



# AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Vol. 37 No. 6 - JUNE 2008  
Newsletter of Kern Audubon Society  
A chapter of National Audubon Society  
[www.kernaudubonsociety.org](http://www.kernaudubonsociety.org)

## KERN AUDUBON GATHERING

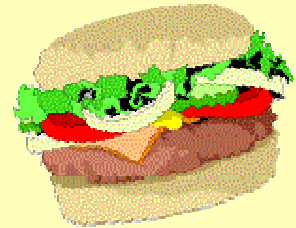
Tuesday JUNE 3, 2008

BBQ & POTLUCK

5:00PM F.A.C.T. TOURS & 6:00PM BBQ

Where: CSUB Environmental Studies Area/F.A.C.T.

(Turn north on Runner Drive from Camino Media, then right into the parking lot.  
Go thru parking lot onto dirt road to ESA fence.)



When: 5:00 - 8:30pm

5:00pm - TOURS of Cactus/Succulent Garden, FACT (Facility for Care & Treatment of Animals) & Desert Tortoise Compound

6:00pm - BBQ DINNER & ENTERTAINMENT

"The CORDEEN Man"

Richard Noel, retired CSUB professor (psychology), is an amazing ACCORDION player who will entertain us with his great repertoire of music!

Go to his website ([www.cordeenman.com/noel](http://www.cordeenman.com/noel)) for a sample. He plays over 500 songs without music!



What to bring: salad, side dish  
or dessert

plus \$5.00/person for burgers, hotdogs,  
drinks/table service

Come and enjoy a fun evening as we end our program year!



## FOR THE BIRDS...

On May 1st, 15 Audubon chapter leaders from the 5 chapters which border Tejon Ranch, were invited to a preview of the historic agreement, including a private tour of the spectacular lands that will now be protected from future development. I had no idea of the scope of Tejon Ranch... we went from the grasslands of the San Joaquin Valley to the fir forests of the 7000' mountains, from old growth Valley Oak to incredible Joshua Tree habitats. We walked a portion of land where the Pacific Crest Trail will be re-located to cross the ranch and walked through poppy fields in the Antelope Valley.

Tejon Ranch is the biggest piece of private property in California and has long been considered one of California's last best chances for conserving incredible wild habitat. While the deal does clear the way for questionable development on about 10% of the ranch along the I-5 corridor, including a planned community (Centennial) and a resort in the mountains, I was impressed with the scope of what will be preserved in perpetuity, including the site of a future state park. This not only benefits Californians but preserves vital habitat for plants and animals, including the California Condor, which forages and roosts in the high mountains. This preserves an important corridor for these endangered birds.

Ted & I are excited to announce that Graham Chisholm, Director of Conservation for Audubon CA, will help us kick-off the fall. So, put Sept 2nd on your calendars and learn more about how this agreement was crafted from someone intimately involved in the process and who is an amazing spokesperson for the environment!

The next "Warbler" will come in late August but there will likely be email announcements about conservation issues or a possible field trip to see the Yellow-billed Cuckoo at the Kern River Preserve. If you aren't on my email list, email me and I will add you: [madielsea@aol.com](mailto:madielsea@aol.com) and check the website:

[www.kernaudubonsociety.org](http://www.kernaudubonsociety.org)

Have a great summer! And remember to keep your hummingbird feeders clean and change the sugar water regularly (2-3 days in the heat) so it doesn't go bad!

Join us next Tuesday June 3rd for the year-end barbeque, a fantastic musical program and a lot of fun!

Madi Elsea, Co-Chair



## Websites to check out...

**Kern Birding** For a comprehensive website about numerous Kern County birding locations go to [www.natureali.org/birding.htm](http://www.natureali.org/birding.htm).

## Kern County Bird Sightings/photos

What's unusual in Kern County birding? Go to [kerncobirding@yahoogroups.com](mailto:kerncobirding@yahoogroups.com) for recent bird sightings, reports by Bob Barnes, Mike McQuerry, Alison Sheehy, pictures by Ken Kyle and others.

