

Kern River Birding Areas

1 Starting/Ending Point
Park here to begin or end the 30 mile Kern River Parkway that is open to walkers, cyclists and birders.

2 2800 Acre Recharge Ponds
These ponds, which are often dry, are on Allen Road two blocks south of Stockdale Highway. Look for raptors, shorebirds, fall/spring migrants and egrets.

3 The Park at River Walk
Stockdale and Buena Vista Road. Access to the bike path and the river for birding.

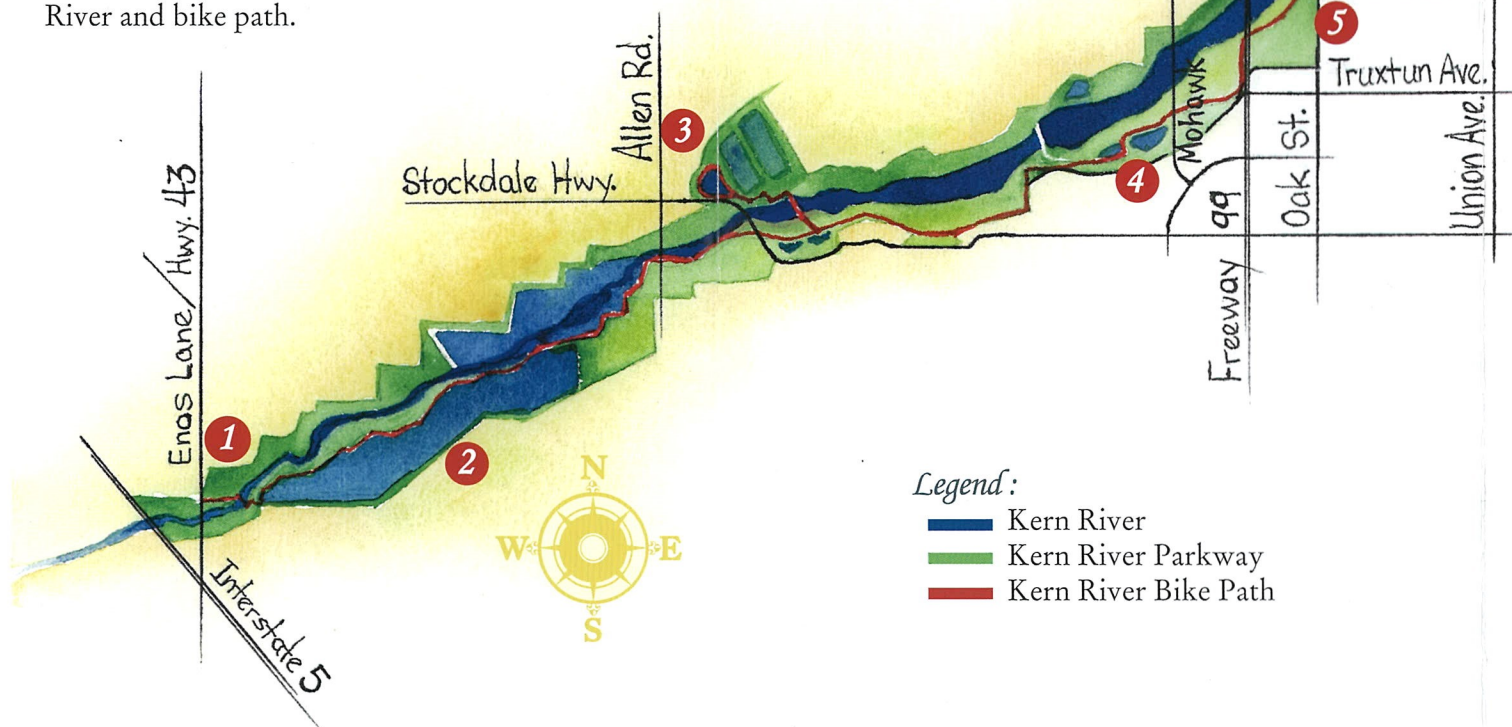
4 Truxtun Lakes
Located between the Kern River and Truxtun Extension there is year-round birding and access to the bike path.

