



Friends of the Kern River Preserve

Volume 12, Issue 1

 **Audubon** CALIFORNIA

Spring 2008

Audubon's mission is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."

SPRING NATURE FESTIVAL

This is the 14th year of the Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival! It will be held from April 30 - May 6, 2008, at Audubon's Kern River Preserve in Weldon and Circle Park in Kernville. The festival celebrates the biodiversity of the Kern River Valley and Southern Sierra Nevada; home to over 200 nesting species of birds, over 100 species of mammals, over 130 species of butterflies, and over 2000 species of plants. This great diversity is a result of the area being at the intersection of three of North America's 10 Floristic Provinces (Great Basin Desert Province, Mojave Desert sub-province of the Sonoran Desert Province, and Californian Province).

Our festival artist, John Schmitt, has designed a new t-shirt featuring "Spring Warblers of the Kern River



John Schmitt completed another masterpiece in his amazing series of the birds of the Kern River Valley & Southern Sierra.

see Spring page 2

AIR QUALITY & AUDUBON



Sunsets are prettiest when the air is dirty

Protecting the health of all citizens in the Kern River Valley by preserving the rural lifestyle is one of Audubon's top objectives. The Kern River Valley Specific Plan is supposed to provide residents and developers with guidelines on sustainable low-impact development. Unfortunately, the process has stalled and the Kern Valley is experiencing some of very bad development in the interim. Homes are being built on unstable hilltops, bright lights and

see Air page 2

GRINNELL REVISITED!

Joseph Grinnell, one of California's pioneer zoologists, created UC Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. He, along with Alden Miller, wrote the still relevant, "Distribution of the Birds of California." Many areas in Kern County were surveyed in the early part of the 20th century including a route along Fay Ranch Road all the way to St. John's Pass in Kelso Valley. Audubon is working to protect the Kelso Valley watershed because of its biological significance.

In 1910 Grinnell stated, "At this point I wish to emphasize what I believe

see Grinnell page 3

Calendar of Events

Check our website for special events!

Saturday, April 19, 2008 - 8 a.m. Spring Nature-Fest Prep. RSVP.

Friday, April 25, 2008 - 1 p.m. - Friends of the Kern River Preserve Spring Nature Festival preparation. RSVP.

Wednesday - Tuesday, April 30 - May 6, 2008 - Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival.

Saturday, May 17, 2008 - 8 a.m. - Spring Cleaning. RSVP. rtollefson@audubon.org

Saturday, June 14, 2008 - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. California Amphibian & Reptile Celebration. Kern River Preserve HQ, Weldon.

Saturday, June 21, 2008 - 8 a.m. - clean HQ, groom nature trail. RSVP.

Thursday-Sunday, June 26-29, 2008 North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Meeting. Kernville School, Kernville.

Saturday, July 12, 2008 - Bird Count - South Fork Rapid Assessment Bird Survey.

Saturday, July 19, 2008 - 8 a.m. - Work Party. RSVP. rtollefson@audubon.org

Saturday, August 9, 2008 - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Kern Valley Hummingbird Celebration. Kern River Preserve HQ, Weldon.

Saturday, August 16, 2008 - 8 a.m. - Work Party. RSVP. rtollefson@audubon.org

Saturday, September 20, 2008 - 8 a.m. - Kern Valley Pride Day work party. RSVP.

Saturday - Sunday, September 27-28, 2008 - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Kern Valley Turkey Vulture Festival, Kern River Preserve, Weldon.

Saturday - Sunday, October 25-26, 2008 - For current members of the Friends of the Kern River Preserve Only. Annual Friends Appreciation Weekend. RSVP.

For more information or to RSVP.

See our website: <http://kern.audubon.org>
email: kpfriends@audubon.org

Friends of the Kern River Preserve



P.O. Box 833

Weldon, CA 93283-0833

email: krpfriends@audubon.org

website: <http://kern.audubon.org>

The Kern River Preserve is managed by Audubon California for the preservation of one of California's largest contiguous cottonwood-willow riparian forests and the wildlife it supports.

The Friends of the Kern River Preserve is a membership organization that provides volunteer & financial support for outreach, education, wildlife habitat protection, & stewardship.

Your support is critical to the success of the Kern River Preserve. Please consider making a donation by filling out the membership form and mailing it to the Friends.

STAFF

PRESERVE MANAGER..... REED TOLLEFSON
OUTREACH COORDINATOR ALISON SHEEHY

unless otherwise noted all articles and photographs by Alison Sheehy

LAND STEWARD MATT REITER
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT..... SANDRA WIESER

OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION ASST DENIS DUNNING
MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS..... JEFF KING

VOLUNTEERS

BIRD FEEDING COORDINATOR..... BIRDIE FOSTER
FEEDERS: DARRELL BARNES, MARIA GARCIA, GORDON & CHRIS
HANCOCK, CHLOE KENNEDY, MARTINE METZENHEIM, MARYA
MILLER, BOB SHOWERS, HOLLY SORENSON & GERRY TESSMAN

SPECIAL PROJECTS

BOB BARNES, VALERIE CASSITY, BILL FOSTER, MIKE
GALLAGHER, RON GILLENLINE, CHARLOTTE GOODSON, BUZ
LUNSFORD, KERNCREST AUDUBON SOCIETY, JOHN SCHMITT,
PATRICIA SEAMOUNT, MARY WHITFIELD

Spring cont. from page 1

Valley and Southern Sierra Nevada." Returning to fill the air with beautiful music at Circle Park, will be a feature performance by "Mama's Mid-Life Crisis" and at the Kern River Preserve, performances are scheduled by "Out of the Blue," Archie Logsdon, "Carrion Luggage," and others.

We look forward to this year's two exciting keynote speakers. Friday night, Bob Steele [www.bobsteelephoto.com] will give a themed presentation titled "Warblers: nesting, migrant, and vagrant of the Kern River Valley and Southern Sierra Nevada, plus bonus regional specialty birds." Saturday night, John Muir Laws [www.johnmuirlaws.com] will present "An Evening Exploring the Natural World of the Sierra Nevada."

There will be weekend workshops on many different aspects of natural history as well as demonstrations on bird banding, pond turtles and falconry. Over 30 different field trips featuring birding, wildflowers, geology, natural history and butterflies are being offered this year. Of the field trip options, many of the destinations are offered all seven days. There are numerous half-day field trips offered Saturday and Sunday. In addition to

our traditional field trips, many new destinations should satisfy even the most seasoned festival veterans. Field trip sign-ups are in full swing and several sections for specific days have already sold out. We will also be continuing our Spring Nature Festival photo contest for the second year.

Find full descriptions and the latest additions to the schedule on our website and view an abbreviated version on page 7. In order to save paper and keep costs down; printed information is not available but there is a printable schedule available on our website. [http://kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm] §

Air cont. from page 1

signs are destroying the night sky and plans are in motion to build a high-speed highway through pristine oak and conifer woodlands along Rancheria Road. While many might applaud such a measure, it means more polluting cars and through traffic from the San Joaquin Valley to the desert with no consideration for the magnitude of air quality deterioration that will result.

If you moved to the country because you love peace and quiet, dark skies and clean air then we hope you will be involved in protecting this valley. A rural lifestyle has trade-offs. The lack of amenities for most is a small price to pay for clean air and open space.

At the Kern River Preserve we work to reduce our impact on air quality by telecommuting. We plant trees that help clean the air and store carbon. We preserve land with natural vegetation that keeps dust down reducing particulate matter. We, along with our partners, have protected large tracts of land like Cyrus Canyon, Capp Canyon, and Fay Canyon which reduces sprawl and the subsequent air quality degradation that results from more commuting cars. Protecting wildlands and promoting cluster development protects people from wildland fire interface and reduces fire risks.

