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## **Birding Hot at Cool Mono Lake**

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### **For Immediate Release**

Mono Lake is always a great birding spot but this past summer and fall have been even better than usual. In mid-October, birders at Mono Lake received a rare thrill when a Gray Catbird was spotted at County Park. Although Gray Catbirds have been seen once or twice within the past ten years, it is still considered a rare sighting in both Mono County and California.

This plain dark gray bird with black cap and red rump prefers low, dense thickets and typically ranges throughout the Midwest and Eastern United States. The Gray Catbird is in the Mimic Thrush family. Local species of that family include the Northern Mockingbird and Sage Thrasher. Noteworthy is this family's great singing ability with some even mimicking the songs of other species.

However, the Gray Catbird goes one step farther. Instead of mimicking other bird species, they imitate the mew of a cat! Imagine, identifying a bird through a cat mew!

One of the observers down at County Park that day happened to be from Louisiana. "Where I come from, we consider those trash birds," said the man, meaning - in birder's lingo - that the bird is extremely common.

But somebody's trash is someone else's treasure, and at Mono Lake this was a sighting to celebrate. Rare sightings can draw birders from miles, even states away with many

birders working on life lists - a list in which birders methodically check off species they see.

Other rare sightings in the Mono Basin this summer include Kentucky Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Willow Flycatcher. To learn more about recent sightings, visit our web page [www.monolake.org/birds/](http://www.monolake.org/birds/) or stop by the Mono Lake Committee Information Center and Bookstore.

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizen's 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.

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