5 Beach Park
Provides access near Highway 99 to the Kern River and bike path.

6 Panorama Vista Preserve
www.PanoramaVistaPreserve.org
1000 acre preserve below the Panorama Bluffs, one mile east of Manor Drive on Roberts Lane. 85 bird species (year-round and migrants) have been counted in this preserve along the Kern River which is in the process of being re-forested. Access by foot, bicycle or horse only.

7 Hart Park
Located along Alfred Harrell Highway. 3000 acre county park with mature trees and lakes. Look for Rose-ringed Parakeets, Wood Ducks, heron rookery, and Acorn Woodpeckers.

8 Lake Ming
Man-made lake adjacent to the Kern River near Alfred Harrell Highway. Seasonal migrants and waterfowl such as Great Horned Owls, raptors, egrets, Osprey and Golden Eagle can be viewed from this great location.



Additional Kern River Birding Area

Audubon's Kern River Preserve, 50 miles east of Bakersfield (Highway 178) along the south fork Kern River is located amidst one of California's finest remaining riparian forests. The preserve is home to over 200 species of birds, including endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and California endangered Yellow-billed Cuckoo. www.Kern.Audubon.org

For a complete checklist of birds of the Kern, go to www.NatureAli.org/checklists.htm or scan the code to the right.



Watercolor Artwork: Nancy Putney

Birds of the Kern



Kern Audubon Society
www.KernAudubonSociety.org
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Raptors

Birds of prey hunt small mammals or birds from the air or perches. Seventeen species reside along or visit the Kern River seasonally, including these five:

- (1) **COOPERS HAWK** agile in pursuing small birds through tree/bushes, larger than its cousin the Sharp-shinned Hawk, a more secretive bird. Look for the red eyes and banded tail.
- (2) **RED-TAILED HAWK** is commonly seen perching on telephone poles or in trees. Characteristic rusty tail seen in flight (absent in juveniles).
- (3) **AMERICAN KESTREL** a small falcon with “clown” face.
- (4) **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** has rusty breast/shoulders and tail bands.
- (5) **TURKEY VULTURES** often soar on thermals with a “rocking” motion and feed on carrion.

Waterfowl

Water birds spend most of their time hunting for fish or other aquatic food while many are also comfortable on dry land. These six species are found year-round:

- (6) **MALLARD** Our most common duck with bright orange legs.
- (7) **WOOD DUCK** is known by its striking plumage.
- (8) **GREAT BLUE HERON** is a solitary bird except for nesting in colonies called “rookeries,” such as Hart Park Lake.
- (9) **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** the only cormorant species found inland.
- (10) **SNOWY EGRET** with black bill, black legs and yellow feet.
- (11) **GREAT EGRET** much larger than Snowy with large yellow bill, black legs and black feet.



Year-Round Residents

Well-adapted to human populated areas, many birds are found in neighborhoods as well as parks and along rivers. Here's a few of the “everyday” birds often taken for granted:

