



AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Vol. 35 Number 8 - November 2006
Newsletter of Kern Audubon Society
A chapter of National Audubon Society

KERN AUDUBON Meeting & Program

Tues. NOVEMBER 7, 2006

(Election Day---vote early!!)

Location: Kern Superintendent of Schools

17th & L Sts., Bakersfield

Street parking or parking structure at 18th & K

"The Best Law You Never Heard of:

Celebrating 100 years of the Antiquities Act, 1906-2006"

Speaker: Douglas W. Dodd, PhD.

The November Kern Audubon will feature a fascinating PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Doug Dodd, assistant professor of history at CSU Bakersfield, on the history of our national monuments, including the two bordering on Kern County: Carrizo Plains & the Giant Sequoias. Prior to joining the faculty at CSUB, Dr. Dodd worked as a historian for the U.S. Forest Service and the California Department of Transportation. His research focuses on the history of federal public lands, particularly national park and national forest policy. His article, "Boulder Dam Recreation Area: The Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, and the Origins of the National Recreation Area Concept at Lake Mead, 1929-1936" will be published in *Southern California Quarterly*, Winter 2007. He has a PhD in history from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Doug is a member of Kern Audubon.

Refreshments served plus great RAFFLE prizes at the meeting!

SUNDAY Nov. 12th - Field Trip

Kern Nat'l Wildlife Refuge

7:30am - John Wilson, Field Trip Leader

Join birding expert John C. Wilson for a morning of great birding at the Kern Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, 40 mi. north of Bakersfield. Expect to see at least 50 species of waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, raptors, etc! Meet at the Kern River Parkway parking area across (north) of CSUB, 7:30am on SUNDAY, Nov. 12th. Bring water, binoculars, lunch; we will return by 2:00pm. Contact Ted Murphy (325-0307) for information.

TULE ELK RESERVE - Field Trip

Sat. Nov. 18 - 7:30am

A crisp November morning will make for a beautiful field trip to nearby Tule Elk Reserve. We will have the opportunity to go to parts of the reserve not open to the public for viewing of the Tule Elk herd as well as birds and other mammals. Bring binocs, snacks, water; we will return by noon. Meet at the Kern Parkway parking lot across from CSUB, 7:30am. Call Roger Coley, Co-Leader for more information (832-1820).

We thank Joseph V. Higbee for the Audubon's Warbler photo (top of page), used by permission. (www.pbase.com/jvhigbee/)

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR - We Need You!!

We all enjoy the refreshment time at the Kern Audubon meetings, don't we?! It's a great time to enjoy a snack and more importantly, to get acquainted with someone you didn't know or re-connect with a friend. But the refreshment time needs someone to make sure that the refreshments happen, and YOU could be that person (or you & a friend)! We need a Hospitality Coordinator to set up before each meeting, which isn't hard because the Kern Supt. of Schools folk provide almost everything (coffee, cups, sugar, creamer, napkins) for our use, and then to recruit volunteers to provide the cookies (or cheese & crackers, brownies, etc.) and punch for the meetings.

Does this sound easy & fun or what?! Madi will be happy to provide "training" and a clipboard for the sign-up sheet, so contact her (322-7470 or madielsea@aol.com) for more information and to say "yes--I'll do it!"

TUESDAY BIRDERS

The Tuesday Birders will meet Tues. mornings Nov. 7 & 21. Beginning birders as well as the experienced are welcome! Contact Brenda Kyle (871-4867) for meeting time and place!



Kern Birding Website To access an excellent, comprehensive web site covering numerous Kern County birding locations go to www.natureali.org/birding.htm.

Kern County Bird Sightings/photos

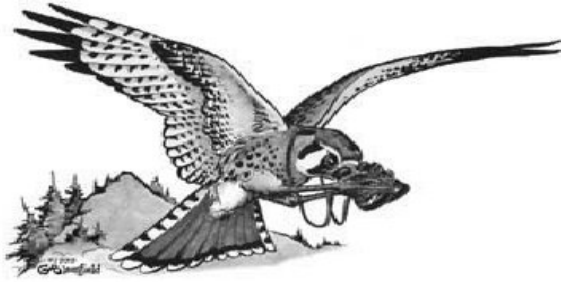
Want to see what's unusual in Kern County birding? Go to kerncobirding@yahoogroups.com for recent bird sightings, reports by Bob Barnes, Mike McQuerry, pictures by Ken Kyle and others.

