The South Fork Kern River supports one of California’s finest remaining examples of Great Valley Cottonwood-Willow Forest. It is recognized at the state and regional levels as a valuable natural asset that provides opportunities for education, nature tourism, research and recreation. Audubon’s Kern River Preserve protects 3,434 acres of this river forest, associated wetlands and uplands. We conduct habitat restoration, invasive weed control and many other types of land stewardship on our property as well as surrounding private ranches and public lands. Audubon partners with local county, state and federal resource managers to help ensure that this rare and unique river forest, our preserve and the surrounding rural landscape are preserved for the future. Audubon is working beyond the South Fork Valley as a member of the Southern Sierra Partnership a collaborative effort with The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Business Council, Conservation Biology Institute and Sequoia Riverlands Trust. Our aim is to create large scale regional conservation outcomes in the Southern Sierra Nevada to help address issues like climate change, alternative energy development, air quality, and forest management.

Reed Tollefson has a B.S. in Wildlife Management from Arizona State University. He came to the South Fork Kern River Valley in 1987 to work as a seasonal field technician on riparian restoration projects for The Nature Conservancy (TNC). He was hired full time by TNC and eventually became the Manager of the Kern River Preserve. In 1997 the Preserve was transferred to the Audubon Society and Reed was fortunate to be hired by Audubon where he continues to work today.

FIELD TRIP
Enjoy a relaxed, easy day of exploring local birding spots looking for our local species and any unexpected exotic transients that we may find.

This trip, led by Noel Gravelle assisted by all participants, will start at 8:30 AM, Saturday, November 19th at the north west corner of the Cerro Coso Community College main parking lot. We'll spend 1 to 2 hours or as much time as needed to thoroughly explore the many diverse habitats in the area for what we can see before moving on to other IWV locations.

Expected locations include: the road south of the fairgrounds to look for Burrowing Owls, the cemetery, the Ridgecrest waste water ponds north of the cemetery, and the BLM Wild Horse/Burro Corral area.

Depending on time available other sites that may be suggested by participants can be visited. Bring appropriate clothing, water, sunscreen and snacks for a light lunch in case we go past lunch time. Of course always bring your binoculars, spotting scopes and field guides.
A pair of Wood Ducks was at the ponds Oct 6 (SLS, TL).

A female Eurasian Wigeon was at the ponds Oct 31 (SLS).

An adult male Surf Scoter was at the ponds Oct 29-31 (LA). This very rare vagrant was last seen in the valley Nov 6, 2009 and falls nicely in their migration window of Oct 5-Nov 6.

The Hooded Merganser at the ponds Oct 29 was a new early date for fall migrants by three days. (SLS). Five Hooded Mergansers were at the ponds Oct 31 (TL).

The Common Loon at the ponds Oct 27 has been the only one seen in the valley this year (TL, SLS).

To give an idea of the relative abundance and scarcity of the big grebes, a Clark’s Grebe was at the ponds Oct 29 (BB), while Western Grebes were noted on thirteen days.

Cattle Egrets were at the ponds Oct 14-29 (SLS).

A Red-shouldered Hawk was at the ponds Oct 11-25 (BB, SLS).

A Ferruginous Hawk was at the college Oct 14 (JS).

The 6th valley record of Rough-legged Hawk was at the ponds Oct 29 (SLS). This is the earliest valley record by about a week and the first seen in the valley since Dec 8, 1997.

A Merlin was at the ponds Oct 26 (SLS).

A Black-bellied Plover was at the ponds Oct 1 (SLS).

The last sighting of Baird’s Sandpiper was Oct 10 and Pectoral Sandpiper was Oct 19 (SLS).

Bonaparte’s Gulls were at the ponds Oct 17 and 27 (SLS).

The Herring Gull at the ponds Oct 3 was slightly earlier than expected (SLS).

White-winged Doves continue to be seen. They were noted on Oct 2 in Ridgecrest (EC, BB), Oct 9 in SE Ridgecrest (N&EG), and Oct 20 in SE Ridgecrest (LS).

