	SP	SU	F	W
_____Chestnut-collared Longspur			Ca	
WARBLERS				
_____Northern Waterthrush			Ca	
_____Prothonotary Warbler			Ca	
_____Tennessee Warbler			Ca	
_____Orange-crowned Warbler	F		F	
_____Nashville Warbler	R		R	
_____MacGillivray's Warbler	U		U	
_____Common Yellowthroat	F	F*	F	
_____American Redstart	Ca		Ca	
_____Northern Parula	Ca			
_____Yellow Warbler (SS)	F	Ca	F	
_____Yellow-rumped Warbler	F		F	U
_____Black-throated Gray Warbler	U		U	
_____Townsend's Warbler	U		R	
_____Hermit Warbler	R			
_____Wilson's Warbler	F		U	
_____Yellow-breasted Chat (SS)	U		U	
TOWHEES/SPARROWS				
_____Green-tailed Towhee	R		R	
_____Spotted Towhee	U	U*	U	U
_____Chipping Sparrow	U		U	
_____Clay-colored Sparrow			Ca	
_____Brewer's Sparrow	F	U*	F	
_____Black-chinned Sparrow			Ca	
_____Vesper Sparrow	U		U	
_____Lark Sparrow	R		R	
_____Black-throated Sparrow	F	F*	F	
_____Sagebrush Sparrow	U		U	F
_____Bell's Sparrow	F	F	F	F
_____Savannah Sparrow	F	F*	F	U
_____Fox Sparrow	U		U	
_____Song Sparrow	F	F*	F	F
_____Lincoln's Sparrow	U		U	R
_____Swamp Sparrow			Ca	
_____Harris's Sparrow	R		R	R
_____White-crowned Sparrow	C		C	C
_____Golden-crowned Sparrow	R		R	R
_____Dark-eyed Junco	U		U	U
TANAGER/GROSBEAKS/BUNTINGS				
_____Western Tanager	U		U	
_____Black-headed Grosbeak	U		U	
_____Blue Grosbeak	U	U*	U	
_____Lazuli Bunting	U		U	
BLACKBIRDS				
_____Bobolink			Ca	
_____Red-winged Blackbird	C	C*	C	C
_____Western Meadowlark	U	U*	F	U
_____Yellow-headed Blackbird (SS)	C	C*	C	
_____Brewer's Blackbird	C	C*	C	F
_____Great-tailed Grackle	U	U	U	
_____Brown-headed Cowbird	F	U*	F	U
_____Hooded Oriole	U		Ca	
_____Bullock's Oriole	F	U*	F	
FINCHES/OLD WORLD SPARROW				
_____House Finch	F	C*	C	F
_____Lesser Goldfinch	F	U*	F	U
_____Lawrence's Goldfinch	Ca			
_____American Goldfinch	U		U	U
_____House Sparrow	C	C*	C	C

This checklist contains 270 species that have been recorded in the Owens Lake area. The boundaries are Highways 395, 190, and 136 including towns, desert scrub, riparian woodlands, marshes, and Owens River from the highways to the lake bottom. The taxonomy and nomenclature used follows The AOU Check-list of North American Birds (1998) and all supplements through 2013.

Migrants are recorded in the season they are primarily moving. Their movement may be slightly before or after the season in which they are recorded. Those species known or suspected to breed are noted with an asterisk (*) in the appropriate column, while other birds that same season are visitors only. The seasonal divisions are those used by North American Birds:

SP = spring (1 March to 31 May)
SU = summer (1 June to 31 July)
F = fall (1 August to 30 November)
W = winter (1 December to 28 February)

Abundance codes are not standardized, therefore an explanation of their usage in this checklist might be helpful. The decisions are based on over a century of data but with emphasis on the last couple of decades, during which time increased coverage and physical modifications to the lake have occurred. All definitions assumed that the observer spent a day in proper habitat during that season.

C = common: The chances of seeing that species are excellent. It is usually found in large numbers, and is obvious enough that missing it is very unlikely. No special techniques are needed to locate it.

F = fairly common: The chances of seeing that species are good. It is usually obvious enough that missing it is very unlikely. Usually no special techniques are needed but knowing vocalizations could help with those species found regularly but in smaller numbers.

U = uncommon: The chances of seeing that species are fair. It is usually found in small numbers reflecting the limited availability of proper habitat. Utilizing special techniques or knowing the vocalizations will improve your chances. These species are almost always found by experienced observers but often missed by those with less experience.

R = rare: The chances of seeing that species are poor. It is not only found in usually very small numbers, but may be recorded only a few times during the season. Special techniques and vocalization knowledge will help, but the species is often not in the area.

