



AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Vol. 40 no. 7 - September 2011
Newsletter of Kern Audubon Society
A chapter of National Audubon Society
www.kernaudubonsociety.org
www.kastehachapibird.org

KERN AUDUBON SOCIETY
Tues. SEPTEMBER 6, 2011
7:00pm - Kern Supt of Schools
17th & L Sts. (parking garage 18th & K)

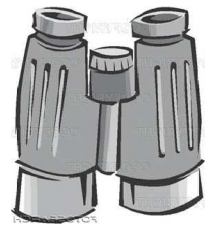
"FLYING JEWELS - Hummingbirds" Ralph Paonessa, Nature Photographer



Ralph Paonessa's hummingbird photography is dazzling and at our September meeting you will see why hummingbirds are called "flying jewels." Leading nature photography workshops all over the world, Ralph works full time pursuing his love of nature, photography and teaching. Ralph's photographs have been featured in numerous birding magazines and books, including covers. Recently he was honored when *WildBird* magazine published a collection of 30 of his hummingbird photos, and he won first place in the Texas Valley Land Fund photo contest. For our meeting he will focus on hummingbirds of Ecuador and share his vast knowledge of birds and how to photograph them. Some of his amazing work is featured on his website: rpphoto.com. Ralph makes his home in Ridgecrest.

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Wednesday Sept. 14th, 7:30am - Join Park Ranger Bill Moffatt for the first of the monthly "Wednesday Walks". The Sept. 14th walk will have the opportunity for birding and seeing the tule elk at the State Tule Elk Reserve west of Interstate 5. Meet at the parking lot on Stockdale & Don Hart Drive across from Cal State Bakersfield, 7:30am to carpool to the reserve. Bring water, snacks, binoculars (we also have binocs to borrow) and enjoy an informative morning. Contact AI for info: 833-6705.



Saturday Sept. 17th, 7:30am - Hart Park "Bird Sounds and Careful Observation in the Field"

Bob Barnes, noted birder/teacher, returns a 2nd year to guide this kick-off to the 2011-2012 field trip season. Gain tips for learning bird sounds, enjoy birds through leisurely in-depth observation, enhance ID skills. Equal success for beginner/novice and intermediate/expert birders, teachers, trip leaders. This is NOT a quick look where "the leader names the bird, then off to the next bird" field trip. The intention is to observe and savor each bird species in depth. We will meet at the west end of Hart Park on Mirror Dr. between the two lakes as you enter the park from the west. Bring water, snacks, binoculars (or borrow from Kern Audubon). \$5 registration requested. Call Madi (322-7470) or www.kernaudubonsociety.org

Sat. Sept 24th, 7:30am - Kern River Preserve Turkey Vulture Festival

The 17th annual Kern River Preserve Turkey Vulture Festival will be Sept. 24th to coincide with the one of the largest migration sites of Turkey Vultures as well as the fall land bird migration. There will be booths, workshops, nature walks, children's activities, etc. plus seeing the vultures as they lift-off from their roosting sites around the preserve. You can travel to the preserve on your own (www.kern.audubon.org) or meet to carpool at the Von's parking lot on Mt. Vernon & Hiway 178. Call 322-7470 for info.

KAS SUPPORTS KERN RIVER PRESERVE

One of Kern County's jewels is the Audubon Kern River Preserve located about an hour east of Bakersfield on Hiway 178 near Weldon. This 2,987 acre preserve along the South Fork Kern River protects one of California's largest remaining cottonwood-willow riparian areas and its wildlife. Kern Audubon's Executive Board recently sent a \$500 donation to the preserve to support its ongoing work. A grateful note of appreciation has been received with notes about some of the Preserve's recent accomplishments:

- protection of satellite preserves in the Greenhorn mountains at mouth of S. Fork Kern & along Kelso Creek (850 acres)
- work with Ca Dept of Fish & Game to protect 22,000 acres of habitat locally
- continuing of Tricolored Blackbird habitat project
- release of four more juvenile Southwestern Pond turtles from the Preserve's rearing facility
- continuing to eliminate and modify barbed wire fencing to make the Preserve more wildlife-friendly
- adding 600-acre Audubon Bright Star Wilderness which was dedicated in March permanently protecting montane, desert and riparian habitat in the eastern Piute Mountains along Kelso Creek
- continuing to offer monthly interpretive walks on the first Saturday of each month
- In the ongoing battle to remove invasive weeds like salt cedar, tree of heaven, etc. four local young adults have been hired with American Recovery & Reinvestment Act funds (stimulus funds at work!) to assist in this effort throughout the South Fork Kern River Valley

