



AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Vol. 36 No. 2 - FEBRUARY 2007
Newsletter of Kern Audubon Society
A chapter of National Audubon Society

KERN AUDUBON GATHERING

TUES. FEBRUARY 6, 2007 - 7:00pm

Location: UC MERCED Bakersfield Campus
20th & K Sts., Bakersfield

Street parking or parking structure on 20th St. between L & K

NATURE PRESERVES OF KERN COUNTY

GREG WARRICK, Preserve Manager

In 1997 the Center for Natural Lands Management acquired three nature preserves in the western part of Kern County: Lokern, Semitropic, Sand Ridge, and one in Tulare County, the Pixley Vernal Pools, all of which are managed by biologist Greg Warrick. These preserves feature many species of endangered and threatened animals, including San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed lizard, Giant & Tipton kangaroo rats, and endangered plants such as the Kern mallow. Bird species of interest are LeConte's Thrasher, Burrowing Owl, Golden Eagle, Greg Warrick will discuss these unique preserves along with a slide presentation. He is very familiar with the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley having worked with the environmental group at Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Preserve and with the Endangered Species Recovery program.

Join us for a fun evening, an interesting program, refreshments and *RAFFLE PRIZES!*

Sat. Feb. 10th Field Trip

**LOKERN & SEMITROPIC
NATURE PRESERVES**

Greg Warrick, Preserve Manager, will lead Kern Audubon on a field trip to these nature preserves in western Kern County. We'll have the opportunity to see birds of prey, LeConte's Thrasher, burrowing owl, plus mammals & reptiles of interest.

Meet at Kern River Bike Path parking area across from CSUB at 7:30am. Bring snacks water, binoculars. There may be some hiking but not strenuous and we will return by 12noon. Call Ted Murphy (325-0307) or Madi Elsea (322-7470) for information.

Sat. Feb. 24 Field Trip

City Sewer Ponds

7:00am - Mike McQuerry, Leader

If you haven't birded at the local sewer ponds, join Kern Audubon on Sat. Feb. 24th for a field trip to the Bakersfield City sewer ponds on Mt. Vernon south of Hiway 58. Expect to see waterfowl and shorebirds. Mike McQuerry will be the field trip leader. Meet at the Kern Parkway parking lot north of CSUB on Stockdale Hiway at 7AM to carpool, or meet at the sewer ponds (where Mt. Vernon deadends just past the recycling/green waste facility.) Contact Mike (872-6984) or Ted Murphy (325-0307) for more information.

FOR THE BIRDS...

Have you checked out Kern Audubon's new website?! We received a California Audubon grant (\$500) to get it started and Ted Murphy, Kern Audubon Co-Chair, has made it possible through his time & talent. Thank you, Ted! Go to www.kernaudubonsociety.org for up-to-date chapter information and numerous links to other related websites. If you would rather receive the Kern Audubon "Warbler" as a pdf file, send an email with "PDF Warbler" in the subject line to tmurhpy@bak.rr.com.

If you have ideas to suggest, contact Ted by email or phone (325-0307).

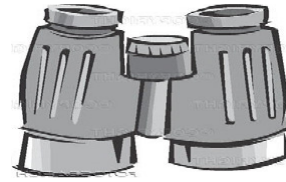
Hope to see you on February 6th...invite a friend!

Madi Elsea, Co-Chair

madielsea@aol.com; 322-7470

TUESDAY BIRDERS

The Tuesday Birders will meet Tues. mornings February 6 & 20th. Beginning birders as well as the experienced are welcome! Contact Brenda Kyle (871-4867) for meeting time and place!



Kern Birding Website For a comprehensive web site covering numerous Kern County birding locations go to www.natureali.org/birding.htm.

Kern County Bird Sightings/photos

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

ASK AUDUBON...The newest addition to Audubon's Newswire: submit questions about consumer choices and how they effect the environment--cblayer@audubon.org.

Audubon Adventures

Ginny Dallas, newly-retired elementary teacher/principal, is preparing learning packages for National Audubon's conservation education program for 3-6th graders. The materials cover a wide range of topics in biology, ecology, and conservation and are written to fit state guidelines. If you are an elementary teacher, home schooler, or charter school teacher, give Ginny a call (587-6323) or email vdallas@bak.rr.com for more information. It would be great to get this wonderful program re-started in our local schools!

Young and Old Went West to the Carrizo

The recent trip to Carrizo Plain National Monument was enjoyed by 24 enthusiastic Auduboners and guests of all ages! The caravan met BLM biologist Kathy Sharum at Soda Lake Road and once in the Monmument Kathy showed us fields of horned larks. We walked to the hill overlooking Soda Lake and on the boardwalk at the edge of the lake Kathy talked about cranes, fairy shrimp, and salts. We lunched at the Goodwin Visitor Center before crossing the plain to Wallace Creek to see the zig-zag created by the San Andreas Fault. Inspecting Giant Kangaroo Rat "precincts" and watching San Joaquin antelope squirrels rounded out the day. Another trip in the spring is planned!