Ca = casual: The chances of seeing that species are very poor. They are not recorded every year and are not believed to be in the area every year.

A = accidental: The chances of seeing this species are very unlikely. Only one or two records exist for the area.

Endangered, threatened, or species of special concern are noted in parentheses after the common name. Because State and Federal governments have different lists, each is identified by government:

SE, ST, and SS = State Endangered, State Threatened, and State Species of Special Concern.
FE and FT = Federally Endangered and Federally Threatened.
E = species considered extirpated from the county and is noted in parenthesis after the common name.

Owens Lake: A Story of Change

Located at the southern end of the Owens Valley, Owens Lake is 110 square miles nestled between the Sierra Nevada to the west and the Inyo Mountains to the east. In the early years of the 20th Century, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power diverted flows from the lake to provide for a growing city, causing the lake and the Owens River to dry completely for most of the year by the mid 1920's.

Prior to this diversion, Owens Lake was a haven for migrating birds in California. In 1917, Joseph Grinnell noted "Great numbers of water birds are in sight along the shore...Large flocks of shorebirds in flight over the water in the distance, wheeling about show en masse, now silvery now dark, against the gray-blue of the water." The absence of water led to an absence of birds at Owens Lake until recent restoration efforts began to make a change for the better.

In 2001, LADWP began flooding portions of the lakebed to reduce harmful dust pollution caused by strong winds stirring up the dry lake. As water has returned to the lake so too have the birds. Each spring and fall tens of thousands of migrating shorebirds and waterfowl stop over at Owens Lake to feed on the brine flies and other invertebrates now abundant in the reborn areas of the lake. During the spring and fall migrations, as many as 115,000 birds including 22 species of shorebirds as well as 15 Species of Special Concern have been recorded at the lake.

In 2001, Audubon designated Owens Lake as an Important Bird Area, recognizing its global significance as habitat for breeding and migrating birds. After years of legal battles and planning processes, the local and state Audubon chapters, LADWP, and the Great Basin Air Quality Control District have settled on a plan for restoration and mitigation that is rebuilding this unique habitat to the delight of the birds and their observers.

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PRESERVATION • EXPLORATION • STEWARDSHIP

EASTERN SIERRA AUDUBON SOCIETY

LA DWP Los Angeles Department of Water & Power

printed 2017

Owens Lake
Important Bird Area

A Birder's Checklist

Most of the data used in the checklist were collected by Tom and Jo Heindel, Mike Prather, Susan Steele, Debbie House, Judy Wickman, and Bob Hudson. Any species considered rare, casual, or accidental requires extensive documentation to be considered a county record and submitted for publication. Please send documentation, images, and/or audio files to Tom and Jo Heindel at tjheindel@gmail.com.

2014

Drawings by Joel Such

WATERFOWL	SP	SU	F	W
_____Fulvous Whistling-Duck (E) (SS)	A		A	
_____Greater White-fronted Goose	Ca		U	Ca
_____Snow Goose	U		F	F
_____Ross's Goose	Ca		R	R
_____Brant (SS)	Ca	Ca		
_____Cackling Goose			Ca	
_____Canada Goose	U	Ca*	U	U
_____Tundra Swan	Ca		Ca	R
_____Wood Duck	Ca		Ca	
_____Gadwall	F	F*	F	F
_____American Wigeon	U		F	U
_____Mallard	C	U*	C	C
_____Blue-winged Teal	U	R	U	
_____Cinnamon Teal	C	U*	C	U
_____Northern Shoveler	C	U	C	C
_____Northern Pintail	F	U*	F	F
_____Green-winged Teal	F	R	F	F
_____Canvasback	R		R	Ca
_____Redhead (SS)	U	U	U	U
_____Ring-necked Duck	U		U	Ca
_____Greater Scaup	Ca			
_____Lesser Scaup	U	Ca	U	Ca
_____Surf Scoter	Ca		Ca	
_____Long-tailed Duck	Ca			Ca
_____Bufflehead	F	Ca	F	F
_____Common Goldeneye	Ca		Ca	Ca
_____Hooded Merganser			Ca	
_____Common Merganser	Ca		Ca	
_____Red-breasted Merganser	Ca	Ca	Ca	Ca
_____Ruddy Duck	C	U*	C	C
QUAIL/LOONS/GREBES				
_____California Quail	C	C*	C	C
_____Chukar			Ca	
_____Ring-necked Pheasant			Ca	
_____Pacific Loon	Ca		Ca	
_____Common Loon	Ca		Ca	Ca
_____Pied-billed Grebe	R*	R	R	R
_____Horned Grebe	Ca		Ca	
_____Eared Grebe	F	F*	C	U
_____Western Grebe	R	Ca	U	
_____Clark's Grebe	R		R	
CORMORANT/PELICANS				
_____Double-crested Cormorant	U	U	U	R
_____American White Pelican (SS)	F	R	F	
_____Brown Pelican	Ca			
BITTERNS/HERON/EGRETS/IBIS				
_____American Bittern	U	U	U	
_____Least Bittern (SS)	R	U*	R	
_____Great Blue Heron	U	U	U	R
_____Great Egret	U	R	U	R
_____Snowy Egret	U	R	U	
_____Cattle Egret	R		R	
_____Green Heron	R		R	
_____Black-crowned Night-Heron	U	R	U	
_____Glossy Ibis		Ca		
_____White-faced Ibis	U	F	F	Ca
VULTURES/BIRDS OF PREY				
_____Turkey Vulture	U	U	U	Ca
_____Osprey	R		R	