Volunteers play an important part in the ongoing success of the Kern River Preserve from planting native plants and shrubs, planning festivals, removing invasive weeds, to filling bird feeders, etc. If you'd like to become involved, consider becoming a "Friend of the KRP". For information email: krpfriends@lightspeed.net

For more information about the Kern River Preserve, go to the website: www.kern.audubon.org

BIRDING FESTIVALS

Bird festivals are fun! You meet other birders, visit new places, see lots of birds, hear interesting presentations, support other local economies and much more. For information about festivals around the country, go to...

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

For information about festivals in California, go to...
www.natureali.org/nature_festivals.htm

KERN AUDUBON EXECUTIVE BOARD

2011 -2012

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Kern Audubon Executive Board will meet on Tues. Sept. 20th, 7pm and is open to interested members. contact a board member for locations.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome these new members who joined Kern Audubon between April - July 2011:

Bakersfield

Elaine Downing Belinda Durham
Mylon Filkins Marjorie Lindsey

Caliente

Virginia Shinn

Frazier Park

Mary Gilman Mary McDevit

Tehachapi

Carol Casey-Newell Denice Fern

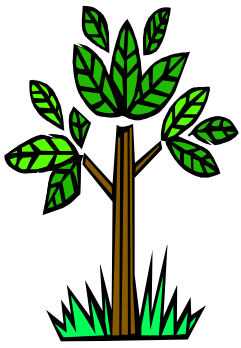
Gail Gewain alcia Hayden

Jean Moore Harold Morgan

Sandra & William Murray

Karen Pestana Richard Sparks

Looking ahead to Tues. October 4th -- Kern Audubon members, John & Cece Eigenauer, will share stories & visuals from their recent birding adventures in Peru



Sat. Sept 10TH - PANORAMA VISTA PRESERVE

On Saturday, September 10, Kern Audubon will begin its 3rd year as a sponsor of the Panorama Vista Preserve with a work day. **Time: 8-10 AM**. With a hot summer and irrigation, the trees and bushes have grown substantially, so there will be plenty of work, from pruning and weeding to working in the nursery. Come out and help! The volunteering of your time is a great way to develop habitat for birds and to make Bakersfield 'greener'. Contact Harry Love (love3@bak.rr.com or 805-1420) for details. (Take Roberts Lane off of Manor Drive in east Bakersfield...follow Roberts to the east about 1 mile where the group will meet at the gate to the preserve.)

WELCOME, TEHACHAPI BIRDERS!

Last spring, the Tehachapi Mountain Birding Club made the difficult decision to disband after many years of serving bird enthusiasts in the Tehachapi area. Fortunately, the love of birding continues to be important as is the desire to see birding and conservation interests served in and around Tehachapi. To that end, Kern Audubon was contacted with the request that a sub-chapter might be started in Tehachapi under the auspices of Kern Audubon. This idea was enthusiastically discussed and endorsed by the Kern Audubon Executive Board on June 22, 2011. Representatives of the board (Madi Elsea, President; Harry & Kathy Love, Rod Lee) met with a group of about 25 former TMBC members and interested persons from the Tehachapi area on June 28, 2011 to present the work of Audubon and how a "sub-chapter" might operate. After much discussion, there was a unanimous decision by those present to move forward by becoming part of Kern Audubon Society. Former TMBC members were invited to become members of Audubon through this local chapter and as members will receive the monthly newsletter (*Audubon Warbler*), the National Audubon magazine, *Audubon*, and are welcome to attend KAS field trips and monthly programs. In addition, Kern Audubon-Tehachapi (the name selected) will hold quarterly program meetings in Tehachapi (time & place to be announced) and monthly or bi-monthly field trips. Kern Audubon will provide monetary support for program expenses including the Bluebird Recovery Project. In addition, two Tehachapi members will serve as members of the KAS Board: Angela Guy and Carol Gates. The website will be www.kastehachapibird.org with Richard Sparks as the webmaster.

Kern Audubon already has approximately 60 members who live in the greater Tehachapi area, so having a meeting/program close to home might be of interest to some of these dedicated Audubon members who can't always make the trip to Bakersfield each month! Look for more information as it becomes available in the monthly *Warbler* and on both websites: www.kernaudubonsociety.org or www.KAStehachapibird.org

Welcome **Kern Audubon-Tehachapi!!**

WEBSITES to check out...

