

Important  
Bird Areas  
of  
California



Compiled by Dan Cooper

Audubon CALIFORNIA

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### Important Bird Areas Program Background

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) program is an international effort to identify, protect, and restore the most critical breeding, wintering, and/or migratory habitat for rare, threatened or endangered birds and/or large congregations of birds around the world.

Hundreds of volunteers, Audubon chapters, and technical advisors contributed to Audubon California's Important Bird Areas program by providing data and site information. In 2004, Audubon published *Important Bird Areas of California* by Daniel S. Cooper. This book describes California's 148 Important Bird Areas and is now being used by local activists, public agencies and conservation groups to guide conservation activities at these sites.

### Program Goals and Next Steps

In May 2006 Audubon California began to focus on prioritizing Important Bird Areas for conservation action and to develop partnerships with local Audubon chapters, public agencies, and conservation organizations to help protect and monitor sites. Audubon California has committed to collaborate with local Audubon chapters to protect 10 high priority Important Bird Areas in California by 2010. High priority Important Bird Areas include San Francisco Bay, Salton Sea and the Imperial Valley, Owens Lake, Kern River Valley, Tulare Basin, and Southern Orange County. Audubon California is working to raise awareness of the Important Bird Areas and inspire conservation and stewardship. Audubon California aims to provide information to guide management of public and private lands in order to protect their value for birds.

Important Bird Area site data and news are now available through our website. We will continue refining and updating site information and maps to more clearly define site boundaries to help identify and track bird population changes and conservation needs.

Collaborations with outside agencies and partnerships are key to implementing site-based bird conservation strategies at selected sites. Specifically, efforts will focus on convening local working groups to identify threats, identify conservation actions, and review and strengthen Important Bird Area bird population and habitat data with the goal of ensuring that these valuable landscapes are re-identified as priorities for public and private conservation funds.



Morro Bay Important Bird Area  
Photo by Andrea Jones



Carrizo Plain Important Bird Area  
Photo by Andrea Jones

## Important Bird Area Conservation Success Stories

- Audubon California worked with partners to conserve over 10,000 acres in the Kern River Valley, a stronghold for Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Summer Tanager, and others.
- Audubon California is working with partners to help ensure that the restoration plan selected for the Salton Sea, a globally significant Important Bird Area, addresses the habitat needs for the millions of grebes, waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, terns and other birds that depend on the Salton Sea during the course of a year.
- Audubon chapters are actively involved in protecting Important Bird Areas through restoration, monitoring and advocacy. Examples include: San Francisco Bay, Santa Clara River, Humboldt Bay, Morro Bay, Los Angeles River, Los Cerritos Wetlands and others.
- The data and information gathered from the Important Bird Area Program is helping inform the conservation work of other partners such as The Nature Conservancy, Endangered Habitats League, and California State Parks. Groups are using the text and data from the Important Bird Areas book in conservation planning and advocacy.
- Audubon California and San Bernardino Valley Audubon teamed-up to help protect southern California's largest remaining Tricolored Blackbird colony in the San Jacinto Valley. San Bernardino Valley Audubon advocates for protecting the valley's remaining native habitat and agricultural lands due to their importance for birds.

### How Can You Help?

- **Organize** a bird survey at an Important Bird Area and keep track of the species and numbers of birds. Report the information to Important Bird Areas Program staff or enter your sightings online at eBird ([www.ebird.org/california](http://www.ebird.org/california)).
- **Write** articles and letters about Important Bird Areas in newsletters, magazines, newspapers, etc. to teach the public about the important bird habitats in your area.
- **Adopt** an Important Bird Area and help develop a conservation plan with Important Bird Areas staff and local partners.
- **Advocate** for land-protection funds.
- **Lobby** for changes in laws and policies that would benefit conservation.
- **Organize** natural and cultural history trips to Important Bird Area sites.
- **Create** and promote wildlife habitat in your backyard using Audubon at Home guidelines.
- **Donate** financial support to the Important Bird Areas Program.



Owens Lake Important Bird Area  
Photo by Andrea Jones