	SP	SU	F	W
_____White-tailed Kite			Ca	
_____Mississippi Kite	Ca			
_____Bald Eagle (SE)	Ca			Ca
_____Northern Harrier (SS)	U	U*	U	U
_____Sharp-shinned Hawk	U		U	U
_____Cooper's Hawk	U		U	R
_____Red-shouldered Hawk	R		R	R
_____Swainson's Hawk (ST)	R	R	R	
_____Red-tailed Hawk	U	U*	F	U
_____Ferruginous Hawk	R		R	R
_____Rough-legged Hawk	R		R	R
_____Golden Eagle	R	R	R	R
RAILS/CRANE				
_____Virginia Rail	F	F*	F	F
_____Sora	U	U	U*	U
_____Common Gallinule	Ca	Ca	Ca	
_____American Coot	C	C*	C	C
_____Sandhill Crane (SS) (ST)	Ca		Ca	
SHOREBIRDS				
_____Black-necked Stilt	F	F*	F	
_____American Avocet	C	C*	C	C
_____Black-bellied Plover	U	R	U	
_____American Golden-Plover			Ca	
_____Pacific Golden-Plover	Ca	Ca	Ca	
_____Snowy Plover (SS)	F	F*	F	R
_____Semipalmated Plover	F	U	F	
_____Killdeer	F*	F*	C	F
_____Mountain Plover (SS)	Ca		Ca	Ca
_____Spotted Sandpiper	F	U	F	
_____Solitary Sandpiper	R	Ca	U	
_____Greater Yellowlegs	F	F	F	F
_____Willet	F	U	U	U
_____Lesser Yellowlegs	U	R	U	
_____Whimbrel	U	R	R	
_____Long-billed Curlew	F	F*	F	U
_____Marbled Godwit	U	R	U	R
_____Ruddy Turnstone	Ca	Ca	R	
_____Black Turnstone			A	
_____Red Knot	Ca	Ca	R	
_____Ruff			Ca	
_____Stilt Sandpiper	A		Ca	
_____Sanderling	R	Ca	U	Ca
_____Dunlin	F		C	U
_____Baird's Sandpiper	Ca	Ca	F	
_____Little Stint			A	
_____Least Sandpiper	C	C	C	C
_____Buff-breasted Sandpiper			A	
_____Pectoral Sandpiper			U	
_____Semipalmated Sandpiper	Ca	R	R	
_____Western Sandpiper	C	C	C	U
_____Short-billed Dowitcher	R	R	U	
_____Long-billed Dowitcher	F	U	F	U
_____Wilson's Snipe	C*	F*	C	U
_____Wilson's Phalarope	C	U*	C	
_____Red-necked Phalarope	F	F	C	
_____Red Phalarope		Ca	Ca	
JAEGER/GULLS/TERNS				
_____Long-tailed Jaeger		Ca	Ca	
_____Sabine's Gull	A		R	

