



AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Vol. 38 No 9 - November 2009
Newsletter of Kern Audubon Society
A chapter of National Audubon Society
www.kernaudubonsociety.org

Kern Audubon Meeting & Program

Join us....

Tuesday NOVEMBER 3, 2009, 7:00PM

Meeting at: UNITY CHURCH

TRUXTUN & E STS.

Note: The location is for November only!!

“Protecting California’s Birds”

Jordan Wellwood, Conservation Coordinator
Audubon California

Jordan Wellwood, Audubon California’s Conservation Coordinator for the Central Valley & Sierra Nevada, will discuss the major threats that birds face in California and what Audubon is doing to protect the landscapes birds will need in order to thrive in the future. She will also share opportunities for local citizens to get involved and make a real difference in the community.

Jordan holds an Honors Bachelors of Environmental Studies from the University of Waterloo in Canada and prior to her work with Audubon California, she worked on conservation policy issues in Sacramento. Her responsibilities with Audubon Ca



involve working with local chapters on a variety of conservation projects, as well as at the state level on Audubon’s priority projects for the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada. In addition to her love for conservation, she is passionate about cycling, yoga, and cooking!

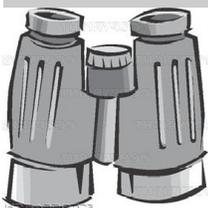
NOVEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Sat. Nov. 14, 3:00pm - Pixley Wildlife Refuge

Over 4000 Sandhill Cranes have arrived at Pixley NWR to spend the winter and we are invited to join the refuge staff for an opportunity see these incredible birds, enjoy light refreshments, socialize, and learn more about current and upcoming undertakings at both Pixley and Kern NWR. We will then walk to the observation platform (about 1/4 mile) to watch the nightly Sandhill Crane fly-in to the refuge where they will roost for the evening. It is a truly spectacular sight! Dress in layers, bring flashlight, binoculars. We will meet at 3:00pm at the Costco parking lot (near the gas station) to carpool. A \$5.00 donation for drivers is requested. Contact Madi (322-7470) for more information.

Sun. Nov. 22, 7:30am - Sycamore Canyon- Tejon Ranch

This field trip will be our first to Tejon Ranch and will be to Sycamore Canyon, which is located on the Antelope Valley side of the ranch. Reservations are limited, so contact Madi (322-7470) or by email: madielsea@aol.com. Trip begins at 7:30am and returning at 1:30pm. Bring lunch, water, snacks, binoculars. We will be carpooling and \$5 donation for gas is requested. Details will be provided following registration.



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UPCOMING BIRD FESTIVALS

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival
January 15-18, 2010
www.morrobaybirdfestival.org

Snow Goose Festival
January 28-31, Chico, CA
Celebrates the great Pacific Flyway
www.snowgoosefestival.org

San Diego Bird Festival
March 4-7, 2010
www.sandiegoaudubon.org

If you like travel, birding, fun and education, consider a birding festival. For more information:

www.birdwatchersdigest.com
www.Americanbirding.org/festivals

WEBSITES to check out...

Kern Birding For a comprehensive website about numerous Kern County birding locations go to www.natureali.org/birding.htm.

Kern County Bird Sightings/photos Go to this website for what's unusual in Kern County: kerncobirding@yahoogroups.com You'll find recent bird sightings, reports by Bob Barnes, Michael McQuerry, Alison Sheehey, pictures by Ken Kyle and others.

Audubon California has a great website about its activities and organization: www.Audubon-ca.org

Audubon in the news - To find out more about national Audubon happenings through an informative electronic newsletter, email chapterleaders@audubon.org

AUDUBON CALENDARS

Again this year Kern Audubon is selling beautiful Audubon calendars. There are three types: *Wildflowers, Songbirds & Green World*. All three are the wall size format and will be available for \$10.00 (Retail price at Barnes & Noble, Amazon is \$11.69.) at the next meeting, November 3. Supply is limited so if you can't get to the meeting, contact Harry Love (589-6245). This is a great way to support Kern Audubon. You can preview the calendars at <http://www.workman.com>

PANORAMA VISTA PRESERVE WORK PARTY - NOV 7TH

Join Kern Audubon on the first Saturday, November 7, for a work party outing to the Panorama Vista Preserve, which our chapter has adopted as a local conservation project for this year. This fantastic area is overseen by Andy Hoenig and other volunteers to preserve the natural habitat in the Kern River basin in Bakersfield. Starting at 8AM and ending at about 10 AM, volunteers will do a variety of work, from watering trees to planting new ones to pruning and weeding. Come and become a part of the team and help make this a great monthly event! Contact Harry Love (589-6245 or email at love3@bak.rr.com) for details. Take Roberts Lane off Manor Drive and go east to the locked gate where the group will meet Andy. Drinking water will be provided. Hope to see you there!

