



AUDUBON'S WARBLER

Vol. 46 No.8 OCTOBER 2017
Newsletter of **Kern Audubon Society**
A chapter of National Audubon Society
www.kernaudubonsociety.org

KERN AUDUBON

Tues. OCTOBER 3, 2017 - 7:00pm
Kern Supt of Schools 1300 17th St, Bakersfield
(Street parking or in lot at 18th & K)

Feather Forensics: An Intriguing Look at Nature's Complex 'Integumentary' Structure

John Schmitt, Naturalist & Bird Illustrator



John Schmitt is an internationally-known bird artist whose work has formed major artistic contributions to over a dozen books, including the most recent edition (7th) of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and recently released *Raptors of Mexico & Central America* and *A Guide to Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. Over 200 of his illustrations have appeared in ornithological journals, magazines and environmental newsletters including *American Birds* and *Living Bird*, the magazine of Cornell University Lab of Ornithology. John lives locally in the Kern River Valley and his artwork has graced publicity flyers and t-shirts for Audubon's Kern River Preserve for many years.

John will be talking about one of his favorite topics: FEATHERS--their structure and artistry, how they are constructed and how birds use them, etc. John has a spectacular collection of feathers from all over the world, some of which he will share with us.

OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS

Wed. October 11th, 8:30AM - Truxtun Lakes. Al Caetano will lead this morning outing along the shores of Truxtun Lakes next to the Kern River with running water, where we hope to see early migrants, waterfowl, shorebirds and year-round residents. Beginning birders especially welcome! Meet at the Truxtun Extension parking lot between Mohawk and the painted water tower at 8:30am, finishing by 11:30. Wear good walking shoes, bring water/snacks. Binocs are suggested and we have some to loan. Contact Al (661-833-6705) for more information.

Sat. Oct 21, 8:00am - Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area Join Al Caetano for a morning of birding at Buena Vista lake about 30 miles west of Bakersfield where we hope to see migrating songbirds, raptors, waterfowl and shorebirds. A great location for new birders. Loaner binoculars available. Meet at **8:00 am** at the Kern River Parkway parking lot on Stockdale Hiway & Don Hart Dr. across from CSUB to carpool or at **8:30am at Buena Vista Rec. Area**. There is a \$6.00 entry fee per car so it is a good idea to car pool. Bring water, snacks, binocs. Lunch optional at the BV golf course cafe or BYOL. Return after lunch. Call Al (833-6705) for more information.

Sat. Oct. 28, 8:00am - Meadowbrook Park, Tehachapi

Meadowbrook Park is located at 21750 Westwood Blvd. in Golden Hills. We will meet at the **Burger King Parking lot at 8 am or at the park 8:30**. The park has paved walkways and easy trails with little elevation change. Should see resident birds and fall migrants. Join Greg Hargleroad, leader, for this morning outing. Bakersfield birders can meet to carpool at the ParknRide at 7:15am (parkinglot between Real Rd & Hiway 99 on Stockdale Hiway.) Bring water & binocs. Call Greg for info: 818/645-3664.



FALL SCIENCE CAMP NEEDS VOLUNTEERS Kern Audubon has been leading the way with outreach to local 6th grade students through the fall & spring science camps at Panorama Vista Preserve. Help is needed at the three camps **Tues - Thurs Oct 17-19, 2017, 8-noon**. No experience necessary, all materials provided, just a heart for kids and birds! Contact Kevin Fahey for information & to sign up: 706-7459 or kjfahey@sbcglobal.net

KERN AUDUBON-TEHACHAPI

Tues. October 31, 7:00pm

Golden Hills Elementary School Cafeteria (20215 Park Rd. Tehachapi)

"Are Birds Dinosaurs?"

