (760) 647-6377. You can also print the registration form from the Chautauqua webpage.
3. If you have friends or family that do not have access to the internet, do not despair. Please call Douglas Dunaway at (760) 647-6595 for assistance. Please ***do not*** request this service if you are able to register via your computer as it will only prevent us 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.

Photo #1: No matter what age you are, the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua has something for everyone. This young girl is enjoying a close-up view of one of the many different birds that are found in the Mono Basin. Photo by Arya Degenhardt.

Photo #2: Rich Stallcup has great enthusiasm for birds, especially the Sage Thrashers that were observed last year at the South Tufa Area. This year, Rich will lead field trips to Crowley Lake and on the privately owned nature reserve at Burger's Retreat. Photo by Arya Degenhardt.

Photo #3: How can field sketching help you become a more observant birder? Jack Laws will lead a bird walk while demonstrating how scientific illustration and quick field sketches can help develop the eye's ability to see nature. Photo by Arya Degenhardt.

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Photos of the Mono Lake area and the text of this press release are available for  
download from [www.monolake.org/press](http://www.monolake.org/press)  
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*The Mono Lake Committee is a nonprofit citizens' group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.*