	SP	SU	F	W
_____Bonaparte's Gull	U	Ca	U	
_____Franklin's Gull	U	Ca	R	
_____Heermann's Gull	A			
_____Ring-billed Gull	F	F	F	F
_____Western Gull	Ca		Ca	
_____California Gull	C	C	C	C
_____Herring Gull	Ca		Ca	Ca
_____Thayer's Gull				A
_____Lesser Black-backed Gull			A	
_____Glaucous-winged Gull	A			
_____Least Tern (SE), (FE)	A	A		
_____Caspian Tern	U	R	U	
_____Black Tern (SS)	R	R	U	
_____Common Tern		Ca	Ca	
_____Arctic Tern	A			
_____Forster's Tern	R		R	
PIGEON/DOVES/ROADRUNNER				
_____Rock Pigeon	R	R	R	R
_____Eurasian Collared-Dove	F	F	F	F
_____White-winged Dove		Ca		
_____Mourning Dove	F	U*	F	
_____Common Ground-Dove			A	
_____Greater Roadrunner	U	U*	U	U
OWLS/GOATSUCKERS/SWIFTS				
_____Barn Owl	U*	U*	U	U
_____Great Horned Owl	U	U*	U	U
_____Burrowing Owl (SS)	R	R	R	
_____Long-eared Owl (SS)	R			R
_____Short-eared Owl (SS)			Ca	
_____Lesser Nighthawk	F	C*	F	
_____Common Nighthawk		U	U	
_____Common Poorwill	Ca		Ca	
_____Black Swift (SS)	R	R*	Ca	
_____Vaux's Swift (SS)	U		Ca	
_____White-throated Swift	U	U	U	Ca
HUMMINGBIRDS/KINGFISHER				
_____Black-chinned Hummingbird	R	R*	R	
_____Anna's Hummingbird	R		R	
_____Costa's Hummingbird	U*	U*	R	
_____Rufous Hummingbird	U		U	
_____Belted Kingfisher	U	U	U	U
WOODPECKERS				
_____Lewis's Woodpecker	R		R	
_____Red-naped Sapsucker	R		R	R
_____Red-breasted Sapsucker	R		R	R
_____Ladder-backed Woodpecker		R	R	R
_____Nuttall's Woodpecker	U	U*	U	U
_____Downy Woodpecker	R	R	R	R
_____Northern Flicker	U	U*	U	U
CARACARA/FALCONS				
_____Crested Caracara	A			
_____American Kestrel	U	U*	U	U
_____Merlin	R		R	R
_____Gyrfalcon	A			
_____Peregrine Falcon	R	R	R	R
_____Prairie Falcon	U	R	U	U
FLYCATCHERS				
_____Olive-sided Flycatcher (SS)	U		U	
_____Western Wood-Pewee	F	R	U	

	SP	SU	F	W
_____Willow Flycatcher (SE), (FE)	U	R	U	
_____Gray Flycatcher	U		R	
_____Dusky Flycatcher	U		R	
_____Pacific-slope Flycatcher	U		R	
_____Black Phoebe	U	U*	U	U
_____Say's Phoebe	U	U*	U	U
_____Vermilion Flycatcher (SS)	Ca	Ca		
_____Ash-throated Flycatcher	U	U	R	
_____Western Kingbird	F	U*	F	
_____Eastern Kingbird		Ca		
_____Scissor-tailed Flycatcher		Ca		
SHRIKES/VIREOS				
_____Loggerhead Shrike (SS)	U*	U*	U	U
_____Northern Shrike				A
_____Bell's Vireo (SE), (FE)	A			
_____Cassin's Vireo	U		U	
_____Warbling Vireo	F		U	
JAYS/MAGPIE/CROW/RAVEN				
_____Steller's Jay		A		Ca
_____Western Scrub-Jay			Ca	
_____Black-billed Magpie	U	U*	U	U
_____American Crow		A		
_____Common Raven	C	C*	C	C
LARK/SWALLOWS				
_____Horned Lark	F	F*	C	F
_____Purple Martin (SS)			Ca	
_____Tree Swallow	C	F	C	R
_____Violet-green Swallow	F	U	F	
_____Northern Rough-winged Swallow	F	U*	F	
_____Bank Swallow (ST)	U	U	F	
_____Cliff Swallow	F	U	F	
_____Barn Swallow	C	F*	C	Ca
CHICKADEE/NUTHATCH/WRENS				
_____Mountain Chickadee			Ca	
_____Bushtit		R	R	
_____White-breasted Nuthatch		Ca		
_____Rock Wren	R	R*	R	R
_____Marsh Wren	F	U*	F	F
_____House Wren	C	C	C	R
_____Bewick's Wren	F	F*	F	F
_____Cactus Wren	Ca			
GNATCATCHER/KINGLET/THRUSHES				
_____Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	U		U	
_____Ruby-crowned Kinglet	U		U	R
_____Western Bluebird	Ca			
_____Mountain Bluebird	F	Ca	F	U
_____Swainson's Thrush	Ca			
_____Hermit Thrush	R		R	
_____American Robin	U		U	R
THRASHERS/MOCKINGBIRD/STARLING				
_____Le Conte's Thrasher	U	U*	U	U
_____Sage Thrasher	U	U*	U	Ca
_____Northern Mockingbird	U	U*	U	R
_____European Starling	F	F*	C	F
WAXWING/PHAINOPEPLA/LONGSPURS				
_____American Pipit	F		F	F
_____Cedar Waxwing	U		U	
_____Phainopepla	R	Ca	R	Ca
_____Lapland Longspur	Ca		Ca	