Nov 7 - Vote Conservation: Yes on Prop 84, No on Prop 90

Yes on Prop 84 - \$5.4 billion conservation and water quality bond. Proposition 84, the Clean Water, Parks and Coastal Protection Bond, is critical to renew funding for the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Coastal Conservancy, numerous regional conservancies, and other important restoration and acquisition programs. Without Prop 84, many of the State's conservation dollars will dry up within the next one to two years, a risk we cannot afford to take. Audubon California is working hard to make sure that Proposition 84 passes! ***Vote YES on 84!***

No on Prop 90 - A Tax Payer Trap Proposition 90 is an assault on environmental protection in California. Hidden behind language to stop abuses of eminent domain, Prop 90 includes several dangerous provisions that would drastically cut back on the government and even voters' ability to protect environment, local communities, and farmland. Prop 90 aims to restrict governments' ability to pass land-use regulations by requiring the government to make huge payments to landowners unless those actions are to protect narrowly-defined public health or safety. Prop 90 would also make it prohibitively expensive for public agencies to acquire property for wildlife, public works projects, new schools, fire protection measures, and utilities.

Audubon CA recommends a "NO" vote on Proposition 90!



BINOCULARS REQUESTED

Kern Audubon would like to have some extra binoculars on hand for field trips to accommodate newcomers or folks who occasionally forget to bring theirs along! If you have an extra pair you would like to donate, preferably 7X35 or larger magnification, please let Ted or Madi know or bring to the next chapter meeting! Thanks!

The Little Engine That Could..."

Have you ever wanted to drive a train?! Now's your chance! CALM (California Living Museum) is looking for someone to learn how to run the miniature train that travels on the east side of the park along the outside of the proposed new exhibit area. The only requirements are cheerfulness, looking out for mechanical problems should they arise, and being good with the public. Interested men and women should contact Tom at the museum (871-1883).

HILLSIDE ORDINANCE PASSES

A unanimous recommendation by the City Planning Commission has finally resulted in UNANIMOUS approval by the Bakersfield City Council of the Hillside Ordinance! Congratulations to the City Council members for taking this unified position after years of often bitter debate. This is good policy and the citizens of Bakersfield and our beautiful bluffs are the winners! Thank you to everyone who participated in helping this to happen!

RAFFLES NEED PRIZES! Have some birding or nature related items that might make good raffle prizes?! Bring them to the monthly meetings and we will use them as part of our fund raising! Like to coordinate the monthly raffle? What an easy job! Contact Madi (322-7470) to volunteer!

SEWER POND BIRDING

Two good sights for viewing waterfowl and shorebirds is at the City & County waste water ponds! Both are located south of Hiway 58 between Mt. Vernon and Oswell at two different locations. Permission to bird is needed, so call ahead!

Bakersfield City ponds: 832-2851 and ask for the supervisor. Ponds are located on Mt. Vernon south of Hiway 58 past the recycling /green waste area.

Kern County ponds: 837-0827 and ask for Pat. Take Oswell off Hiway 58 and turn right one block south of freeway onto Kimber. Follow Kimber until it ends at the waste water treatment plant. Go into office to check-in.



GRANT RECEIVED

Audubon California has recently funded Kern Audubon's grant proposal in the amount of \$500 to support the establishment and maintenance of a WEBSITE. Our plan is to set up a simple one or two page site very soon, then expand with a larger site. If you have an idea or want to get involved with the project, contact Ted (325-0307) or Madi (322-7470).

Proposed SVRA Update

At the request of State Parks & Recreation, the Co. Board of Supervisors voted on Tues. Oct. 24 to postpone their decision on going forward with the proposed off-road park for approximately 90 days. There are serious environmental concerns related to Poso Creek, which runs through the southeastern portion of the proposed park, as well as concerns about air quality and Valley Fever spores from the dust. It's not too late to express your concerns during this delay period by calling the Supervisors (868-3601) or by email: board@co.kern.ca.us or Chairman Patrick: district3@co.kern.ca.us

AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Kern Audubon Society
PO Box 3581
Bakersfield CA 93385



Non-Profit Org
US Postage
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Bakersfield CA
Permit #93

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join KERN AUDUBON for these activities...