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

Kern County Bird Sightings/photos For what's unusual in Kern County, go to kerncobirding@yahogroups.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

2011-2012 Kern Audubon Goals

Setting goals for a local chapter of Audubon is an annual process for the Executive Board with those goals being reported as part of the annual report to National Audubon. At the August Executive Board meeting, these four goals were highlighted for the coming year:

- Support for satellite chapter of Kern Audubon being developed in the southern region of Kern County (Tehachapi CA)
- Continued sponsorship of and support through volunteers of the Panorama Vista Preserve,
- Explore and develop social media tools such as Facebook, etc.
- Develop tri-fold brochure of Kern County birds using Kern Audubon photographers and graphic artists

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

AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Kern Audubon Society
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www.kernaudubonsociety.org

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join KERN AUDUBON for these activities...

- Tues. Sept. 6th, 7:00PM - Meeting & program with photographer Paul Paonessa on Hummingbirds
- Sat. Sept. 10, 8-10am - Work party at Panorama Vista Preserve
- Wed. Sept. 14, 7:30am - Tule Elk Reserve field trip
- Sat. Sept. 17, 7:30am - Hart Park: "Bird Sounds & Careful Observation in the Field" with Bob Barnes
- Sat. Sept. 24, 7:30am Kern River Preserve Turkey Vulture Festival Field Trip

Membership Application -- KERN AUDUBON SOCIETY (C30)

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* (10 issues)
____ New Member \$20

Make check payable to **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Send this form and your check for \$20 to:
Kern Audubon
PO Box 3581
Bakersfield CA 93385

Name(s) _____ Amount enclosed _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ Zip Code _____ Phone # _____

Please indicate if you would like to receive your *Audubon's Warbler* electronically: ____yes ____no

BIRDING ARIZONA ...BIRDING TRIP TO REMEMBER

No words can express our feelings about our July 23 - 30 southeast Arizona trip with Michael McQuerry, except **WOW!** We knew Michael was an expert birder and could hear birds before he saw them, but we had **NO** idea how moving this experience would be for us.

A few highlights were:

- What an experience to witness Michael calling a pygmy owl a couple hundred yards away. During this process he could tell by the owl's response how close it was to us. Then to see it perch directly over our heads in plain view - remarkable and awesome.
- We saw a Thick-billed Kingbird, which is only found in this one location in the United States.
- Michael immediately phoned the Rare Bird Alert when we saw a Common Black Hawk. This was a "life" bird for Michael even though he has been birding this area for 25-30 years.

The flying jewels (hummingbirds) we saw were the Lucifer, Broad-tailed, Violet-crowned, Magnificent, Broad-billed, Calliope, Allen's, and Blue-throated. We would laugh when someone would actually say, "It's just another broad-billed". Before this trip we didn't even know what a Broad-Billed hummingbird looked like!

Some of the other new birds for us were Bridled Titmouse, Scaled Quail, Black Vulture, Mexican jay, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Rufous, Costa's, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Hepatic Tanager, Western Wood-Pewee, Yellow-eyed Junco, the underbelly of an Elegant Trogon, Botteri's Sparrow, Don's favorite the Rufous-winged Sparrow, and the Chihuahuan Raven.

We were greeted with open arms by some of Michael's friends, many of whom had been deeply effected by the terrible fires in southeast Arizona:

- Tom and Edith Beatty of Beatty's Miller Canyon Guest Ranch, who had the Arizona fire destroy everything around their house, but have kept the hummingbird feeders well supplied
- Mary Jo Ballator of Ash Canyon Bed and Breakfast, who escaped fire while some neighborhood homes did not. Her home had two large yards of bird feeders and we saw birds ranging in size from a wild turkey to a bushtit.
- Tony Battiste of Battiste Bed, Breakfast and Birds in Miller Canyon, who was instrumental in saving the houses in his immediate area by watching the fire and alerting fire crews to where the fire was headed. Their home was an unexpected stop thanks to Mary Jo calling to see if they had any different birds at their feeders. A Lucifer hummingbird was finally sighted along with other first time birds for the group
- Mrs. Paton was another friend of Michael's who passed away, but whose home is still a place for seeing hummingbirds, including a violet-crowned. Another Michael, also an expert birder, maintains the Paton home in Patagonia.