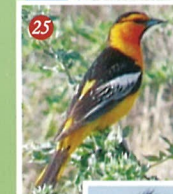
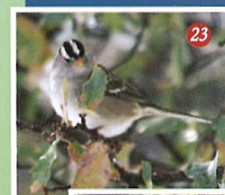
- (12) **CALIFORNIA SCRUB JAY** usually found in pairs or small family groups.
- (13) **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** heard with often repeated phrases and known for the ability to mimic.
- (14) **HOUSE FINCH** usually found in small flocks in bushes and on the ground. Male has orange-red chest and forehead. Has a lovely song.
- (15) **ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** has flourished in Bakersfield area. It has a noisy call, and eats fruit and nuts.
- (16) **CALIFORNIA QUAIL** is our state bird, often seen perching or scurrying along open ground in small flocks or pairs.
- (17) **ACORN WOODPECKER** has clown-like face, undulates in flight and stores acorns in tree holes it has drilled.
- (18) **BLACK PHOEBE** is a solitary bird, often near water. Dips its tail, catches insects while in flight. Distinctive “tuxedo” like appearance.
- (19) **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** is only year-round hummingbird in California. Male has bright red gorget and fancy aerial display.
- (20) **GREAT HORNED OWL** hunts mammals from a perch and can be identified by its “hoot.”
- (21) **CALIFORNIA THRASHER** prefers foraging on the ground around trees and shrubs and is difficult to find except when singing, usually from a perch.
- (22) **GREATER ROADRUNNER** generally found in dry areas, often perched on rocks or fence posts. Feeds on small prey, mainly lizards and snakes.



Migratory/Seasonal Birds

Many birds migrate during spring and fall, some staying a few days/weeks, some for several months. Some birds come here to nest (Bullock's Oriole), others nest far away, such as White-crowned Sparrows. These species are commonly seen spring-summer or fall-winter along the Kern River:

- (23) **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** has yellow seed beak, black and white stripes on crown. Forages mostly on the ground in small flocks. Common winter visitor.
- (24) **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** also common in winter, is known as “Audubon's Warbler.” Shows four yellow patches: throat, crown, rump and flanks.
- (25) **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** nests in spring in sack-shaped hanging nests.
- (26) **BELTED KINGFISHER** has a noisy chattering call when in flight. Found near water.
- (27) **WESTERN KINGBIRD** usually in pairs, yellow-bellied and square dark tail. Common spring and summer.
- (28) **NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER** has a white barred back and is found in oak woodlands.
- (29) **OSPREY** feeds on fish it captures feet-first, more gull-like than hawk. Narrow wings are angled. Winter and spring migrant.



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www.SparksArts.com

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A Brief History of the Kern River

The Kern River as it exists today is a remnant of a natural flood channel. Before the turn of the 19th century the southern San Joaquin Valley had one of the largest freshwater marsh and lake systems west of the Mississippi River. Four lakes were fed by the Kern: Goose, Kern, Tulare and Buena Vista. Tulare Lake in 1862 measured 486,000 acres in size. Due to diversions, canalizations and damming of the Kern River none of the ancient natural lakes exist today. The result has meant the loss of many species of plants, birds and animals from this watershed.

The southernmost river in San Joaquin Valley, the Kern River's north fork rises from several small lakes near Mt. Whitney in the high Sierra Nevada mountains. It flows south through the Sequoia National Forest, emerging from its narrow canyon at Kernville and into Lake Isabella. The headwaters of its south fork flow from the Golden Trout Wilderness south through Inyo National Forest, then west spilling into Lake Isabella.

Below Isabella Dam (completed in 1954 to manage spring flooding downriver) the Kern River flows through a spectacularly rugged canyon paralleled by Highway 178. Reaching the city of Bakersfield the Kern's course is diverted by canals providing irrigation for farms, agribusinesses of the southern San Joaquin Valley and municipal water supplies. During wet years the river is allowed to flow its natural course through the city riverbeds where it recharges aquifers, provides habitat for birds and wildlife, and is enjoyed by city's residents.

The Kern River Parkway was established in 1976 to encompass a native riparian area extending over 30 miles from the mouth of the Kern Canyon to Enos Lane (Highway 43) and comprising 6000 acres of trails, parks and waterways. A private preserve within the parkway, 1100 acre Panorama Vista Preserve, is held in trust for the public. The Preserves' wooded land along the banks of the river, as well as a revegetation project with native shrubs/trees, provide use for birders, equestrians, bicyclists and walkers. 230 plus species of birds have been seen along the Kern River Parkway.

Kern Audubon Society welcomes you to visit soon and enjoy this beautiful natural habitat.