- Nov. 7th Meeting & Program, 7pm Kern Supt of Schools 17th & L
- Sun. Nov. 12 Field trip to Kern National Wildlife Preserve, 7:30am
- Sat. Nov. 18 Field trip to Tule Elk Reserve, 7:30am

All meetings & activities are open to the public---bring your friends and family!

Membership Application -- KERN AUDUBON SOCIETY (7XCHC30)

If you would like to be part of an organization that actively protects our present and future, join National Audubon Society and Kern Audubon! Please complete the form below and send with your check!

Membership includes the national *Audubon Magazine* (6 Issues) and the *Kern Audubon's Warbler*.

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)

Name(s) _____ Amount enclosed _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ Zip Code _____ Phone # _____

Newcomers to Bakersfield (of the bird variety!)

The matter of illegal immigrants is a hot issue these days, especially in California. Several colonies that recently arrived from down south, under the radar, are well-established in southwest and northwest Bakersfield and probably will soon be all over town. At times they startle people in shopping center parking lots or panhandle at fast-food drive throughs, eliciting wonder in the observers: who are these noisy ones, where did they come from, what are they doing here?

The first time I experienced the interlopers was at a gas stop on the way home from Los Angeles, 10 or so years ago. While pumping gas I heard a raucous sound that I thought was a bird, but it sure wasn't one that I recognized. After I filled the tank, I looked for the source of the noise and spotted it in a tall tree behind the store: a large, long-tailed black bird that was calling loudly and off-key.

"A boat-tailed grackle," I thought, but not having seen the species since the early 1960's in coastal towns of North Carolina, I wasn't sure of my identification. Back then, it was *Cassidix mexicanus*, in Peterson's "A Field Guide to Eastern Birds," 1947. It was a hot afternoon so having enjoyed a brief reminder of "back home," we quickly got back in the car and drove on.

Several years later I took my Cal State natural history class to a park in nearby Haggin Oaks to a fenced, landscaped storm drainage sump that had always been a good place to look for a variety of wildlife, especially in springtime-including burrowing owls, greenbacked herons, domestic ducks, blackbirds, and coots. On the far side of the pond we heard strange new bird noises and quickly went to see what was making them. I went through the drill with my students, "look at it, listen to it, check your field guide for the picture, match the description with what you see and hear, then tell me what it is and name the species."

"Great-tailed grackle, *Quiscalus mexicanus*!"

The males were conspicuous, even handsome, with their shiny, jet black coats, yellow eyes, and long V-shaped tail, like the keel of a boat. The brown females were less colorful, had shorter tails, and were less vocal. We enjoyed the sight of the courtship rituals and the comical calls of the birds.

A year or so later I drove south on Gosford and as I passed a shopping center on the east side of the road I heard great-tailed grackles. Although I couldn't see them, I recognized the call. As I turned into a fast food place I saw grackles in the parking lot and sitting on the hoods of cars parked near the drive-through window, evidently waiting for someone to chuck a fry or two at them.

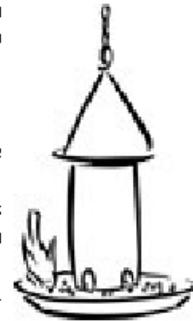
Another year went by and I was in a shopping center on Rosedale Highway, west of Coffee Road. There were the noisy characters in the sickly young trees, calling loudly. In early March of this year I encountered them again in the parking lot of the Gosford/White Lane shopping center. They were calling from the trees, not very visible but very audible. As I left the lot, there were four or five individuals helping themselves to scraps in the dumpster behind the fast food restaurant.