T-SHIRT CONTEST

Help design a logo and win special prize yet-to-be-determined!

**Steve & Kristi Clark
are the contest organizers**

**Submit a 4 1/2" X 5"
design or idea
(front of t-shirt, not the back)**

**Email the Clark's
(skclark1981@aol.com) or
call (588-2175) with your
ideas/questions**

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

AUCTION THANK-YOU'S

In addition to the names listed in the January "Warbler", we want to thank the following persons and businesses for providing gift certificates, donated items or services to the December auction. It was a great success and we appreciate these generous participants:

Aquarium Arts
Facility for Animal Care and Treatment
Santa Barbara Pizza and Chicken
Josh Bradley
John Lindsay
Doug and Adele Davis
Kerry Lattimore
Ted and Peggy Murphy

CALIFORNIAN ARTICLE ON KAS

Bakersfield Californian reporter Jeff Nachtigal and his wife Sarah went along on the December field trip to the Kern National Wildlife Refuge and Jeff has produced a wonderful story & video as a result. It's about what it's like to "go birding." You can see the video and read the accompanying story at <http://www.Bakersfield.com/142/story/93656.html>. A briefer version of the story with pictures was featured in the *Californian* on Tues. January 23 on the front page of the "Eye Street" (C section)!! We thank Jeff for birding with us and doing such a terrific story/video..great publicity for KNWR and Kern Audubon Society!

Elephant Seals on the Coast

Up close and personal....yes, you can get within 15' of elephant seals basking, birthing & bellowing on the beaches north of San Simeon. Elephant seals started appearing in this spot in 1990 and the colony has now grown to many thousands which arrive here off and on all year to rest, mate, birth, wean, and molt. In 1997 1700 pups were born and in 2005, 3800 were born! A boardwalk above the beach puts viewers in close and safe proximity and a wonderful opportunity to view these sea creatures. Docents are on hand to answer questions. The Elephant Seal Rookery is approximately 4 miles north of Hearst Castle on Hiway One.

www.elephantseals.org

BURROWING OWL SURVEY... The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) is partnering with California Audubon chapters to perform surveys for Burrowing Owls throughout the entire breeding range during a two year period (2006-7). Volunteers are needed to conduct the surveys which help inform a perspective on the status and distribution of this sensitive species. Volunteering for the Breeding Burrowing Owl Survey is fun! Maps are provided of your survey area, instructions, data forms, and assistance if you have questions. Censusing a 5km x 5km survey block typically requires between 5 and 20 hours of work, depending on the location of the block. Survey work must be completed between May 15 and July 15 of 2007. **If you did not participate in 2006 but are interested in participating in summer 2007, the second year of this 2-year project, please email us at owl@birdpop.org and provide contact information and county of residence.** Your local volunteer coordinator will then contact you in early 2007 to see if you are still interested, and to provide the survey materials.

Looking ahead to MARCH...Join Kern Audubon on Tuesday March 6th for a program on the Atwell Island Restoration Project with guest speaker Steve Layman, BLM biologist. This 8000 acre project is in the Tulare Lake basin, which a hundred years ago was California's largest fresh water lake. A field trip to Atwell Island is planned for Sat. March 10, 2007.



Global Warming: Weather, Polar Bears, and the Ocean Food Chain

Hotter summers, more severe *El Ninos*, more violent weather events like hurricanes and tropical storm...Polar ice melting and breaking up... polar bears having difficulty hunting since they have no expanses of ice from which to capture seals, their favorite prey,,The number of devastating storms to increase.

These are frequently cited effects of global warming and still some people just will not admit that it exists, or want to do anything about it. Recently, a disturbing story appeared in *New Scientist Magazine* ("ParadiseLost", 8/5/06) and *The New Yorker* ("The Darkening Sea", 10/20/06) describing an ominous change in the world oceans caused by global warming that will have far-reaching effects.

The basis of much of the ocean ecosystems involves organisms that deposit calcium carbonate - corals, mollusks, coralline algae and plankton of all sorts that serve as food for larger animals.

A short chemistry lesson: atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) dissolves in water to form carbonic acid. This is a useful reaction normally, since the oceans absorb carbon dioxide when the concentration in the atmosphere is high, then when the concentration is low, the reaction reverses and CO₂ goes back into the atmosphere. Consequently, the CO₂ concentration in the air and the pH of the ocean is fairly stable.

Coral reefs are formed by the deposition of calcium carbonate by coral organisms (stony corals). Reefs provide habitat for thousands of species near the base of the food chain, not just the pretty fish you see on TV (think Nemo). Calcium-containing plankton are eaten by larger animals, especially fish, which are eaten by birds. Birds depend on this food for calcium (think bones and egg shells).