Audubon is committed to follow the simple principles of preserving nature for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. We are committed to working to promote the process of developing the Kern River Valley Specific Plan with a long view to the future. The ability to take a deep breath without coughing and the view of our mountains is too important not to be involved. Each and every one of us can add to the problem, but we hope the choice is to be part of the solution. §



Grinnell cont. from page 1

will ultimately prove to be the greatest purpose of our museum. This value will not, however, be realized until the lapse of many years, possibly a century, assuming that our material is safely preserved. And this is that the student of the future will have access to the original record of faunal conditions in California and the west, wherever we now work."

A century has since passed and the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at UC Berkeley is now conducting a long-term project to document changes in diversity and distributions of small mammals and birds in California through re-surveys of sites originally examined by Joseph Grinnell and colleagues 100 years ago. They intend to use the data collected to test the performance of model-based predictions of species' responses to changes in climate and land-cover, and thereby improve upon predictions of wildlife's responses to change.

Audubon staff is excited to help this fascinating re-visit of Joseph Grinnell's pioneering studies and hope to provide not only housing and logistical support but to also join the field teams in documenting the current distribution and abundance of vertebrates. Visit their website to learn more about this research project and already completed re-survey project reports. [<http://mvz.berkeley.edu>] §

INTRODUCING... MATTHEW REITER, KRP'S NEW LAND STEWARD

by Matt Reiter

I was born in Florida, but grew up in western Massachusetts among the Berkshire Mountain foothills. Personally, I am recently married and spend as much of my time in the outdoors as possible. I love to hike, backpack, camp, climb, ski, mountain bike, surf, hunt, and fish. I also play bass in local blues-rock band and like to drink good beer.

My path as a wildlife ecologist began with a passion for all things in the outdoors. At a young age my mother fostered my interest in nature and in college, I escaped the bustle of Boston, backpacking in the northern reaches of New England with friends.



The original Grinnell survey route went from the head of Fay Canyon to the head of Kelso Valley at St. John's Pass.

Following graduation from Boston College, I took a field internship in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Although I had no prior experience in field science, I was soon hiking transects and trapping mosquitoes throughout many of the most remote areas of the Hawaiian Islands. I continued on to manage a three-year study evaluating the efficacy of mosquito control to reduce transmission of avian malaria among Hawaii's native birds, many of which are critically threatened by this parasite.



The Preserve scored a coup when Matt Reiter agreed to join our team.

My desire to delve deeper into the wildlife sciences lead me to graduate school. I maintained a commitment to only consider positions where the research data could provide recommendations for wildlife managers. I initiated work in pursuit of my M.S. at the University of Minnesota in fall of 2003, where I was quickly immersed in the ecology and interactions of nesting Canada geese, arctic fox, and lemmings. These predator-prey dynamics are complex, occur across very broad spatial scales in northern Canada, and have direct consequences for the management of Canada geese along the Mississippi River migratory corridor. I continued my work studying factors that influence the reproductive performance of Canada geese in northern Canada; beginning my Ph.D. research in the summer of 2005 while completing my M.S. I hope to complete my PhD dissertation by the summer of 2008.

As the new Land Steward at Kern River Preserve, I hope to successfully incorporate my scientific and wildlife management background into the ongoing restoration and habitat management activities at KRP. I will primarily work with the KRP manager, Reed Tollefson, to achieve restoration goals as part of a recent land acquisition to mitigate loss of southwestern willow flycatcher habitat, and to implement new conservation strategies at KRP as part of a federal conservation easement. I am particularly interested in identifying how to best use livestock grazing as a habitat management tool, and the incorporation of geographical information systems (GIS) into restoration and habitat management. Furthermore, I believe that finding ways to accurately monitor the success, or lack thereof, of our current and future management activities at achieving their goals will provide insights to improve our restoration and management of this valuable ecosystem into the future. Having been primarily a scientist over the last 10 years where achievements (i.e. publications) often have limited consequence for conservation, I am thoroughly excited to directly implement management strategies to improve the habitat for all wildlife at KRP. §

NEW AUDUBON CENTER...2010?

While we love the quiet charm of the visitors' center at the

Kern River Preserve, the facilities are quite small and at risk from many factors (the river washing away the headquarters is probably the biggest threat).

In October, we applied for a grant to begin planning for a new building complex. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy has generously granted us \$152,000 to pay for the necessary environmental review and architectural design of a state of the art green visitor center, and on January 26, the National Audubon Society board gave us their blessing to go ahead with this great project. We are excited at the prospect of a new Center opening in a few years! §

SHE'S BACK!

by Birdie Foster

Chloe Kennedy, the Tuesday Bird Feeder volunteer, has returned to her regular bird feeding duties. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in early November, 2007. A small lump was discovered on a mammogram, a lumpectomy was done followed by six weeks of radiation. Chloe said, "Early detection and treatment was so important for me - so get informed." Visit [www.komen.org] for some good information. Chloe was missed at the Kern River Preserve and we are very glad to have her back filling those feeders and visiting with Preserve guests. §



It is such a joy to see Chloe's smiling face at the preserve again!



It's a rare day when we can get our team of bird feeders all in one place. Left to right: Gordon Hancock, Chris Hancock, Darrell Barnes, Marya Miller, Chloe Kennedy, Bob Showers, Birdie Foster, Gerry Tessman, Maria Garcia, Martine Metzenheim. (MIA Holly Sorenson).

CANS FOR CUCKOOS

Bring your recyclables to Thomas Recycling and donate the proceeds to the Kern River Preserve account. It can really add up and is very much appreciated. They are located at 2000 Chain Ave. in Lake Isabella (across from the fire station on Lake Isabella Blvd). They are open Tuesday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. §

LEAVE YOUR LEGACY AT KRP

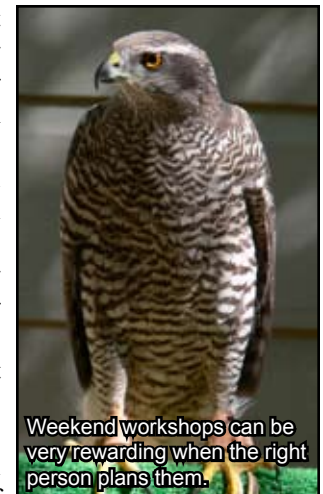
Let your legacy live on at the Kern River Preserve. A simple note in your will allow long term support for Outreach and

Education, Land Protection, Research and Land Stewardship. Is is easy to help the Kern River Preserve protect this land in perpetuity, just have the following language added to your will: I bequeath \$ _____ (or _____ % of my residuary estate) to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit environmental conservation organization, located at 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003. This bequest shall be applied to Audubon's programs at the Kern River Preserve in the State of California. Please consult an estate planner for legal advise. All gifts are appreciated and will be used with gratitude.

Planned giving is one of the most powerful ways for an individual or family to help create a lasting benefit for the wildlife, the land and the people at this Preserve. §

WANTED! VOLUNTEER EVENT COORDINATOR

Would you like to help connect people with the Kern River Preserve by organizing regular monthly events? Topics of an environmentally sensitive nature could include anything from natural history, native American or pioneer history, geology, native plant gardening or other topics relevant to the Kern River Preserve and Kern River Valley. The task includes finding guest speakers to commit to a few hours on any second Saturday morning, publicize each event, attend each event and then submit a brief report. Contact Alison Sheehey to apply or for more information. Email: krpfriends@audubon.org or call 760-378-2029. §



Weekend workshops can be very rewarding when the right person plans them.

CLEAN-UPS, PLANTINGS, etc...

Each month we have scheduled activities for Friends of the Kern River Preserve to participate in. The preserve always needs help and our volunteers are critical to the success of many of our projects. Please check the calendar of events for upcoming activities and then let us know if you can help. Thanks! §



Cub Scout Pack 848 from Ridgecrest put in a full morning's work raking leaves in November. THANKS SCOUTS!