The Lesser Nighthawk at the ponds Oct 17-22 was later than expected (SLS).

An Acorn Woodpecker was at the college Oct 7 (RO).

A Red-naped Sapsucker was at the college Oct 9 and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen Oct 13-16 (SLS, JS). The Yellow-bellied was the first seen since Jan 31, 2009.

The Least Flycatcher at the college Oct 7-8 was the 3rd valley record (SLS).

The 7th valley record of Red-eyed Vireo was at the college Oct 2-6 (NG).

A late Northern Rough-winged Swallow was at the ponds Oct 23-24 (BB).

A flock of Bushtits was SW of Inyokern Oct 28 (LK).

A Red-breasted Nuthatch was at the college Oct 10 (BB).

Phainopeplas were at the college Oct 10-15 (JS, SLS).

The Hermit Warbler at the college Oct 15 is our latest sighting date by fifteen days (SK).

Palm Warblers put on an amazing showing this fall. With just eight previous records, three more were added. Birds were at the ponds Oct 6 and 26 (SLS), and another was at the college Oct 8-9 (VH).

The Clay-colored Sparrow at the college Oct 7-14 was our second record this fall (SLS).

A Vesper Sparrow was at the college Oct 8-9 (SLS).

A gray-headed Fox Sparrow was at the college Oct 10 and a red Fox Sparrow was at the ponds Oct 27 (SLS). The red Fox Sparrow is a very rare migrant and this is just our second record.

A Swamp Sparrow was at the ponds Oct 20 (SLS).

White-throated Sparrows were at the college Oct 9 and 28 (SLS).

An Indigo Bunting was at the college Oct 13-16 (SLS).

The 3rd valley record for Dicksiesel was at the college Oct 7 (SLS). This species was last seen in the valley on Oct 3, 1998.

Bobolinks were at the ponds Oct 1-7 with a high count of seven on Oct 2 (TW).
A Lawrence’s Goldfinch was at the college Oct 16-17 (SK).
FOF for American Goldfinch was from S of Inyokern Oct 16 (SLS).

Thanks to the following observers: Liga Auzins, Bob Barnes, Encar Card, Noah Gaines, Noel and Ellene Gravelle, Vernon Howe, Sandy Koonce, Louise Knecht, Tim Ludwick, Ron Overholtz, Joyce Seibold, Lee Sutton

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP REPORT
Those who missed this trip to the Steeles’ cabin in Aspendell missed a wonderful time! The birds, the fall leaves, and the hospitality were all awesome. On Saturday, we all met at Silver Lake on the June Lake loop, where the leaves and photo ops were incredible. Bird highlights there were an amazing 9 Horned Grebes, rare for these inland lakes, both Red-breasted and Common Mergansers, and a Surf Scoter!

Sunday morning saw us trekking up to North Lake for more beautiful leaves. A long search for an American Dipper finally paid off, at least for some of us. My (Brenda’s) favorite birds there were a flock (family?) of Pygmy Nuthatches. Bob showed us the tree hole they roost together in and said it’s fun to go over in the morning and watch them all pile out of it. We missed that, but enjoyed hearing them call to each other as they foraged en masse. They act much like Bushtits, calling continuously to each other, but their voices are clearer and more musical. What a treat!

Here’s the complete list of birds seen:
Common Loon
Horned Grebe
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Green Heron
Mallard
Ring-necked Duck
Surf Scoter
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
California Quail
American Coot
Belted Kingfisher
Hairy Woodpecker
Steller’s Jay
Clark’s Nutcracker
Black-billed Magpie
Common Raven
Mountain Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
Pygmy Nuthatch
American Dipper
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Townsend’s Solitaire

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS
Alison Sheehey provided this information on the region’s Christmas Bird Counts. Further information, including all of California’s CBCs, is available on her web site: www.natureali.org
The first five days of the count period have Christmas Counts and all compilers can use help. Access to many normally closed areas is arranged by compilers, so if you want to really bird the heck out of Kern, here is your opportunity.
Please contact the compiler directly to participate.

