

November 16, 2011

Greetings in Christ!

We've started a new adventure that we pray will be a blessing for generations to come. A couple of staff members drove around Christ Serve Ranch and visualized things that we may never see. I can imagine that those involved in the early years of camp did much the same thing back in 1949. It would be 3 years before the first summer programs would be held and several years more before the chapel would be built. We've often commented that we may be much like Moses and the promised land. We do get a chance to see what may be in the future and it will be a blessing!

### **Creation and Life issues in the news:**

#### **Why Are California Birds Getting Bigger?**

Alfred Hitchcock would have appreciated this twist: The birds in central California are getting bigger.

Researchers at San Francisco State University have found that the birds on both ends of San Francisco Bay have greater body mass and longer wingspans since Hitchcock made the 1963 horror film, "The Birds," in which birds went mad and attacked a town on the coast.

Researchers said that the reason for the growth is believed to be climate change, but therein lies a mystery: The birds should be getting smaller as the climate warms, not bigger.

San Francisco State University graduate student Rae Goodman and assistant professor Gretchen LeBuhn used data from 14,735 birds collected since 1971 near the northern tip of the bay at the Palomarin Field Station at Point Reyes National Seashore, and 18,052 birds collected between 1983-2009 at Coyote Creek Field Station, on the southern end of the bay. Each bird was caught, banded with an identification tag, and released after being weighed and measured either by the locally based PRBO Conservation Science or the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Many were recaptured in later years, providing a data base that could track changes. Dozens of species were involved.

"The birds in the study included resident birds as well as migrants, so birds from Alaska or Central America were also showing an increase," Goodman said.

The birds grew on average by about 2 percent in both mass and wingspan.

The mystery, however, involves a theory known to biologists as Bergmann's Rule, which generally holds that animals get bigger the farther north they are found. Ravens in Alaska are noticeably larger than ravens in the Lower 48. It applies to mammals as well: moose in the Arctic are much bigger than moose in Maine. The reason, the theory holds, is that larger animals can retain heat better and are therefore better able to survive at higher latitudes. Christian Bergmann, the 19th-century German biologist who came up with the rule, thought it applied only to warm-blooded creatures but scientists have found it applies to some cold-blooded animals as well.

So, as the climate warms, the birds should not be getting bigger.

The only other similar study of North American birds was done by University of Zurich's Josh Van Buskirk in western Pennsylvania. The birds he studied shrank, obeying the rule.

Researchers from Cambridge University and the University of Tel Aviv, working in England, studied passerines (bullfinches and tits), and also found they were getting smaller just as expected.

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/11/11/why-are-california-birds-getting-bigger/#ixzz1dvSpoZJp>

**Nature Watch:** We spent about 20 hours in the last week traveling on various roads throughout Minnesota. The Road Kill watch included two mink, over 20 deer, a turkey, several cats, one pheasant, and one crow. Small ponds froze over for the first time this week and there was ice around the lake today. We were at Christ Serve Ranch today where a very active beaver has cut down about 10-12 trees on two sides of the pond. Water levels have dropped dramatically this fall, going down over 2 feet on the lake. Many ponds have dried up, making things challenging for animals that typically bury

themselves in the mud of the pond. Field work is wrapping up. A trip to southern Minnesota found only one corn field in the process of being harvested. The snow is coming!! We are hearing predictions of measurable snow on Saturday of this weekend, but then warming conditions into next week.

**Program Information:** We are scheduling some great programs at Christ Serve Ranch this winter. In January we'll be enjoying Pastor Carl Noble's presentation on astronomy. He'll be covering "the story of Jesus in the stars". We'll be enjoying the out of doors if it isn't too cold. If it is, they'll be plenty to cover in doors. We'll also be scheduling a winter Creation Photography program. In February we have a program scheduled called Winter Critters. We'll keep you posted

**Bulletin insert:** Join us for the first event to be held at Christ Serve Ranch. It will be a retreat led by Pastor Carl Noble on how the stars tell the story of Jesus. Call Lutheran Island Camp to receive more information.

**From the Task force:** The planning has begun! We've developed a multi-page list of short term projects, tasks, and opportunities as well as the beginning of a list of long term projects. We hope to begin involving scientists, students, pastors, and others in doing such things as surveys, program planning

**God's Word:** "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." Psalm 119:18 NIV

Prayer List: 1.) Rejoice with us as God blesses us through Christ Serve Ranch. 2.) Pray to God that He would lift up volunteers for projects this spring. 3.) Pray that God would continue to give staff the energy, wisdom, and fortitude during this very busy time. 4.) Thank God that we continue to have people express interest in our Creation programs for this summer. 5.) Ask God to bless our immediate planning, surveys, and efforts at CSR.

**Link of the week:** This link was provided by task force member Gary Schroeder. Enjoy these exceptional photos.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45246052/displaymode/1247?beginSlide=1#.TsMVCPL6PKc>



**Resource of the week:** Stars and their Purpose: Stars have fascinated men for centuries and provide many questions like, "How big is the universe?" and "Do the stars proclaim anything or are they merely 'amazing lights'?" Dr. Werner Gitt addresses these questions and more. 216 pgs paperback.

**Question and Answer:**

**Question:** When can we start volunteering at Christ Serve Ranch?

**Answer:** By December 1 we'll be ready to start having volunteers cut wood, take down old fence and more.

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