RESEARCH AROUND THE SOUTH FORK and BEYOND

Last year was a banner year for Audubon's involvement in research on the Kern River watershed's flora and fauna, and this year also looks to be full of interesting research projects. Preserve staff are supporting several doctoral candidates by allowing research on preserve lands, providing direct project support or housing, or all three.

Returning this year to do more studies on hummingbirds will be Chris Clark with his field assistant Teresa Feo. One of Chris' papers on the importance of tail feathers in hummingbird 'song' was published in a British ornithological journal and made international news.

The Southern Sierra Research Station will be conducting its normal studies on Southwestern Willow Flycatchers and was also awarded funding for Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo surveys after several years absence.

The Kern River Preserve's Southwestern Pond Turtle headstart project continues under the capable direction of Bill Foster and Darrell Barnes. Read more about the volunteer crew's findings after last year's trapping season in this newsletter.

New research projects that staff of the Kern River Preserve will provide significant support for will be a study on a very rare flower which is endemic to the Kelso Valley and Cyrus Canyon areas only; read our article about the Kelso Creek Monkeyflower and Naomi Fraga's doctoral research on this rare and unique wildflower.

The last project which we are most excited about is the Grinnell re-visited Project being conducted by UC Berkeley. Read our front page article about this amazing revisit of one of California's most influential zoologist's field surveys of a century ago. §



Chris Clark found that some hummingbird song is actually a result of vibrating tail feathers

KELSO CREEK MONKEYFLOWER *Mimulus shevockii*



The Kern River Valley's only endemic species needs our help

The Kelso Creek Monkeyflower is an annual herb in the Figwort family. It is a diminutive plant that occurs in the Kern & Kelso Valleys. Only 3/4 - 4 3/4 inches tall, it has fairly long (for its size) oval-shaped leaves on a reddish-green stem. The 5-lobed petals are maroon on top and yellow with maroon dots on the

bottom. It normally flowers in March and April depending on rain and temperature.

The flower is severely endangered because of its limited distribution. At this time it has no legal protection but is listed by California Native Plant Society as "fairly endangered" (CNPS 1B.2) and is of special management consideration by the Bureau of Land Management. It was petitioned to be listed with the US Fish & Wildlife in 1994 but was withdrawn from consideration in 1998.

Audubon purchased the Cyrus Canyon property and donated it to BLM to help protect one population of this plant, and we continue to work with land owners and agencies to help secure permanent protection of this truly unique Kern County species. On Saturday, March 15th a new population was discovered bringing the number of very small sites the plant is found on to eleven. Staff of the Kern River Preserve continue to search our Kelso Creek Sanctuary for *Mimulus shevockii* but have so far been unsuccessful.

This year Audubon is providing field and logistical help to Naomi Fraga, a doctoral candidate from Claremont University, who is studying population genetics of this monkeyflower and investigating current threats to the plant. We look forward to supporting her research and hope her findings help Audubon find a way to protect this rare beauty in perpetuity. §

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Each year Audubon compiles data from Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) conducted throughout the country between December 15th and January 5th. Each count circle is created by individuals who decide the radius of the circle based on knowledge of the area. Some counts are done because compilers know that the area has many individual birds or particular species or has tremendous ecological significance. While some Audubon chapters may organize the counts, most counts are not chapter sponsored.

Three local CBCs are held in part on Kern River Preserve property: Butterbredt, Kern River Valley and South Fork.

The area's oldest count is the Butterbredt CBC which covers a circle centered on Butterbredt Peak and includes Audubon's Kelso Creek Sanctuary. The count was started by members of the Santa Monica Audubon Society on December 18, 1976. Members of the original group included Keith Axelson, Pam Axelson, Abigail King and three great people no longer with us: Gilbert King and Don & Caroline Adams. That first year they saw 44 species on count day plus an additional 11



Eighty Pinyon Jays flew over the Kelso Creek Sanctuary during the Butterbredt CBC

species during count week. This past year the count was held on December 15, 2007 with 16 participants finding 57 species including several unusual species: Band-tailed Pigeon, Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Red Crossbill.



Found on two Kern County CBCs, rare Red-necked Grebes seemed almost common

The next count to be started was the Kern River Valley CBC begun by Tony Farmen of the Army Corps of Engineers on Dec 30, 1978. Part of the Kern River Preserve is within the count circle, including a small section of Migrant

Corner and all property west of Sierra Way. That first year, 32 participants found 117 species. On the 30th anniversary, despite valiant efforts by all 25 field participants and 5 feeder watchers, intense winds caused us to only tie the record of the first count with 117 species. Eight additional species were found during count week after the winds had subsided. Two species were found that were new to the count circle: Red-necked Grebe and Violet-green Swallow.

The final count was begun by Steve Laymon on Christmas Day in 1991. The South Fork Count covers the greatest portion of Audubon lands including most of the Kern River Preserve from east of Sierra Way all the way to our Allen Sanctuary on the edge of the Canebroke Ecological Reserve. The first year eight participants recorded 94 species plus six additional species during count week. It was truly a Christmas Day bird count for the first several years. This year 22 participants found 91 species on count day with two additional species found during count week. The only new species recorded was the Ruddy Duck which after 17 years was novel in the fact it had never been seen before; notably absent were Killdeer. We suspect drought played a major role in its absence.

The severe drought during the 2006-07 rain year affected the number of individuals and species totals; it will be interesting to see how long it takes the numbers to rebound. What is interesting is how closely the species totals for all counts was very close to the premier count totals (including the count week birds) even with the extreme drought conditions. Do these numbers reflect a cyclical low, the norm or seasoned birders ability to find every species within the circle? Stay tuned for next year's round of censuses to see what happens! §

WILSON'S WARBLER: KRP's most abundant migrant

Look at John Schmitt's drawing for this year's Spring Festival t-shirt. See the bird on the right side in the center of the picture? This is just one of the many warblers that are found on the

Kern River Preserve. Although this species does not nest on the preserve (it nests in the local mountains and all the way up to Alaska on the west coast), it is our most abundant migrant warbler.

Thousands of Wilson's Warblers visit our forest each spring. While easier to see at small migrant traps like Butterbredt Spring, migrants find little to eat there and need to refuel at massive tracts of native lands like the Kern River Preserve.

At Butterbredt Spring on the morning of May 19, 1999, local bird expert, Matt Heindel counted 10 species and 3,000 individuals of migrating warblers, of which 1,700 were Wilson's Warblers. While thousands of individuals might be seen flying through the narrow canyon of that desert oasis, they do not stay there but continue on. When they arrive at the South Fork Kern River, the forest provides these weary travelers a welcome break. A relative smorgasbord of insects along with plenty of protective cover lets these tiny birds enjoy a restful few days to refuel for the rest of their journey from southern Central America to British Columbia (another subspecies that uses the coastal route nests can nest all the way up to the Arctic Circle).

Wilson's Warblers numbers peak between April 25 and May 5, although they have appeared as early as March 24 and as late as June 17. Beginning in early April the Kern River Preserve becomes the three squares a day, sit-down restaurant for many migrating birds. Wilson's Warbler is just one of the beneficiaries of the abundance this extensive forest protected and restored through the efforts of The Nature Conservancy, the California Dept. of Fish & Game, the Army Corps of Engineers and Audubon. §



Male Wilson's Warbler
courtesy Bob Steele © bobsteelephoto.com

KERN VALLEY BUTTERFLY COUNTS

Bob Barnes can't seem to stop counting things and he has enlisted many of us to expand our horizons to count more than just birds. For many years we have been counting butterflies all around the Kern River Valley and this year will be no exception. Many of us knew absolutely nothing about butterflies before attending our first count, but being paired with great teams like Ken Davenport (regional butterfly guru and author of the recorded Butterflies of Kern & Tulare Counties and Butterflies of Yosemite) and

see Butterfly page 9



14th Annual Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival

Wednesday, April 30 - Tuesday, May 6

Friday & Saturday evening dinner and programs: South Fork Middle School, Weldon.
 Saturday only: exhibits and children's activities: Circle Park, Kernville. Both Saturday and
 Sunday: Audubon's Kern River Preserve, Weldon: bird walks, demonstrations, workshops,
 exhibits, and children's activities. Website: <http://kern.audubon.org/KRVSNE.htm>

The festival offers many special programs on Birding, Bird Research, Children's Activities, Land
 preservation and restoration, Raptors, Reptiles and Wildflowers. MEETING LOCATIONS: **CP** = Circle
 Park, **KRP** = Kern River Preserve, **KC** = Kissack Bay, **LI** = Isabella Park & Ride, **RP** = Riverside Park,
 Kernville, **SR** = 1.6 mi up Fay Ranch Road - at hay barn, **WF** = Whiskey Flat Trail, Kernville.