WEDNESDAY, December 14, 2011
Bakersfield CBC: Compiler: John Wilson - year began 1949 held in 1950 resumed in 1973

FRIDAY, December 16, 2011
Buena Vista CBC: Compiler: Alison Sheehey, Phone: 760-417-0268. - year began 1989

SATURDAY, December 17, 2011
Butterbrett CBC: Compiler: Charles Bragg, Phone: (310) 454-9662 - year began 1977
Lancaster CBC: Compiler: Mary & Nick Freeman, Phone: (818) 247-6172 - year began 1980

SUNDAY, December 18, 2011
China Lake CBC: Compiler: Pete Woodman, Phone: (760) 377-3466 - year began 1957

TUESDAY, December 20, 2011
Tehachapi CBC: Compiler: Larry Parmeter, Phone: (559) 276-8753 - year began 1992

WEDNESDAY, December 21, 2011
Bear Valley Springs CBC: Compiler: Alison Sheehey, Phone: 760-378-2029 - year began 1995

SATURDAY, December 31, 2011
Carrizo Plains CBC: Roger Zachary, Phone (805) 466-6222 - year began 1971
South Fork Valley CBC: Compiler Denise LaBerteaux, Phone: (760) 378-4278 - year began 1992

SUNDAY, January 1, 2012
Kern River Valley CBC: Compiler: Alison Sheehey, Phone: 760-417-0268. Housing available bring sleeping bag - year began 1979

Kerncrest Audubon Society
Brenda Burnett President 375-8634
Lee Sutton Vice President 375-1981
Nancy Robinson Secretary 375-2049
Dan Burnett Treasurer 375-8634
Robert Parker Field Trips 446-2001
Terry Middenmiss Conservation 377-5192
Noel Gravelle Membership 375-2325
Lloyd Brubaker Member at Large 375-7245
Sherry Brubaker Member at Large 375-7245
Shelly Ellis Member at Large 446-5012
Nancy Robinson Birdathon 375-2049
Newsletter Ed. Brenda Burnett 375-8634
Webmaster Noel Gravelle 375-2325
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
National Audubon Society
Includes 1 year of Audubon magazine, Local chapter membership

Name_________________________________________________
Address________________________________________________________________
City ________________________ State ______ Zip ___________

Donor’s address for gift subscriptions:
Name_________________________________________________
Address________________________________________________________________
City ________________________ State ______ Zip ___________

____ New Member/Gift - $20 (Renewal will be $30)
_____Senior (62+) or full-time Student - $15

Please enclose a check payable to National Audubon Society
Clip out and mail to: National Audubon Society
C45   P.O. Box 51005
TXCH  Boulder, CO 80323-1005

The Chat
Newsletter of the Kerncrest Audubon society
P.O. Box 984, Ridgecrest, CA 93556

Return service requested

November, 2011

---

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
Kerncrest Audubon Society

Name_________________________________________________
Address________________________________________________________________

City ________________________ State ______ Zip ___________

____ yr Kerncrest Audubon Society Membership @ $15/year
(Includes subscription to The Chat)
____ yr Subscription to The Chat only @ $7/year

Please request the National Audubon Society to exclude my name from promotional mailing lists.
Please enclose a check payable to Kerncrest Audubon Society.
Clip out and mail to: Kerncrest Audubon Society
P.O. Box 984
Ridgecrest CA 93556

National Audubon Society membership includes membership in the local chapter, a subscription to the Audubon magazine and the Kerncrest newsletter, The Chat. It also provides the right to vote in society elections, and inclusion on national society mailing lists for informational materials and solicitations for contributions. Membership in the Kerncrest Audubon Society includes a subscription to The Chat, (not to Audubon magazine) and provides the right to vote in local society elections. Inclusion on national mailing lists is optional. A subscription to The Chat only does not provide the right to vote in elections.