According to Erlich, *et al* ([The Birder's Handbook](#)), the Boat-tailed Grackle (now *Quiscalus major*) and the Great-tailed Grackle, which once were considered separate species, comprise a "superspecies" in which the two mainly occupy separate ranges, but in an overlap area from southwest Louisiana to southeast Texas do not hybridize. The Great-tailed Grackle apparently is spreading northward. In Peterson's first Western Bird Guide (1969) the eastern and western forms were considered *Cassidix mexicanus* and the range of the western bird is given as "s. Arizona, New Mexico, and w. Texas." In the 1990 edition, the range map shows it just a bit north of San Diego. We saw them at the Kern Wildlife Refuge in Delano last spring. How far north of Bakersfield are they now?!

Contributed by Dr. Ted Murphy, Professor Emeritus
California State University, Bakersfield

HOW CLEAN IS YOUR FEEDER? Clean birdfeeders/birdbaths are critical in preventing the spread of disease between birds. Birds with disease are also more likely to die from starvation, dehydration and predation, so protect them by following these tips:

- **DISINFECT**...to keep pathogens at bay, immerse seed feeders & birdbaths in a 9 to 1 water - bleach solution, rinsing thoroughly. Do this one or two times per month.
- **EVERYDAY**...empty water from your birdbath, even in colder weather. Brush or wipe clean, then refill with clean water. People like clean dishes and fresh water, so do birds!
- **DISCARD** old seed/hulls when you clean feeders and rake or sweep up uneaten hulls on the ground. Disease causing germs can live up to 5 days in food and several hours in water.
- **OVERCROWDING**...If possible, provide more than one feeder and spread them out. Crowding expedites the spread of disease, so give birds variety and plenty of room.



Central Valley Birding Symposium

November 16-19, 2006
Radisson Hotel - Stockton

"Birds on the Wind" - the story
of bird migration
"Birding Made Simpler"
"Falcons of North America"
"Raptors Demystified"

These are just some of the keynote topics plus there will be lots of field trip opportunities as well as artists and vendors. Information is on the website:

<http://cvbs.org>

Christmas Bird Count

More than 50,000 observers participate each year in this all-day census of early-winter bird populations. The results of their efforts are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of unbroken data on trends of early-winter bird populations across the Americas. Simply put, the Christmas Bird Count, or "CBC", is citizen science in action.
www.Audubon.org

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

These are Kern Audubon's newest members and we welcome each of you. We hope you will get involved in our many activities!

*Patsy Miehi
Lileth T. Wynn
Paul & Lynn Woodward
Dean VanZant
Larry & Pat Mumford
Rob & Debbie Rephan
Steven & Kristi Clark
Daniel Meyer
Jay Bancroft
Linda Cooley
Genevieve Fabrizio
Elaine White
Virginia Dallas-Dull
Curt Asher
Helen Maas
Virginia Childres
Linda Greene
Michele Zachlod*

Go South for the Winter...

The 7th Annual South Texas Wildlife and Birding Festival in Kingsville, Texas is Nov. 16-18. Just west of the Gulf of Mexico in an area called The Wild Horse Desert by early settlers, lies the historic town of Kingsville and the King Ranch, birthplace of the American Ranching industry. With a built-in habitat of a million acres of land and a semi-tropical climate, it is home to deer, javelina, bobcat, alligator and is in the center of some of the best birding in the US. An exciting festival is planned! For more information go to: cvb@kingsvilletexas.com.

The 107th annual Christmas Bird Count will take place December 14, 2006 - January 5, 2007. John Wilson is coordinator for the Bakersfield region, which will be on Sunday Dec. 17th, and Alison Sheehy will coordinate Buena Vista region with the date TBA. Look for more information in the next Warbler!



CLOCKTOWER HOLIDAYS "Once Upon a Time..."

Look for Kern Audubon's fairy tale WREATH which will be displayed in the Gallery at the Kern County Museum during Clocktower Holidays, Nov. 16 - Dec. 31. The wreath was decorated by Allene Krizo, Kathy Love, Ann Etue and Michele Zachlod. We thank them for their time and creativity!

Kern Audubon needs funds! Thanks to a great raffle last month (\$115), we are able to pay some bills, but Some generous gifts would be appreciated! Send to KAS, PO Box 3581, Bakersfield 93385 (tax-deductible).