SCHEDULE OF FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

RSVP to Bob Barnes: bbarnes@lightspeed.net for all fee-based
 birding trips and workshops and pay fee to your leader on the
 morning of the trip, Send Bob the dates you will be at the festival
 and your top CHOICES for field trips. He will give personal trip
 planning services based upon your dates of attendance. Trust his
 judgement on which trips are best if you are wanting to see certain
 species. Please visit the festival website for full details. **NOTE:**
trips sell out quickly please number trip choices: 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

RSVP for dinners or to ask questions about all other activities
 email: krpfriends@audubon.org. Mail t-shirt and dinner fees to
 KRVR-Nature Fest, P.O. Box 833, Weldon, CA 93283

WEDNESDAY, April 30th through MONDAY, May 5th

**BASED ON CAREFUL TRIP PLANNING (see above) THE
 FOLLOWING TRIPS WILL BE OFFERED at some point
 between Wednesday and Monday**

- 4:45 am - 4 pm / 5 pm. TRIP B: **Butterbredt Spring & East
 Kern Desert Oases.** FEE: \$40 **SR**
- 4:45 am - 3 pm / 5 pm. TRIP C: **Butterbredt Spring & Piute
 Mountains.** FEE: \$40 **SR**
- 5:45 am - 4 pm / 6 pm. TRIP H: **Greenhorn Mountains Transect.**
 FEE: \$40 **RP**
- 5:45 am - 4 pm / 5 pm. TRIP M: **Kern River Valley & Southern
 Sierra Nevada.** FEE: \$40 **SR**
- 6 am - 4 pm / 5 pm. TRIP Q: **Mojave Desert & Great Basin.**
 FEE: \$40 **SR**
- 6:30 am - 4 pm / 5 pm. TRIP U: **San Joaquin Valley &
 Greenhorn Mountains.** FEE: \$40 **LI**

FRIDAY, May 2nd

- 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm. **Deep Pit Barbecue Dinner.** Location: South
 Fork Middle School, 5225 Kelso Valley Road, Weldon (food
 served at 5:30 pm sharp). FEE: \$20 (includes dinner, taxes, tip,
 evening program and door prizes).
- 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm - PROGRAM: **Warblers and Specialty Birds
 of the Kern River Valley and Southern Sierra Nevada by Bob
 Steele.** (\$10 at the door if only attending the program)
- 6 pm - Conclusion. TRIP R2: **Owling – All Night Owling in the
 Greenhorn Mountains.** FEE: \$60 **RP**
- 6 pm - 11 pm. TRIP S: **Owling – High Country.** FEE: \$40 **RP**
- 6 pm - 9:30 pm. TRIP T: **Owling – Low Country.** FEE: \$30 **KRP**

SATURDAY, May 3rd & /or SUNDAY, May 4th

- 4:45 am - 3 pm / 5 pm, TRIP G: **Galileo Hill-Silver Saddle**

Resort. FEE: \$40 **SR**

- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP D: **Canebrake Ecological Reserve.**
 FEE: \$30 **SR**
- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP F: **Fay Ranch Road.** FEE: \$30 **SR**
- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP I: **Inyokern - Desert Birds.** FEE:
 \$30 **SR**
- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP J: **Isabella Reservoir.** FEE: \$30 **SR**
- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP K: **Kelso Creek Sanctuary.** FEE:
 \$30 **SR**
- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP L: **Kern River Preserve HQ.** FEE:
 \$30 **KRP**
- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP P: **Migrant Corner & Prince's
 Pond.** FEE: \$30 **SR**
- 6 am - 11:30 am/1pm. TRIP W: **South Fork Wildlife Area.** FEE:
 \$30 **SR**
- 6 am - 2 pm, TRIP E: **Chimney Peak National Backcountry By-
 way.** FEE: \$30 **SR**
- 7 am - noon. TRIP A: **Bird Banding Demonstration at Kern
 River Preserve.** FREE **KRP**
- 9 am-3 pm. TRIP Y: **An Introduction to Kern River Valley
 Spring Butterflies.** FEE \$20 **SR**
- 9 am - 11 am. TRIP N: **Kern River Preserve Bird Walk.** FREE

SATURDAY, May 3rd

**NOTE: Trips leave from multiple locations but most
 workshops are held at the Kern River Preserve: read where
 to meet carefully. SEE PRIOR LISTINGS FOR TRIP
 OFFERINGS SCHEDULED FOR MULTIPLE DAYS**

- 7 am - 10 am. TRIP BB: **Basic Bird Photography Workshop
 with Bob Steele.** FEE \$30 **KRP**
- 8 am - 10 am. **Spring Nature Run 10K/ 5K. Start from
 Whiskey Flat Trailhead, Burlando Road, Kernville.** Not
 affiliated with any other festival activities, contact Darby Vreven
 760-376-1067 or Mike Lane 760-376-4405 for information. FEE
WF
- 8 am - 1:30 pm. TRIP Z: **Southern Sierra Geology.** FEE: \$30 **RP**
- 8 am - 2 pm. TRIP EE: **Rare Plants of the Kern River
 Watershed.** FEE: \$20 **RP**
- 9 am - 11 am. TRIP N: **Kern River Preserve Bird Walk.** FREE
- 9 am - 11 am. TRIP AA: **Habitat enhancements and
 stewardship at the Kern River Preserve.** FREE **KRP**
- 9 am - 5 pm. **Kern River Preserve Festival Headquarters, Kern**

River Preserve, Weldon: Children's activities, Information, Educational & Interactive Exhibits, Field Trip Departures, Live animals, Music and more. FREE *KRP*

10 am - 10:30 am. **Southwestern Pond Turtle Demonstration.** Learn about the Kern River Preserve's preservation efforts for this rare species. FREE (Donations welcome). *KRP*

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - *Archie Logsdon*. LIVE MUSIC *KRP*.

10 am - 4 pm. **Official United States Postal Service Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival Postal Station.** *KRP*

10 am - 4 pm. **Children's Activities at the Kern River Preserve.** Charlotte Goodson Nature crafts, storytelling, live snakes & frogs. FREE *KRP*

10 am - 4 pm. **Live Native Amphibians & Reptiles with HerpEcology.** Kern River Preserve. Educational presentations throughout the day by HerpEcology. On display will be a wide variety of California reptiles and amphibians. FREE (Donations welcome). *KRP*

10 am - 4 pm. **CIRCLE PARK FESTIVAL HEADQUARTERS, Circle Park, Kernville: Information, Educational & Interactive Exhibits.** Informational displays, live animals, music, and more. FREE *CP*

11 am - noon. **Native Plant Gardening Workshop.** FREE *KRP*

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - *Out of the Blue*. LIVE MUSIC. *KRP*

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm. **GPS Workshop with Matt Reiter.** *KRP*

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. - *Carrion Luggage*. LIVE MUSIC *KRP*.

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm. **Kern River Preserve Nature Walk.** FREE

2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - *LIVE MUSIC JAM at KRP*. FREE.