Greg Hargleroad, Speaker

Greg Hargleroad is a Tehachapi High School biology teacher and member of Kern Audubon-Tehachapi. He'll be showing us pictures of fossil birds and dinosaurs on Halloween. How appropriate! Greg is also the field trip leader for Kern Audubon-Tehachapi and is a very good birder.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Kern Audubon Executive Board has approved a new position of Communications Coordinator to "carryout and coordinate functions relating to the important role of communication for the chapter and its outreach to the community." This will include editing the monthly newsletter and coordination with board as well as those involved with program/field trips, mailings, social media, website. This will be a part-time position with stipend. Persons interested may contact Madi Elsea, Warbler editor: 322-7470 or madielsea@aol.com



CLIMATE CHANGE spells trouble for more than just the polar bear. In 2016 scientists found that the last Bramble Cay melomys, a rodent found on an island in Australia's Torres Strait, had vanished, victim of rising seas and the first documented case of a mammal driven to extinction by climate change. Rising temperatures are depressing some plant and animal populations, driving species toward the poles, shifting migrations and behavior. The population of Arctic shore bird Red Knot is getting smaller. Populations of Adelie penguins on Antarctica have plummeted. This is the legacy of climate change on animals. Who's next?

Photo (left): 22 folks attended the recent Wind Wolves outing which included sighting of a healthy Black Bear

AUDUBON IMPACTS COASTAL COMMISSION ACTION

The California Coastal Commission met recently in Cambria to consider a permit application by a seafood company to modify its existing oyster cultivation activity on tidal mud flats in Humboldt Bay. At its June meeting, the Commission had denied the company's permit application. Audubon California, the U.S. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, the Tulare Basin Wetlands Association and the California Waterfowl Association had objected to the planned location of some of the company's oyster operations in dense, but sensitive, eelgrass beds on the tidal flats.

The Coastal Commission ended up approving a revised permit application, which protects most, but not all, of the healthiest eelgrass areas in the bay. As part of the permit agreement, Coast Seafoods also agreed to cut back and consolidate its footprint of operations to no more than 279 acres. Coast Seafoods owns or leases 4,313 acres of intertidal land and is the largest employer on Humboldt Bay, having oyster farmed there for 70 years.

Humboldt Bay's eelgrass provides essential and increasingly rare habitat for a large number of fish, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Traditional bottom scraping methods of oyster farming, which are no longer allowed in California, have permanently destroyed many of Humboldt Bay's former eelgrass beds. The less invasive cultivation methods in use today still involve boat and foot traffic and installation of equipment, all of which harm the eelgrass and disturb wildlife. Black Brant geese and Pacific herring are particularly vulnerable to loss or disturbance of eelgrass beds. Herring in Humboldt Bay spawn (lay their eggs) almost exclusively in eelgrass habitat. They have not been reported to spawn when the eelgrass has oyster aquaculture plots.

For the Black Brant, Humboldt Bay's eelgrass beds are their most important wintering and staging area in California. They are small, dark geese with large wings which migrate along the west coast and as far south as Mexico. They winter and feed only in beds of eelgrass, a staple of their diet. They will also eat the herring eggs they find in the eelgrass, as do many shorebirds. They are highly sensitive to disturbance and are negatively affected by vessel traffic during their winter stopover, a time when they must rest and feed efficiently.

Adding to the importance of Humboldt Bay's eelgrass habitat, there is huge decline in eelgrass along the west coast south of Humboldt Bay. Morro Bay, for example, which has always been an important staging area for Black Brant during migration, has lost 97% of its eelgrass since 2007, from 344 acres down to 13. The exact cause of that decline is still unknown. A major transplanting effort was undertaken in 2014, but little of the transplanted eelgrass has survived. *Reported by Mac McCarthy, Member-at-Large, Kern Audubon Executive Board*

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join KERN AUDUBON for these activities...

- Tues. Oct. 3, 7pm - Meeting & program
- Wed. Oct. 11, 8:30am - Truxtun lake outing
- Tues. Oct. 17, 7pm - KAS Executive Board
- Sat. Oct. 21, 8am - Buena Vista lake outing
- Sat. Oct. 28, 8am - Meadowbrook Park, Tehachapi outing

Membership Application -- KERN AUDUBON SOCIETY (C4ZC300Z)

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
_____ Renewal \$20

Make check payable to **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

SEND this form and your check made to National Audubon for \$20 to:

Kern Audubon
PO Box 3581
Bakersfield CA 93385

Name(s) _____ Amount enclosed _____

Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Phone # _____