Michael's posse from Kern Audubon were Jim & Arlene Burrows, David Chilton, Roger & Barbara Coley, Barbara Mattick, and Don & Yvonne Turkal.

While our photographers, Roger and Jim, will have pictures to remember our glorious finds, each of us will hold our memories in our hearts. If you ever have the opportunity to bird with Michael as your leader....."Just do it"!

Submitted by Vonnie Turkal, grateful participant



In our working gear



Our last evening (David was banding hummingbirds)

KERN COUNTY: CAPITAL OF WIND & SOLAR ENERGY

In 2009, 12% of the electricity generated in California came from renewable sources: wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, and biomass. AB 32 is a law that defines steps that the state needs to take to reduce 'greenhouse gas' emissions, one source being fossil fueled electric generators. In April, 2011, Governor Brown signed a law now mandating that 33% of all electricity in the state, by 2020, must be from renewable sources.

Kern County, because of its geography and weather, is a prime target for wind and solar energy development. The desert and the west side of the county are looked upon as potential solar sites. The Tehachapi area, already a major wind power generation source, is now looked upon for more siting of larger wind generators. Recently, a major project was proposed close to the city of Tehachapi, causing residents to register their concern about the noise and size of wind towers that are 500 feet in height. The company initiating the study soon pulled out, noting that local disapproval is a hard obstacle to overcome.

The good news is that with each wind farm that is approved, the measures to reduce bird mortality have improved. Most require that an 'in the field' biologist is hired to monitor both the construction and operation phases. The County has improved its monitoring program as to not repeat the large number of bird fatalities associated with the Altamont Pass wind farms in the Livermore area.

However, now there is another wind development, approved by the Planning Commission in August, in the Kelso Valley/Jawbone Canyon portion of the Tehachapi wind zone area. It is close to the Butterbredt Springs birding area, an Audubon recognized Globally Important Bird Area. The project is called the North Sky/Jawbone Wind Project. Recent fatalities of golden eagles in a neighboring wind farm, Pine Tree, have caused much concern about the size of the machines and degree of bird mortalities they can produce.

Final approval of the project by the Board of Supervisors will be on **Tuesday, September 13, at the 2 PM meeting. Please write to your supervisor** (1115 Truxtun Ave, 5th Floor, Bakersfield 93301) **immediately expressing your concerns about a project having the potential for a high number of bird kills.** Mention that the project is located in a primary bird migration zone and has prime golden eagle habitat. You can also email your concerns to your supervisor at board@co.kern.ca.us. Finally, you can come to the meeting and express your concerns that this is the wrong project in the wrong place.

This way Kern County can still do two things: provide renewable energy and protect bird species.

If you have questions, please call or email me:

Harry Love, Conservation Chair
love3@bak.rr.com or 589-6245

Gift from Estate of Mary Warter

Kern Audubon has recently benefited from the estate of former member, Mary Ellen Warter, who died last November at the age of 84. Mary was an ardent birder and collected bird figurines, photos, paintings and had an extensive library of bird/birding-related books that were donated to KAS through her friend and executor, Laura Stockton. Many of these items will be offered to the chapter through raffles or on a sale table at upcoming meetings. Some of the books will be for sale, some will go to KAS' library and some will go to the Kern River Preserve. We thank Laura for this wonderful donation and for these biographical notes about one of our former members:

Mary was born and lived most of her life in Des Moines, Iowa. She was a graduate of Oberlin College and received a Doctorate in Entomology from the University of Minnesota. Mary taught natural sciences at Grand View University. In 1978 she moved to Bakersfield and began a second career as a computer programmer at Tenneco West.

Birds were her passion and she was a very active member of the Des Moines Audubon Society before moving west. In her younger years Mary was very proud of her ability to recognize birds by their calls. She always had her binoculars handy and bird watched when and wherever she could. She was a member of Kern Audubon and part of the Kern Audubon Tuesday Birders group for a number of years.

On her 2.5 acre property in the Rosedale area she raised pigeons, doves, chickens, ducks and geese. For a number of years her show pigeons numbered in the hundreds. Many friends and acquaintances relied on her to take in wild birds that were rescued.

Mary also had a passion for plants and was a founding member of the Kern Co. CNPS Chapter. For many years she assisted with CNPS plant sales. Much of her property was planted in CA native plants in addition to many fruit trees. Her "birdhaven" was a haven for many kinds of vertebrate and invertebrate wildlife and for friends.