3 pm - 4:30 pm. **Earth-honoring Faith.** Weldon Methodist Church. 20021 Highway 178. FREE

3 pm - 5 pm. TRIP CC: **Advanced Bird Photography.** FEE \$30 *KC*

5 pm - 6:30 pm **Catered Barbecue Chicken Dinner.** Location: South Fork Middle School, 5225 Kelso Valley Road, Weldon (food served at 5:30 pm sharp). FEE: \$20 (includes dinner, taxes, tip, evening program and door prizes). Music by "*Out of the Blue*"

6:30 pm-7:45pm **John Muir Laws - An Evening Exploring the Natural World of the Sierra Nevada.** (\$10 at the door if only attending the program).

6pm-Conclusion. TRIP R1: **Owling - All Night Owling on Breckenridge Mountain.** FEE: \$60 *LI*

6pm-Conclusion. TRIP R2: **Owling - All Night Owling in the Greenhorn Mountains.** FEE: \$60 *RP*

6pm-10pm/11pm. TRIP S: **Owling - High Country.** FEE: \$40 *RP*

SUNDAY, May 4th

NOTE: Trips leave from multiple locations but most workshops are held at the Kern River Preserve: read where to meet carefully. SEE PRIOR LISTINGS FOR TRIP OFFERINGS SCHEDULED FOR MULTIPLE DAYS

9 am - 10 am. **Falconry Workshop.** FREE *KRP*

10 am - 10:30 am. **Southwestern Pond Turtle Demonstration**

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - *Archie Logsdon*. LIVE MUSIC FREE.

10 am - 2 pm. TRIP FF: **Wildflowers in Bloom Workshop.** FEE: \$10 *RP*

10 am - 4 pm. **Children's Activities at the Kern River Preserve.** Nature crafts, storytelling, live snakes & frogs. FREE *KRP*

10 am - 4 pm. **Kern River Preserve Headquarters.** Kern River Preserve, Weldon: Children's activities, Information, Educational & Interactive Exhibits, Field Trip Departures, Live animals, and more. FREE (Donations welcome). *KRP*

10 am - 4 pm. **Kern Valley Museum. 49 Big Blue Road.** FREE

10 am - 4 pm. **Live Native Amphibians & Reptiles with HerpEcology.** Kern River Preserve. Educational presentations throughout the day by HerpEcology. On display will be a wide variety of California reptiles and amphibians. FREE (Donations welcome). *KRP*

11 am - noon. **Gardening with Native Plants at the Kern River Preserve.** FREE *KRP*

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - *Out of the Blue*. LIVE MUSIC. FREE.

Noon - 1 pm. **Propagating native riparian plants with Matt Reiter.** FREE *KRP*

1 pm - 2 pm. **Native American use of Native Plants.** Carol Wermuth, Native American expert will talk about traditional uses of native plants. FREE *KRP*

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. - *Carrion Luggage*. LIVE MUSIC. FREE

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm. Nature Walk. Learn about the plants, trees, birds and animals that are all part of the Kern River Preserve. FREE *KRP*

2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - *LIVE MUSIC JAM*. FREE.

MONDAY, May 5th

6:30 am - 3pm/5pm. **TRIP V: San Joaquin Valley/Tulare Lake Basin via the Kern River Canyon.** FEE: \$40 *LI*

7 am - 5 pm. **TRIP DD: Natural History of the Kern River Watershed with Nature Ali.** FEE \$40 *KRP*

TUESDAY, May 6th

5:45 am - 3 pm/6pm. **TRIP X: Target Species / Target Trips Tuesday.** FEE: \$40 *KRP*

Make dinner & t-shirt Checks to: "**KRVR-Nature Fest**" and trip & workshop checks to: Bob Barnes & Associates

Check the website for changes or additional events between now and the Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival weekend.. <http://kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm>

NAME(s)	_____
Address:	_____
City:	_____ State: ____ Zip +4: _____
Phone (____)	_____ E-mail: _____
FEE FIELD TRIP	
Friday Dinner:	# People _____
Saturday Dinner:	# People _____
Total Trip Fees: \$ _____	
Nature Festival T-shirt - &15 each (\$5 shipping) - please circle size - S M L XL XXL	
# t-shirts x \$15 =	\$ _____
Additional Festival Donation	\$ _____
Total Amount	\$ _____

Butterfly cont. from page 6

Susan Steele (one of the county's most prolific birders and naturalists), our group learned how to identify at least 30 species of butterflies on our first outing.

If you would like to join one of the butterfly counts to seriously learn about the local Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) then please join us. If you would like to go with an expert to learn about butterflies during a less formal event then sign up for one of Fred Heath's butterfly outings during the Spring Nature Festival, either way you are in for an eye-opening and entertaining experience. §



Yucca Giant Skipper is just one of the Kern rarities that may be found in Kelso

- Saturday, April 26, 2008 - South Fork Kern River Valley
- Sunday, April 27, 2008 - Kelso Creek Watershed
- Saturday, June 7, 2008 - Sequoia National Forest South
- Sunday, June 8, 2008 - Chimney Peak Road & Kern Plateau
- Wednesday, June 25, 2008 - North Fork Kern River Valley
- Monday, June 30, 2008 - Giant Sequoia National Monument

great little festival each year. They bring an assortment of wild caught animals (that are released unharmed right after each event) along with plenty of knowledge to share. If you can't get to this festival, no worries, Buz and company are at most of the Kern River Preserve's festivals throughout the year. §

NABA CONVENTION

While for years it has been fairly common knowledge that the Kern River Valley and Southern Sierra Nevada are great places for birds, what hasn't been understood is how great this area is for butterflies. The Kern River Preserve is home to the rare San Emigdio Blue and the beautiful



John Schmitt created an amazing work of art celebrating local wildlife for NABA.

Great Purple Hairstreak making our preserve one of the premier stops for Lepidopterists from across the globe. From common to extremely rare, Kern and Tulare Counties have recorded 176 species along with 65 distinct subspecies of butterflies. This year the North American Butterfly Association will let the cat out of the bag (or the larvae out of the chrysalis), by celebrating its 8th Biennial Members' Meeting in Kernville from June 26th through the 29th. [www.naba.org] §

AMERICA'S BIRDIEST INLAND COUNTY COMPETITION

Can Kern County win five years in a row? Join our teams of birders who scour the county during the weekend of our Annual Spring Nature Festival. You can participate by birding at one of the festival events (as long as you are in Kern County) or bird independently. Send results to count coordinator, Bob Barnes at bbarnes@lightspeed.net. §



Blue Grosbeak arrives in mid-April just in time for the Birdiest County Competition

RAPID ASSESSMENT BIRD COUNT

Dawn - Saturday, July 5, 2008

The melodious song of several thousand birds can become a cacophonous orchestra that is sure to delight those who choose to help count birds during this summer's South Fork Rapid Assessment Bird Count. Calling all birders to help this really important effort to census the forest and surrounding lands along the South Fork Kern River. Last year we recorded a record number of Yellow Warblers while finding absolutely dismal numbers of ground nesting birds such as Song Sparrows. Although the drought is not broken entirely the South Fork Kern Valley did get closer to its normal amount of rain. Will the numbers rebound after just one season? Join us and help us figure this out. Contact Bob Barnes, Count Coordinator to volunteer: bbarnes@lightspeed.net. Accommodations provided to out of town birders. §



Will Song Sparrow numbers rebound this year?

AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE CELEBRATION

Do you love amphibians and reptiles? Do you hate snakes? Either way you can learn a lot about our native frogs, lizards, snakes and other scaly friends at the Annual California Amphibian & Reptile Celebration held at the Kern River Preserve Headquarters in Weldon on Saturday, June 14, 2008 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Buz Lunsford, Critter and Tia Lomax and other amazing volunteers from HerpEcology and Reptile Rescue put on this

HUMMINGBIRD CELEBRATION

Squawking jeweled jets of furious feathers flit by fans of all types at the Kern River Preserve's Annual Hummingbird Celebration on Saturday, August 9, 2008 between 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Although it is early in the planning process, workshops, hikes, and children's activities have already begun to take shape. Watch the website: http://kern.audubon.org/hummer_fest.htm for details in July. §



Costa's Hummingbirds nest in the desert portions of the Kern River Preserve

AUDUBON CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY AT THE KERN RIVER PRESERVE

Since 1992, Reed Tollefson has been the Manager of the Kern River Preserve. In March 1997, Audubon hired Reed as they began the process of taking over the preserve from the Nature Conservancy. Under Reed's direction the preserve has grown from 1,127 acres to 2,894 acres of contiguous property along the South Fork Kern River with another 495 acres at our Allen Sanctuary and 156 acres on our Kelso Creek Sanctuary. Great job, Reed! §

KERN VALLEY PRIDE DAY

Friends of the Kern River Preserve take pride in the South Fork and Kelso Valleys and it shows. On September 15th we once again proved that we are good at finding trash on our public lands. Fourteen intrepid souls sought trash and came within 3 bags of winning the Kern Valley Pride Day competition once again. Second isn't too bad especially knowing that 168 bags of trash were removed and that the Kern River Valley is so much better for our efforts. The area we clean up each year is actually two areas. We clean up the public lands around the South Fork Wildlife area and also clean up some illegal dumps on Kelso Creek and Kelso Valley Roads.

Thanks to Darrell Barnes, Valerie Cassity, Chana Cortez, Birdie & Bill Foster, Chris & Gordon Hancock, Carlie Henneman, Jeff King, Dave Kurkeda, Matt Reiter, Alison Sheehey, Holly Sorenson, Reed Tollefson and Sandra Wieser. §

UPLAND RESTORATION ON SPRAGUE RANCH

by Sandra Wieser

2007 marked the beginning of our latest restoration project. Jeff King put out irrigation line on two acres of land in the field east of the Sprague ranch house, and Jeff and I started planting in March.

Several species of plants native to the area around the site were planted in the field. We started off last year with beavertail cactus, silver cholla, and four-wing salt bush. Another round of planting this year will include: Joshua tree, silver lupine, rabbitbrush, gray pine, cactus, saltbush, and other plants.



Matt Reiter and Sandra Wieser harvest gray pine nuts for the Sprague Ranch upland restoration project

As many of you know, we had a long, dry summer last year, and even with irrigation some of the plants did not make it. This happens on all restoration projects. Due to the drought the amount of food available to wildlife was in short supply by mid summer, so our tender little plants were very appealing to the many critters in the area. We started enclosing the young plants in netting and chicken wire; once they get a good head start, grazing by wildlife will not be as big a problem. Food and shelter for wildlife are the main reasons for the restoration of native vegetation.

If anyone wants to come and help with the plantings or just hang out and learn about the project, call or e-mail the preserve and find out when work days are being held. Trips to the area will be part of our Spring Nature Festival this year.

Come and see the rebirth of the bounty of nature. §

GLOBAL WARMING IS THE BIGGEST ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT OF OUR LIFETIME.

According to a United Nations scientific report, scientists that are not paid by the oil industry around the world agree that man-made greenhouse gases from fossil fuels are causing global warming. Effects are already being seen worldwide affecting both humans and wildlife. Were the low numbers of birds during last year's Rapid Assessment Bird Count an effect of global climate change? How can we as individuals help stop the trend?

The spring ice thaw in the Northern Hemisphere is occurring 9 days earlier than it did 150 years ago, and the fall freeze now typically starts 10 days later. Tree Swallows across North America are breeding a full week earlier than they did 30 years ago. The impacts to wildlife with wide weather fluctuations causing droughts, floods, late freezes and early heat waves is tragic.

But if each of us takes action — in our homes, in our communities, and in our nation — there is still time to reduce global warming pollution and help safeguard our environment for birds, wildlife, and our children. It is up to every single one of us to commit to saving our planet for the benefit of all living things!

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

All of us use fossil fuels every day. In the process we produce

the greenhouse gases that are primarily responsible for global warming. Here are some of the most important ways we can all make a difference:

1. **DRIVE** Less - our staff telecommutes as much as possible - our outreach director bought a hybrid SUV to lessen the impact of necessary trips.
2. **SWITCH** to Compact Fluorescent Bulbs - each and every bulb is replaced to CF as they burn out or before.
3. **USE** fans and sweaters to reduce your need for excessive air conditioning in summer or heat in winter
4. **BUY** only Energy Star appliances.
5. **USE** less hot water - shorter showers, wash in cold/warm water, air dry dishes.
6. **PLANT** deciduous trees around your house for windbreaks and summer shade. The trees at KRP sequester millions of tons of carbon.
7. **GO** organic; plants grown organically protect organisms that keep carbon dioxide in the soil.
8. **THINK** globally, eat locally
9. **CONSUME** less
10. **AUDIT** your energy use
11. **CALCULATE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT:** How much do your emissions add up to? You'll be amazed how small steps add up to huge differences in our cumulative impact.
12. **BE AN ACTIVE CITIZEN:** You can do a lot to support the work of local, state, and national governments to curb global warming. Stay informed, write letters, and support political candidates who take the farsighted actions necessary to curb global warming. Check the Audubon website for up to the minute information on climate change. [<http://audubon.org>] §

WHY CALIFORNIA NATIVES ARE THE ONLY WAY TO GO!



Red Brome germinates easily and is transported via socks ;)

A local gardening group has been discussing uses of Mediterranean and Australian plants in local gardens. But, history shows that the use of many of these introduced plants can be a disaster for native habitats. The reason for using California natives and hopefully, more specifically,

southern Sierra natives in your garden is because all California ecosystems may be threatened by the escape of horticultural plants.

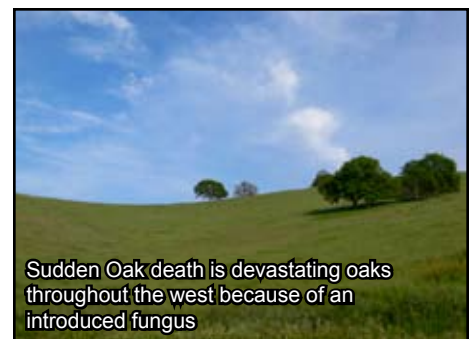
Many of the cultivars currently in use come from Australia or the Mediterranean, where the climate is quite similar to California. Without any type of natural controls many of the imported plants

can overrun California native habitats very quickly. For example: in the late 1700's and early 1800's, California's grasslands were mostly covered with deep rooted perennial grasses and shrubs. The brown hills in the summer that we are used to (along with the extreme fire hazard) were virtually unknown.

Most of the annual grasses that grow in California's hills and valleys were imported in the fur, digestive systems and hooves of sheep and cattle long ago. Ecologically adapted to the climate of the Mediterranean, thousands of years grazing and a history of human-caused fires encouraged these annual grasses through natural selection to grow at the first wisp of first rain and favored individuals that set seed within a few weeks. Even more annoying is that the grasses and herbs that are the most successful are ones that have a seed case that digs into the soil for ease of germination and are also harder for close cropping grazing animals to reach. Just look at the non-native foxtail type bromes and filaree to see examples of this selective adaptation.

Another reason for not pushing for exotics is genetic. California has over 5,000 native plants. Of these natives, Kern County has almost 2,000; several found only within the Kern River watershed. When plants are brought in it exposes our natives to potentially damaging cross pollination events which can cause genetic extinction. Our local plants are adapted to survive in many narrow micro-climates caused by canyons with different slopes, aspect and elevation, and the original genetic stock can disappear through hybridization.

Another problem with non-natives is they potentially introduce fatal diseases to native plants. Foreign vegetation may be adapted to survive alongside these diseases but our native plants have



Sudden Oak death is devastating oaks throughout the west because of an introduced fungus

never had to adapt to such assault so they have no natural defense. Sudden Oak death is caused by an introduced fungus-like organism. Huge tracts of oaks native to California and Oregon, after two centuries of assault by non-native cultures and exotic plants, may finally be dealt the death blow with this disease. So, the take home message is: there is no simple reason for planting regional natives, just do it! Know that botanists, ecologists, and other scientists understand the complex reason why and that it has nothing to do with economy of man but all to do with the economy of nature.