The first monthly work party in October at the preserve was a great success! *Score: Audubon work party 100, tumbleweeds 0*. On a cool Saturday morning a vigorous shovel wielding group led by Andy and Sasha Honig and joined by Deb Moffat and son Tucker, Don and Vonnie Turkal, Lucy Clark and Clyde Golden, and myself who took two hours to remove the tumbleweeds we all hate. It was a great way to vent frustrations by eliminating a pest! I made the reference that we could have all been extras in a classic Paul Newman movie, "Cool hand Luke". I hope you'll join us on November 7th!

Harry Love, Conservation Chr.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Put these dates on your calendars for the area Christmas Bird Counts...detailed information to follow:

Sun. Dec. 20 - Bakersfield CBC

John Wilson, Coordinator

jwilson@lightspeed.net

Mon. Dec. 21 - Buena Vista CBC

Allison Sheehey, Coordinator

natureali@

THANK YOU TO THE KYLE'S

Kern Audubon has many faithful volunteers who share their birding expertise with us and one of those is a couple, BRENDA & KEN KYLE, who have led the monthly Tuesday Birding group for over 10 years. They have decided to "retire" from this commitment and we want to express our grateful appreciation for their time, dedication and inspiration. Thank you, Brenda & Ken!!

We are hoping to continue to have a monthly weekday bird watching outing, so if you are interested or know of someone who might like to lead this experience, contact Ted Murphy (325-0785) or Madi Elsea (322-7470).



Northern Spotted Owl

OWLING TRIP A HOOT...!!

Nine Kern Auduboners joined Michael McQuerry & Gary File on a recent night trip up Breckenridge Mtn. to spot owls, a new experience for all those attending. We had a fun and educational time hearing four different species of owls: Western Screech (8), Northern Saw-whet (3), Great Horned (2) and Spotted, which we also "spotted" before it flew away!

Central Valley Birding Symposium

Nov. 19-22

If you are interested in birds and birdwatching, consider the 13th annual Central Valley Birding Symposium held in Stockton Nov. 19-22. There are far-flung field trips, a Birder's Market full of artists and vendors with bird and nature-related items, workshops with bird experts such as Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan...you can even learn to digiscope, draw birds and carve decoys! Evening programs include Murrelet Halterman on Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Stephen Shunk on "The magic of Birding."

Questions? Contact Frances Oliver: 209/369-2010. For information and registration go to the website: <http://cvbs.org>

NEED BINOCULARS?

Kern Audubon has the opportunity to purchase binoculars from Eagle Optics and receive a donation of a matching number of the same item, which can be used for field trips, beginner birding classes, etc. If you might be interested in participating by purchasing one of these sets of binoculars for under \$150 for yourself or as a gift (Christmas is coming!), contact Rod Lee (487-9850) or rodmlee@aol.com.

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

Anyone with an interest in birds can participate! FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs.

Participants count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you have provided, such as a feeder or bird bath. You will report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology either over its web site or on paper data forms. Learn more about Project FeederWatch on the website: www.birds.Cornell.edu.

There is a \$15 annual participation fee, which covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and a year-end report (*Winter Bird Highlights*). Participants receive a [Research Kit](#), which contains instructions, a bird identification poster, wall calendar, a resource guide to bird feeding, and a tally sheet—everything needed to start counting your birds. Participants also receive a subscription to the Lab of Ornithology's newsletter, [BirdScope](#).

Looking ahead to Tues. December 1, 6:30pm....The December meeting will be our annual Holiday gathering with potluck, auction and a fascinating program by Jon Hammond, member of the Tehachapi Birding Club, local journalist, rancher and expert on the Tehachapi Kawaiisu.