**www.Audubon-ca.org** is a great website all about the activities and organization of Audubon California

**AUDUBON IN THE NEWS** - To find out more about Audubon happenings around the country, you can receive an informative electronic newsletter. Just email [chapterleaders@audubon.org](mailto:chapterleaders@audubon.org)

Remember to check out Kern Audubon's own website.....[www.kernaudubonsociety.org](http://www.kernaudubonsociety.org)

**E-WARBLER** If you would like to receive the *Audubon Warbler* by email instead of hardcopy, send an e-mail to [tmurphy@bak.rr.com](mailto:tmurphy@bak.rr.com). Save some trees!

Sign up today to receive **Audubon ACTION ALERT** online! Using Audubon's simple, online action tools, you can influence decision makers on important Audubon conservation priorities.

Audubon California:

<http://audubonaction.org/California/join.html>

National Audubon Society:

<http://audubonaction.org/audubon/join.html>

## KERN AUDUBON EXECUTIVE BOARD

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## TUESDAY BIRDERS MEET 3RD TUES.

Tues. June 17th will be the next outing of the *Tuesday Birders*, IF it's not too hot! Contact Brenda Kyle (871-4867) for information.



## NEWSLETTER "MAILERS" NEEDED

*The Audubon Warbler*, Kern Audubon's newsletter, will be needing one or two folks to take-over the mailing of the newsletter starting in August. We thank Barb & Roger Coley who have handled this monthly responsibility for the past year and a half.. What's involved? Contact Madi or Ted for more information!

We thank Joseph V. Higbee for the Audubon's Warbler photo used as the newsletter logo. Used by permission. ([www.pbase.com/jvhigbee](http://www.pbase.com/jvhigbee))

## **Preserving a California Treasure: TEJON RANCH**

### **Audubon California helps craft historic conservation pact**

Up to 240,000 contiguous acres of spectacular and ecologically significant California wildlands will be protected under a precedent-setting agreement brokered by Audubon California and five other environmental groups with the Tejon Ranch Company. The agreement, announced on May 8th, will protect approximately 90 percent of Tejon's rich natural habitat from development and open new opportunities for Californians to enjoy this tremendous landscape firsthand.

"If you look at a map of California, you can see just how big a victory this is for Californians," said Graham Chisholm, conservation director for Audubon California. "The protected area is immense – 375 square miles – and the only place in North America where four distinct ecoregions meet on one property."

Tejon Ranch encompasses more of California's natural beauty and diversity than any undeveloped area of the state. Located at the junction of the Mojave Desert and the Sierra Nevada, central and coastal mountains, the enormous parcel is home to precious native grasslands, oak woodlands, Joshua tree woodlands and conifer forests. It is home to the endangered California Condor and more than two dozen state and federally listed plant and animal species.

Audubon California and its partners in the environmental community have secured a hard fought victory for California's environment through intense negotiations. Ultimately, these negotiations presented a unique opportunity to settle the ranch's future and avoid decades of piecemeal legal wrangling with little likelihood of gaining the extensive habitat protection and funding for long-term restoration and management that this represents. In exchange for major conservation concessions, Audubon California and its partners will agree not to oppose three development projects on 10 percent of the Tejon Ranch. These developments will still be subject to public review and applicable federal and state environmental protection laws.



"This comprehensive negotiated solution is a window of opportunity to preserve the ecological integrity of the Tejon Ranch," said Dan Silver, chief executive officer of the Endangered Habitats League.

(from a special edition of *Audubon CA News*, May 8, 2008)

Some additional specifics: The agreement locks in the protection of 178,000 acres, with an option to purchase another 62,000 acres in the next three years, and opens this previously forbidden land to the public for the first time. A 37-mile stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail will cross the ranch, and the partners have committed to creating a major state park. At the same time, the deal clears the way for the development on about 10 percent of the ranch, along the I-5 corridor, including a planned community of 23,000 homes in Los Angeles County and a posh resort community in the mountains. However, as Graham Chisholm wrote in a commentary piece in the Los Angeles Times: *"This is perhaps the greatest victory for conservation that many of us will see in our lifetimes...In exchange for conserving 90% of this irreplaceable land, Audubon California, the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council and other groups have agreed not to oppose three developments on the remaining 10%. These developments, non of which has been approved by regulatory agencies, will still be subject to public review and comment and all applicable environmental protection laws. Both sides had to swallow hard before striking this deal, but both came away with results they never could have secured any other way. And while these proposed developments...would normally have conservationists spoiling for a fight, the prospect of protecting nearly 375 square miles was an opportunity we couldn't ignore...Environmentalist critics say there can be no legitimate justification for agreeing to withhold opposition to proposed development in sensitive habitat areas. maybe not. But the protracted negotiations over Tejon Ranch were not about approving development, and this agreement doesn't do that. This was about securing 90% of the ranch for conservation."* (www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary May 19, 2008)