In planning your garden there are plenty of absolutely gorgeous Kern County natives to choose from. If you want to plant bulbs on your hillside plant; blue dicks, golden stars, blue-eyed grass, Munz' iris, Hartweg's iris, Sierra onion, Burlew's onion, fringed onion, Kern brodiaea, any of the 21 varieties of mariposa lily native to Kern, Ithuriel's spear, Spanish bayonet, Joshua tree and on and on. Then there are thousands of other

attractive annual, perennial, vines, shrubs and trees that not only do well here but are native.

Beauty and native, what could be better for your garden and our environment? §

KERN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT CREW HELPS RID THE SOUTH FORK VALLEY OF INVASIVES

Fire Crew Supervisor Randy Griffin and eight men from the Kern County Fire Department Type 1 crew out of Democrat Station helped last fall to eliminate invasive weeds with staff from the California Dept. of Fish & Game and Audubon's Kern River Preserve. On Friday and Saturday, October 12-13, 2007, Fuels Crew 87 worked on this project in the South Fork Valley with the Kern County Fire Department's chipper brought down from Tehachapi. Their fuels crew removed and chipped invasive Tree of Heaven and Giant Cane off of private property between Onyx and Weldon. The arrangement was that this project was done at no cost to the property owner, although Audubon and the Department of Fish and Game agree to diligently patrol this property to make sure the weeds do not grow back.



Kern County fire department crews spent several days removing invasive Tree of Heaven

The South Fork of the Kern River is one of California's finest remaining native riparian forests. Through a diligent program of invasive weed removal, Audubon, California Department of Fish and Game and the Southern Sierra Research Station lead the charge to keep the river and valley free of many exotic species that have decimated native forests throughout the southwest. The California Invasive Plant Council states that invasive plants displace native plants and wildlife, increase wildfire and flood danger, consume valuable water, degrade recreational opportunities, and destroy productive range and timber lands. In the Kern River Valley, the Department of Fish & Game and Audubon work with property owners, land managers, researchers, concerned citizens, and policy makers to protect our valley from invasive plants.

Thanks to the Kern County Fire Department: Ken Stevens, Randy Griffin and Fuels Crew 87; Sean Borlena, Ben Hicks, Carlos Barbosa, Jordon Bert, Brandon Neighbors, Matt Bennett, Ross Janzen, and Brian Burseson. Kern County Fire Department Fuels Crew 87 assisted Jeff King of the Kern River Preserve and Scott Yoo of the Department of Fish & Game in tackling the tough problem of invasive and flammable weeds in the South Fork Valley. §

INVASIVE SPECIES ERADICATION

Staff of the Kern River Preserve and California Department of Fish & Game spend time every year trying to eradicate invasive weeds from the South Fork Kern River watershed. You can read more about invasive plants in the Kern River Valley on the Kern River Preserve's website. [<http://kern.audubon.org/aliens.htm>]

TREE OF HEAVEN (*Ailanthus altissima*)

Originally from eastern China, *Ailanthus* was planted throughout the United States during the 1800's and widely in California until the 1890s. Unfortunately, it is still occasionally planted even today.

Tree of Heaven is a deciduous tree that can grow up to 70 feet tall. It has smooth gray bark and the branches have large heart-shaped leaf scars. The leaves are compound and mostly sword-shaped except for 1-3 teeth near the base. The underside of the leaflets have circular glands. The small, nasty-smelling, greenish-white flowers grow in clusters. They develop into bunches of papery winged seeds that dangle in twisted masses from the branch tip. Leaves have an unpleasant odor when crushed. *Ailanthus* spreads by root sprouts and wind-dispersed seeds although seed propagation is not as common as root cloning. It is similar in overall appearance to California walnut, however, the leaf blades are usually much smaller and the walnut fruit is a nut.



Tree of Heaven produces thick forests of foul-smelling trees

Individual *Ailanthus* trees typically live thirty to fifty years, but clones can continue to sprout making the genetic lifespan indefinite.

Tree of heaven will overwhelm yards and natural areas with root suckers. This tree has minimal value to wildlife and livestock, and can cause foundations to split and clog underground pipes and leach lines. *Ailanthus* is found mainly on disturbed ground, fence



Tree of Heaven leaf

lines and road edges. This plant has overwhelmed much native vegetation along the north fork of the Kern River especially around the site of Road's End resort. It is



Large numbers of seeds are produced each year

found widely but locally throughout California from sea level to 6,000 feet in elevation. It has a natural herbicide that can be toxic to native plants.

Control of Tree of Heaven, once established, can be difficult and not without some controversy. If mechanical and/or chemical control is attempted, sites need to be monitored several times per growing season. All new root sprouts should be removed, and monitoring should be continued for at least one full year after the last sprout is removed.

Pull young seedlings after a good soaking or rain when the soil is loose. This allows removal of the entire root system, which could resprout if left in the ground. After the tap root has developed, root removal is more difficult. Plants should be pulled as soon as they are large enough to grasp.

Girdling trees may prove effective. Expose the trunk below the surface and then manually cut away the bark around the trunk. Do this with an ordinary ax in spring when trees are actively growing. According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources the tree may resprout below the girdle unless the cut is treated with herbicide. Cutting an *Ailanthus* stem without applying herbicide induces prolific root suckering and the production of stump sprouts. After a stem is cut, its stump sprouts may grow over ten feet per year and its root sprouts three to seven feet per year. Herbicide applications are most effective in spring, just after leaves are fully expanded. Applying herbicide to freshly cut stumps is the most effective technique for controlling ailanthus. According to the California Invasive Species Pest Council, wiping the stump with full strength, 100% Triclopyr amine within several minutes of cutting should reduce or even eliminate subsequent root suckering. §

POND TURTLE PROJECT update



This was the first of 5 hatchlings in 2007

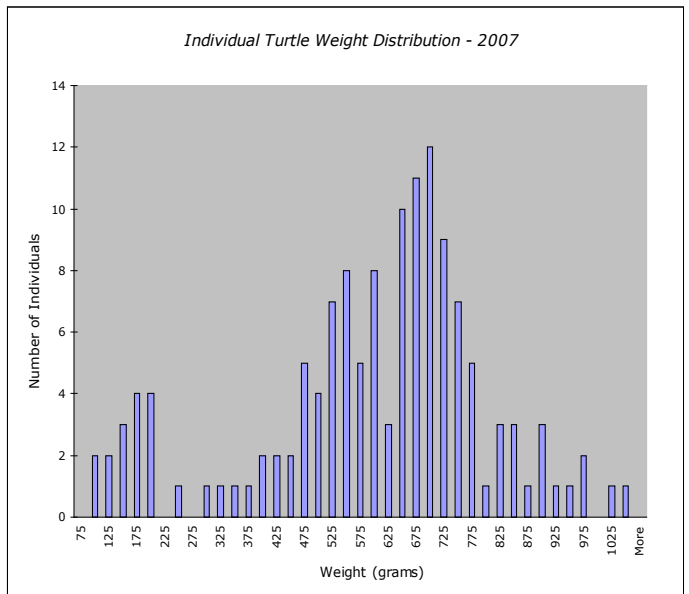
Another season of the turtle project begins with some leftover business from last season. On July 6, 2007, six turtle eggs were found in the enclosure the team built, and 89 days later the first egg hatched on October 3rd. Five of the six eggs hatched over the next three weeks. The

temperature of incubation determines the sex of the turtles, so the team maintained the temperature to produce females.