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER RESORATION

A conservation victory has begun to unfold in California's Great Central Valley...this year, the San Joaquin River will receive more water than it has since the 1940s when Friant Dam was constructed. In 2012, Chinook salmon will be re-introduced and will hopefully begin their recovery from the brink of extinction.

If you grew up in the San Joaquin Valley before the 1940s, you probably remember an impressive river flowing to the Delta from the mountains beyond Fresno, a river that was as volatile as it was vital. If you lived near the river, you may remember the sound of thousands of salmon splashing upstream on their journey to spawn. You may even have caught a Chinook salmon in the San Joaquin.

Some things have changed in the Valley since then and others have not. The San Joaquin no longer flows from the Sierra to the Delta, and Chinook salmon no longer travel up this river to spawn. We have controlled the movement of water in astounding ways, but have not learned how to create water where there is none.

In a third year of drought and with increasing restrictions on water use, some Californians will find it questionable to see water flowing down the San Joaquin for the first time in over 70 years. For others this process is recognition of the inherent value of a natural river system and the culmination of decades of hard work.

The vast majority of wetland and riparian habitat that once existed in the San Joaquin Valley has been lost for decades. Birds have been forced onto smaller and increasingly marginal pieces of land, and only those that have adapted to the agriculture-dominated landscape have continued to thrive. Over 225 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians depend on riparian habitats, and riparian ecosystems harbor the most diverse bird communities in the arid and semiarid regions of the western United States. Riparian areas can harbor individuals during the bird breeding season at densities up to ten times greater than surrounding terrestrial habitats and the San Joaquin River habitat complex hosts a variety of special-status species including Bald Eagle, Greater Sandhill Crane, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Swainson's Hawk, Willow Flycatcher, and Bank Swallow.

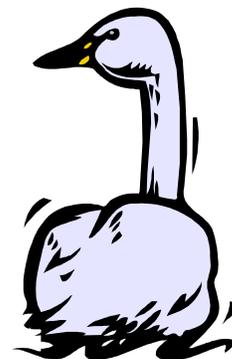
As test releases begin in 2009 and federal and state agencies prepare the river for the reintroduction of Chinook in 2012, Audubon California is working to maximize the benefits of the revived river corridor for birds. For more information, see Audubon California's website: www.ca.audubon.org.

"INSIDE BIRDING" - NEW WEB VIDEO SERIES

It's fall and millions of birds are migrating, so it's a great time to go bird watching. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has put together a new & FREE video series called "Inside Birding". It is hosted by Chris Wood and Jessie Barry who share tips, tools, and techniques for identifying birds with confidence—whether you're new to birding or seeking to hone your skills. In the first four episodes, learn the secrets of the "four keys" to bird identification. Join Chris and Jessie in the field as they practice using *size and shape* to identify common birds. Learn how to use *color pattern* and *behavior* for critical clues about a bird's identity. And travel with them to the swamps of Florida as they explain the importance of *habitat* when you're looking for birds. Go to the



You might also explore Cornell Lab's newly redesigned [All About Birds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org) website: (www.allaboutbirds.org), which is packed with stunning images and information about every aspect of birding. Enhance your bird knowledge by visiting Bird Guide, with more than 500 species profiles, new photo ID tools, cool facts, sounds, and video. Peruse the Living Bird section for articles about travel, science, and conservation. Practice using the four keys to identification or sharpen your knowledge about Songs and Calls in the Building Skills section. Check out the Multimedia theater to watch videos about birds from the Arctic, coasts, and grasslands—or learn more about attracting birds to your backyard.



E-Warbler...Want to receive the Audubon Warbler by email? Send an email to rodmlee@aol.com

HUMANS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEALTH OF THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR -- BY HUNTING

This article by Graham Chisholm, Executive Director of Audubon California, was a "Community Viewpoint" article published by the Bakersfield Californian, October 8, 2009

Just a few years after humans helped push it to the brink of extinction, the California Condor may find itself owing its survival to people with guns.

That may sound like nonsense, but it is a reality that experts are beginning to embrace.

Two centuries ago, when California Condors soared over the West, they were nourished by a thriving population of large mammals -- deer, bear, seals, whales. Now our state is a different place, with a population exceeding 36 million. These sources of food are harder and harder to find, and competition among scavengers has made it hard for the condor.