## **DISASTER FOR DESERT TORTOISES**

Fort Irwin is in the Mojave Desert of Southern California. It is an area in which Desert Tortoises have peacefully lived in spectacular habitats for many thousands of years. But the Department of Defense wants the land the tortoises call home for training maneuvers. As a result, in 2001 Congress approved the translocation of more than 700 federally endangered Desert Tortoises to give the US Army additional training space for long range weapons testing. As mitigation, the tortoises were moved from the southern borders of Fort Irwin and onto BLM managed land, land known to have ill tortoises, and the new habitat not able to support so many animals. The tortoises were released in the very early Spring months (March 2008) when night time temperatures were still dipping into the 30's. Numerous tortoises have been predated on and killed, as there are not enough burrows for them to find safe refuge, and weather was far too cold for them to dig suitable shelter from exposure and predators.. Food sources are nowhere near as plentiful in the area they were released. In a related problem, 15 of 70 baby tortoises collected at the training center as part of the relocation have died of various causes, according to Army officials. The problem, they say, may be linked to severe drought, which killed off plants and triggered a crash in rodent populations. As a result, coyotes, which normally thrive on kangaroo rats and rabbits, are turning to the slow-moving Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) for sustenance.



The Army also has plans to relocate an additional 1,200 tortoises from the western edge of the base. The Desert Tortoise Survival Alliance has been created for individuals and organizations interested in keeping remaining populations of these tortoises safe and protected from threats to its habitat. The Desert Tortoise is a federally endangered species and the official reptile of the state of California. It is supposed to be protected by state and federal endangered species acts, yet threats to its survival are many.

If you'd like more information and to sign a petition to [Stop Desert Tortoise Translocation](#), go to this website: [www.tortoise-aid.org](http://www.tortoise-aid.org).

The mission of the Audubon Society includes this: *to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, OTHER WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity*. The Desert Tortoise needs all of our support, so consider signing this petition.

## **Kern Audubon Goes Public**

Kern Audubon had a public presence at two environmental venues in April: the Bakersfield College Horticulture Department's third annual "GardenFest" and the re-newed "Earth Day" at CSUB, organized by Professor Carol Raupp. Ginny Dallas and Ted Murphy hauled the table, photo boards, chairs and handouts to the GardenFest and Linda Greene helped Ted set up at the Earth Day Celebration. Kern Audubon members generously came to help in the "booth," greet passers-by and share the days' events. KAS members who helped were: Bill & Lynn McDonald, Sinee Irelan, Pauli, Madi Elsea, Rod Lee, David Chilton, Barbara Reifel, Rob Rephan, and Deb See. Ginny Dallas added to both days by providing bags of bird seeds along with a handcrafted souvenir of her trip to Peru for booth visitors. Our Earth Day neighbor was Dave Hardt at the Kern National Wildlife Refuge display.

Many visitors to the booths entered a drawing for a chance to win a year's membership in National Audubon (and Kern Audubon Society). The winning entrants were: Susan Whitney and Steve Suter of Bakersfield and Cindy Albarran of Lamont. Welcome to Kern Audubon! We hope you will join us soon at a Kern Audubon meeting or field trip!

## **So...How is the "New" Kern Audubon Doing?**

That's a common question from folks who know KAS has been rebuilding since 2006. The answer is: Very well, thank you! Program attendance and field trip participation are good indicators of the vitality of the organization, even more than membership totals, which currently stands at 430. From January 2007 through May 2008, there have been 15 program meetings with an average of 36 attendees (low 32, high 58). In that time there were 29 field trips with an average of 14 participants (low 5, high 29).

In 2005 the numbers were zero. And these numbers do not include the monthly Tuesday Birder trips led by Ken and Brenda Kyle, or the dedicated and active Executive Committee. So we are doing all right!