For this first round Darrell Barnes is raising the hatchlings in a temperature-regulated aquarium at his home. A journal of the

turtles' activities is being kept and a mini-cam was set up to watch their activities while keeping disturbance to a minimum. They are weighed and measured monthly. The team expects to raise many more turtles as a result of the 2008 trapping season.

Of the 141 turtles trapped in 2007, 126 were adults and 15 were juveniles. Prior research on the Kern River Preserve's turtles was evident, as three turtles originally captured and marked by Dan Holland in 1987 were recaptured and five originally captured and 14 headstarted by Gary Collings and Lynn Overtree in the early 1990's were recaptured. In all, 45 previously marked turtles were found with the bulk of them having marks on them that were not made by any known permitted researchers.



Another interesting finding was how the turtles migrated. They moved from ponds that dry up on the preserve and found more permanent water sources to the south or west of the original capture or release site. No evidence of upstream movement was found.

Over the winter the team removed the solar system that was in the back of the Visitors' Center and took it to the turtle enclosure. They set it up to recirculate warm water to keep the hatchling pond from freezing in the winter. Jeff King set up a small diversion structure to divert water to one turtle population pond. Recently, the turtle project has gained statewide attention and has begun corresponding with the California Dept. of Fish & Game in the development of a Western Pond Turtle Conservation Strategy.

The first year of the turtle headstart project was full of accomplishments far beyond anyone's expectations. The leadership and dedication of the entire volunteer team is amazing. While the project was originally just a way to help reproductive success in this species, it has begun to shape up as a full-scale research project worthy of any University's doctoral program.

Thanks to the entire team for their efforts: Bill Foster, Birdie Foster, Darrell Barnes, Chris Hancock, Gordon Hancock, Jake Hefner, Dave Kurdeka, Marya Miller, Jeff King, Bob Showers and Reed Tollefson. §

THANK YOU DONORS & NEW MEMBERS

Since our last newsletter 164 people and organizations have generously sent in much needed donations. As of this year the entire Kern River Preserve outreach budget comes from your donations. If your name is missing or misspelled please let us know. We enjoy providing recognition to our wonderful friends. Your privacy matters, if you prefer to remain anonymous, please let us know.

SUMMER Tanager (\$5,000)

John Newman & Linda Adams

FREMONT COTTONWOOD (\$1000-\$2499)

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 Robin Winslow-Smith Oasis Garden Club of IWV

IN KIND DONATIONS

Barbara Gregoratos - HellerEhrman LLP - Legal Services
 John Good - electrical wiring for Land Steward office
 Rossback & Sons - port-a-potties for Festivals

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In memory of Ruby Jenkins from Alan & Joan Woodman
 In memory of Anna White Garlund from Sara Lee Gershon
 In memory of Piute from Charles & Nancy Robinson
 In memory of Jim Clark from Robert Krase §



Friends of the Kern River Preserve

Membership / Renewal Application



Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____ Fax: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Email: _____ Check for change of address / email / information

Application for: New Member Renewal Gift In Memory

_____ \$ 5,000 Summer Tanager	_____ \$100 Great Blue Heron
_____ \$ 2,500 Black Bear	_____ \$50 Bobcat
_____ \$ 1,000 Fremont Cottonwood	_____ \$40 California Quail (Family)
_____ \$ 500 Gray Fox	_____ \$25 Raccoon
_____ \$ 250 Willow Flycatcher	Total \$ _____

Anonymous Donation
 Web Newsletter Only

Please Send Information on:

Planned Giving / Bequests
 Volunteer Opportunities

All members in the Raccoon and above categories receive our newsletter. New members in the \$100 Great Blue Heron and above level are eligible to receive a KRP Friends T-shirt. Donations in the Gray Fox and above categories receive lifetime membership. Please be sure to indicate size if you WISH to receive a t-shirt. Extra T-shirts available for \$15 (\$12.50 members) plus \$5.00 shipping.
 small ♦ medium ♦ large ♦ XL ♦ XXL

Please make checks payable to : **NAS / KRP Friends**
 or donate online: <https://loon.audubon.org/payment/donate/CAKERN.html>

Mail to: *Friends of the Kern River Preserve* • P. O. Box 833 • Weldon, CA 93283-0833

v12 II

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Do you live in or visit the Kern River Valley? Would you like to help feed the birds, help plant and maintain the hummingbird garden, do special construction projects, or help with the trail projects? Contact us or see our scheduled volunteer workdays. §

KRP WISH LIST

- Desperate NEED Medium Farm Tractor, Cat. III 3-point hitch
- Flatbed Trailer suitable for hauling a tractor or automobile
- New/Used Economy 4x4 pick-up - THE OLD ONE DIED
- New/Used Hybrid Multi-passenger vehicle

KEYSTONE SPECIES

Our membership categories characterize keystone species that rely on intact ecosystems to survive. Our goal is to provide long-term sanctuary for these species through outright acquisition of habitat or conservation easements along the entire South Fork Kern River watershed. Although most of the property will not be owned by Audubon, staff of the Kern River Preserve are integral to the success of protection efforts by government agencies and other private organizations.

Audubon is funded solely through private donations. Supporting the Friends of the Kern River Preserve by becoming a keystone donor allows these important efforts to continue. Please become a member at the highest monetary level you can afford. §

KEYSTONE SPECIES

CALIFORNIA QUAIL

Callipepla californica



California Quail (male)

California's state bird is also one of its most lovable species. California Quail form large groups called coveys. Both sexes have a top knot although the male's is larger. The male has a semi-circle of black feathers around the chin up to the ear that is edged in white. The female's facial pattern is plain.

Drive into the preserve any day of the year and find a covey enjoying a free meal below our bird feeders. Quail are one of three chicken-like birds found on the Kern River Preserve. The other two are non-native; Chukar and Wild Turkey.

By supporting the Friends of the Kern River Preserve, you are saying you support the efforts to protect the habitat of this and the 300+ species that nest, migrate through or winter on the preserve. A friend in the Quail family category truly becomes a member of the Kern River Preserve's extended covey. §



Audubon CALIFORNIA

Friends of the Kern River Preserve

P.O. Box 833

Weldon, CA 93283-0833

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UPCOMING EVENTS... DON'T MISS!

Every third Saturday work parties

April 30 - May 6, 2008

Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival

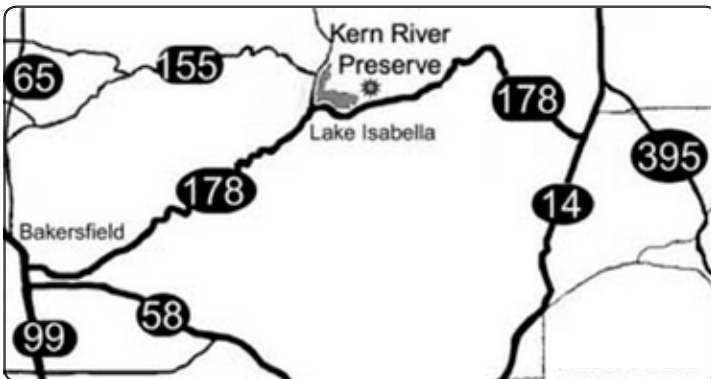
June 14, 2008

California Reptile & Amphibian
Celebration

August 9, 2008

Kern Valley Hummingbird
Celebration

Please note the date of expiration on your mailing label. If it says "exp" then this will be your last issue (if this is in error please contact us right away). We appreciate your support in the past and hope you consider renewing your membership soon. Thank you.



The Kern River Preserve is located 1.1 miles east of the intersection of State Highway 178 and Sierra Way in Weldon, Kern County, California.

Driving time from:

Los Angeles	3.5 hours
San Diego	5.5 hours
San Francisco	6.5 hours
Reno	7.5 hours

Current road conditions: 1 (800) 427-7623 [-1 (800) gas-road]

For further information about the



*Friends of
the Kern
River Preserve*

Email: krpfriends@audubon.org

or visit our website:

<http://kern.audubon.org>