The 95 condors that remain in the wild today in California (189 worldwide) are largely fed by humans, who leave animal carcasses at feeding stations within the birds' range. If these condors are ever going to live without this kind of support, they're going to need a steady supply of nourishment from California's wildlands and ranches.

This is where hunters -- particularly those that use the wildlands in and around Kern County -- make a big contribution.

A recent report issued by experts from the American Ornithologists' Union said unequivocally that hunting is essential to the survival of the California Condor.

"Humans are the dominant predators in most of the condor's range, and carcasses and gut piles resulting from hunting and other types of shooting are important food sources for condors," the report reads. "It is essential that hunters continue to harvest deer, pigs and other wildlife throughout the condor range using non-lead ammunition, so that a clean source of wild food is available to condors beyond food subsidies. It is hard to imagine that condors will be able to be sustained in the wild after food subsidies are reduced without this source of food."

That note about non-lead ammunition is important. When condors feed on carcasses left behind by hunters who use lead ammunition, they ingest the fragments and suffer from lead poisoning. Lead poisoning has been linked to at least a dozen confirmed deaths of condors in California. Many more condors have had to suffer having the lead removed from their blood in a painful and complicated medical process.

It was for this reason that a ban on the use of lead ammunition in the range of the California Condor went into effect last year. A recent report from the California Department of Fish and Game found that since the ban went into effect, there has been 99 percent compliance from hunters. Clearly, hunters understand what's at stake and are willing to act.

Early blood testing of California Condors since the ban went into effect seems to suggest that hunters' swift adoption of these new rules is resulting in lower lead levels.

It's not widely understood among the general public that hunters play a leading role in protecting California's wildlife and its habitat. Responsible, law abiding hunters are people who love the outdoors and have a real understanding of the beauty and importance of nature. And they want it preserved.

Through their license fees, they support threatened populations of mammals and birds. Many also participate in organizations that contribute to protecting wildlife preserves and other habitats for wildlife. As far as birds are concerned, hunters have done remarkable things to support wetland habitat, migratory bird populations.

Although the story of the California Condor has yet to be fully written, it would be wonderful to add this glorious species to the list of birds that hunters have helped preserve.

NEW SHEARWATER DISCOVERY

On September 8, 2009 biologists visiting Matinicus Rock, an island off mid-coast Maine, discovered a fledgling Manx Shearwater, the first of this species to successfully mature to fledgling age in the United States. Audubon's Scott Hall, along with Brian Benedict, Bob Houston, Matt Klostermann, and Lauren Scopel of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, discovered the chick. Named for their habit of flying low over the water, adult Manx Shearwaters develop a wingspan of nearly three feet. The discovery is a tribute to the partnership between Audubon's Seabird Restoration project and USFWS. (from *Audubon News Alert*, 9/16/09)

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

AUDUBON CA'S "BIRD OF THE YEAR"

Voting has begun for Audubon California's 2009 Bird of the Year, which will recognize a California bird species of conservation interest that made a significant impact in 2009. All members are encouraged to cast their votes online on Audubon California's website at www.ca.audubon.org through Dec. 7.

Audubon California created the designation this year to highlight the state's remarkable birds and the conservation challenges many of them face. Soon after voting ends on Dec. 7, the winner will be announced to those who provided their email address to Audubon California while voting. A public announcement will be made soon afterwards.

Although you can vote for any bird, the Audubon California Board of Directors has nominated six species in particular:

- California Condor
- Brown Pelican
- Peregrine Falcon
- Acorn Woodpecker
- Yellow-billed Magpie
- Western Snowy Plover

GarrisonFrost, Director of Marketing/Communications
AudubonCalifornia

AUDUBON'S WARBLER

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www.kernaudubonsociety.org

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join KERN AUDUBON for these activities...

- Tues. Nov. 3, 7:00pm - Monthly program on "Protecting California's Birds", to be held at Unity Church (Truxtun & E Sts.)
- Sat. Nov. 7, 8:00am - Panorama Vista Preserve Work Party
- Sat. Nov. 14, 3:00pm - Pixley Wildlife Refuge to see the Sandhill Cranes
- Sun. Nov. 22, 7:30am - Sycamore Canyon at Tejon Ranch

Membership Application -- KERN AUDUBON SOCIETY (C9ZC300Z)

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 (not Kern Audubon)

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 # _____