Ted Murphy, Co-Chair

## Largest Tricolored Blackbird Colony Saved

Audubon California announced in May that it had reached an agreement with a farmer in Tulare County to safeguard a colony of about 80,000 Tricolored Blackbirds – nearly a third of the world’s population of this declining songbird! The agreement came as volunteers began looking for Tricolored Blackbirds as part of a statewide survey sponsored by Audubon California and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Photo by Al Schmierer.



## No on 98/Yes on 99

There are only two propositions on California’s June statewide ballot. Both have important ramifications for the environment. Audubon California opposes Proposition 98 and supports Proposition 99.

### Summer at Kern River Preserve

The Kern River Preserve is one of Audubon CA’s sanctuaries, located an hour east of Bakersfield along Hiway 178 in Weldon. Alison Sheehy, KRP Outreach Coordinator, invites Kern Audubon members and friends to participate in these activities over the summer:

Sat. June 14, 9am - 4pm

#### **Calif Amphibian & Reptile Celebration**

Great opportunity to learn about snakes, lizards, tortoises and great fun for adults & kids of all ages!

Sat. June 21 - 8:00am

#### **Kern River Preserve Workday**

Volunteers are needed to clean out the headquarters and groom the nature trail!

Sat. August 9 - 9 - 4pm

#### **Kern Valley Hummingbird Festival**

Hummingbirds galore at the Preserve headquarters

Check out the website for more information...  
[www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/kernriver](http://www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/kernriver)

## THANK YOU SPEAKERS & FIELD TRIP LEADERS...

As we complete our second full year as a renewed chapter of Audubon, let us say “thank you” to Program Coordinators Don & Yvonne Turkal and to the incredible speakers who educated and inspired us...

*Andrea Jones, Audubon CA*

*Bill Moffat, Tule Elk Reserve*

*Karen Pestana, Ca Bluebird Project*

*John Wilson, Winter Birds of Kern Co.*

*Jihadda Govan, Kern Nat'l Wildlife Refuge*

*Rob Hansen, Tulare Lake Basin*

*Bob Steele, Birds of Australia*

*Scott Frazer, Birding in Peru*

*Brifitta McDonald, Penguins & Pinipeds-Antartica*

And to the excellent field trip coordination of Roger Coley and all those who provided leadership, we say a special thank-you as well: *Jihadda Govan, Bill Moffat, Andy Honig, John Wilson, Richard Sparks, Michael McQuerry, Pam Williams, Cheryl Harding, Steve Laymon, Brenda & Ken Kyle, Mike Stockton, Roger & Barb Coley.*

## TOGETHER GREEN

The National Audubon Society has recently announced a new initiative in alliance with and funded by Toyota called “TogetherGreen”. The goals of the program are to nurture conservation leaders, achieve conservation results and engage millions of Americans in conservation action. The leadership program will be developing 200 “Fellows” who will take part in the program over 5 years. The conservation innovation grants program (Grow GREEN) will select and fund local initiatives planned to generate tangible conservation results. Grants will be awarded to innovative endeavors to engage communities in conserving land, water, energy and wildlife.

If you have ideas about projects contact Ted Murphy (325-0307) or Madi Elsea (322-7470). For more information, go to the website: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) & click on “TogetherGreen”

Looking ahead to TUES. SEPTEMBER 2ND for our first meeting of the fall! The speaker will be GRAHAM CHISHOLM, Director of Conservation for Audubon CA and one of the principal negotiators in the recent Tejon Ranch agreement. He’ll be speaking about this historic agreement and how Kern Audubon might be involved!

## AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Kern Audubon Society  
PO Box 3581  
Bakersfield CA 93385



www.kernaudubonsociety.org

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### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join KERN AUDUBON for this activity...

- Tues. June 3 - BBQ, meeting & musical program at FACT, 5pm tours & 6pm BBQ

### Membership Application -- KERN AUDUBON SOCIETY (7XCHC30)

If you would like to be part of a grass-roots conservation organization with a distinguished history, join the National Audubon Society and Kern Audubon! Please complete the form below and send with your check !

Membership includes *Audubon Magazine* (6 Issues) and the *Audubon's Warbler*. (11 issues)

\_\_\_\_ New Member \$20      \_\_\_\_ Renewal \$35  
Make check payable to **National Audubon Society**

Send check & form to ...Kern Audubon  
PO Box 3581  
Bakersfield CA 93385

I am enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation for the work of Kern Audubon in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_. (Check payable to Kern Audubon)

Names) \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_