

National Audubon Society—California



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Dear Audubon Member,

I'm writing with great news -- and an urgent request for your support.

We have an option to buy 160 acres near Audubon's Kern River Preserve known as the Foster Property, and we need your immediate financial support to secure the option and buy the land.

I am writing to you today to ask you to make a direct contribution to the purchase of the land. That's right, every cent of your donation will go towards purchasing, protecting and maintaining this valuable habitat.

With your help, we hope to add this land to Audubon-California's Kern River Preserve, a key part of one of the largest remaining contiguous riparian habitats in California. Already, the Kern River Preserve is a crown jewel of the Pacific Flyway, that vital link between survival and extinction for hundreds of thousands of birds moving south to north and back again. Adding the Foster Property will be a boon to the countless birds that depend on California wetlands and riparian forests.



Photo by Sean Rowe

To purchase the land and restore it to an ecologically healthy state, we need to raise \$200,000. We have already raised \$50,000 from foundations, but we must raise the rest. That's why I'm writing to you today. We hope to raise the remainder of the money needed to purchase the land through the generosity and support of Audubon members like you.

The Foster property contains some of the finest riparian habitat on Kelso Creek, a tributary of the South Fork Kern. This perennial reach of stream supports an excellent stand of cottonwood-willow riparian forest surrounded by Mojave Desert Scrub.

In 1980, Kelso Creek was identified in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service inventory, "California's Important Fish and Wildlife Habitat," as one of California's top habitat protection opportunities.

In addition to resting and foraging use by thousands upon thousands of spring migrant birds, the Foster property hosts during the spring/summer nesting season the

Cooper's hawk, golden eagle, prairie falcon, greater roadrunner, three species of owl (barn, great horned, and long-eared), three species of hummingbird (black-chinned, Anna's and Costa's), five species of wren (cactus, rock, canyon, Bewick's and house), western bluebird, summer tanager, three species of oriole (hooded, Bullock's, and Scott's), and lesser and Lawrence's goldfinch.

The Foster property is a critical part of a twenty-five mile long riparian migration corridor. Surrounded by desert, this riparian habitat provides a verdant oasis for many species of wildlife, including summer tanagers, long-eared, barn and great horned owls; hooded, northern and Scott's orioles; Cooper's hawks and many other birds. This area is part of the most heavily-used Spring migration corridor in the Sierra Nevada. Kelso Creek links the South Fork Kern, a Globally Important Bird Area 14 miles to the north with Butterbrecht Canyon, a Nationally Important Bird Area roughly the same distance south.



Photo by Ian C. Tait

The Foster property is one of the few places along Kelso Creek where water runs above the surface of land for the longest period of time, making it critical as a water source for wildlife during the summer months.

Unfortunately, the level of threat has increased in this area.

Just downstream, a landowner has stripped away riparian forest and surrounding desert in an effort to develop a horse ranch. It is clear that the landowner intends to expand his ranch, so there is a chance that if we don't buy the Foster Property, it will be cut down and turned into a hobby ranch. Audubon-California can protect the Foster Property through acquisition, but we need to go farther. We hope to positively influence all of our neighbors in the Kelso Creek area by setting an example of good stewardship and exploring ways for people to realize their dreams while taking wildlife values into consideration.

This area is already suffering from erosion, bank destabilization and lack of regeneration by native vegetation from uncontrolled livestock grazing and off-road vehicles. The property needs to be fenced, posted and patrolled. If we can buy the property, we can save it from continued degradation and add it to our existing preserve.

So please consider making a special contribution today to Audubon to help us raise the remaining \$150,000 needed to purchase the Foster Property and protect it by adding it to our Kern River Preserve.

The Kern River Preserve is unique.

It is literally the "California Crossroads" for birds, acting as the biological center of five distinct ecological areas that come together at the Preserve -- the Sierra Nevada, the Mojave Desert, the Central Valley, the Great Basin of the Eastern Sierra and Southern California Chaparral. The result: a veritable Eden for birds and for bird-watchers in this "temperate jungle!"

More than 240 species of birds and more than 100 species of butterflies have been found in the dense cottonwood and red willow streamside forest, including the

yellow-billed cuckoo, a state-listed threatened species. The South Fork Kern supports one of the top three remaining breeding populations of willow flycatchers in the United States.

Photo by Sean Rowe



Also found are yellow warblers, lazuli buntings, blue grosbeaks, summer tanagers and blue-crested flycatchers. Many hawks, owls and songbirds use the Preserve for nesting sites.

The Eunis Skipper butterfly was believed to be extinct until 81 were found in the Preserve! Many mammals, reptiles, amphibians and plants can also be found there, including deer, beaver, dusky-footed wood rat, weasels, and occasionally bear or mountain lion.

In the 1800's California's Great Central Valley boasted more than 800,000 acres of forests lining the rivers that flowed down from the Sierra Nevada. These lush riparian forests contain some of the most abundant concentrations of wildlife found anywhere.

Sadly, only about 12,000 of these rich acres remain in California, the rest having been lost to cities, farms, roads and other development. That makes the Kern River Preserve's 869 forested acres one of the the largest protected riparian forests in California. So it is critical that we expand it right now, while we have the opportunity.

You can help Audubon-California take advantage of this opportunity and add the Foster Property to our Kern River Preserve, and ensure its unique wonders are preserved for the birds who depend on it, and for future generations of bird-watchers, naturalists, ecologists and classes of children to study and explore by making a special contribution today.

Your support of our effort to acquire the Foster Property will give us the resources to not only save this critical habitat, but to continue creating exciting new opportunities for environmental education, habitat restoration, bird and butterfly research and monitoring.

Thank you once again for your support of Audubon-California. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dan Taylor
Executive Director

P.S. -- Please send your tax-deductible special contribution today to help Audubon-California buy 160 acres adjacent to our Kern River Preserve known as the Foster Property. It will only take a minute or two -- a small investment that will pay off in a big way for the Kern River Preserve. Remember, every cent of your donation will go towards purchasing, protecting and maintaining this valuable habitat. With your help we can protect and preserve this critical habitat and Californian treasure for our children and grandchildren to know and enjoy. Thank you.

Audubon-California expresses sincere thanks to Sean Rowe and Ian C. Tait for donating the use of their photographs for this appeal.