Most corals are colored by photosynthetic algae that live in the coral cells. These utilize light to produce sugars that are furnished to the corals in return for a place to live. In the process, the algae remove carbon dioxide (and other substances produced by the living organisms) from the water.

What does global warming do to coral reefs (think marine ecosystem)? When the water temperature increases, the corals lose, or perhaps eject, the photosynthetic cells in their tissues and the coral loses its color - this is called "bleaching." Lacking a source of food, the coral dies. Without the living coral, the reef erodes under wave action.

The cause of global warming is the increased burning of fossil fuels which increases the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere. More CO₂ is dissolved in the ocean and results in "ocean acidification" which reduces the availability of calcium carbonate. (Optimum pH for coral life is high, around 8.2-8.4.) Consequently, calcium carbonate-depositing organisms lack the material to form skeletons, shells, and reefs, and the existing calcium carbonate structures begin to dissolve.

So bleaching wipes out the corals in the reef and acidification prevents their recovery. What next? Loss of reefs, change of currents, reduction of basic food chain elements, further increase of CO₂ levels because the corals aren't sucking up the excess and....this is a major matter.

What to do? At every opportunity, do what you can to reduce global warming - send a message to your legislators, go "green" when you can, pass the word to others, join environmental groups that advocate climate cleanup - petition local business, government, education, and service groups to reduce emissions.

A fairly simple explanation of this potentially calamitous situation, complete with citations of scientific literature, can be found on the World Ocean Observatory internet site, The W2O Observer -www.TheW2O.net.

Submitted by Dr. Ted Murphy, Professor Emeritus (Biology)

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Upcoming Bird Festivals

February 2-4, 2007 is the 10th annual SAN FRANCISCO FLYWAY FESTIVAL at Mare Island. For information go to www.sfbayflywayfestival.com.

February 7-12 is the SAN DIEGO BIRD FESTIVAL with trips to the desert, seashore, wetlands and pelagic trips to Baja. For information go to www.sandiegoaudubon.org.

Feb. 15-18, 2007 is the 25th annual KLAMATH BASIN BIRD FESTIVAL at the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Trips to nearby Klamath Basin Nat'l Wildlife Refuge to see the largest concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states, plus thousands of wintering waterfowl. Go to www.winterwingsfest.org for info.

March 30-April 1, 2007 - OLYMPIC BIRD FEST. Visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula, Washington, to discover birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest--Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Ducks, etc. Take guided field trips and a cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, etc. Go to www.olympicbirdfest.org.

April 26-29, 2007 - VERDE VALLEY BIRDING & NATURE FESTIVAL...great birding in Central Arizona's diverse habitats: field trips, workshops, special events. For information go to: www.birdyverde.org or call 928-282-2202

May 4-6, 2007 - YOSEMITE BIRDING FESTIVAL in the incomparable Yosemite Valley with birdsong expert Don Kroodsma and photographer John Hendrickson...see diverse habitats and great birds! Go to www.yosemite.org/seminars

***GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT -
FEB. 16-19, 2007***

What mid-winter activity is fun, easy, free, and helps bird conservation? What can parents and teachers do with children that connects them to a whole new world of natural wonders? This February, the tenth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, will give everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and "Count for the Record."

During February 16-19, 2007, people of all ages, from beginners to experts, are invited to join this event which spans all of the United States and Canada. Participants can take part wherever they are - at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges. Observers simply count the highest number of each species they see during an outing or a sitting, and enter their tally on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at www.birdsource.org/gbbc. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the GBBC, and by participating in greater numbers than ever before, with more checklists submitted, provides more information about bird population trends - and helps to better inform conservation efforts.

Last year, participants submitted more than 60,000 checklists - and reported 7.5 million birds overall and 623 different species. The count helped chronicle the early spring migratory routes of Sandhill Cranes, documented lingering migrants such as Orange-crowned Warblers and Tree Swallows, revealed the ongoing range expansion of introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves, and recorded declining numbers of American Crows.

Participants who want to hone their bird watching skills can learn more from the Great Backyard Bird Count web site, which offers [identification tips](#) and access to photos, sounds, maps, and natural history information on more than 500 bird species. People can also submit photos to an online [gallery](#) showcasing the dazzling array of winter birds found during the GBBC. [Competitions](#) add another element of fun, including a photo contest, rankings for most numerous birds, and the coveted "checklist champ" title for towns, states, and provinces with the highest participation.

AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Kern Audubon Society
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Bakersfield CA 93385



www.kernaudubonsociety.org

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join KERN AUDUBON for these activities...

- Tues. FEBRUARY 6, 7pm at the UC Merced campus in downtown Bakersfield (20th & K) for "Nature Preserves of Kern County
- Sat. Feb. 10th - Field Trip to Lokern & Semptropic Nature Preserves
- Sat. Feb. 24th - Field trip to the City Sewer Ponds for ducks and shorebirds

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 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)

Name(s) _____ Amount enclosed _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ Zip Code _____ Phone # _____