

# Audubon CALIFORNIA

## Kern River Preserve



**SIZE:** 2,789 acres

**LOCATION:** The preserve is located along the South Fork Kern River, 57 miles north-east of Bakersfield, along State Highway 178 near Weldon at the site of the historic Andrew Brown Ranch.



**HISTORY:** The South Fork Valley is steeped in fascinating history. The Tubatulabal were the indigenous people of the valley. They lived in this area for millennia before the arrival of European



settlers shortly after 1850. Mining was the main industry of the hillsides, while cattle grazing and hay growing dominated the agriculture-based valley. A flour mill, built in 1878, stands as a reminder of the pioneer industry of Andrew Brown, the original owner of the property.

**GEOGRAPHY:** The preserve lies within the South Fork Kern River Valley near the southern terminus of the Sierra Nevada. Elevation is moderate, ranging from 2600 to 2700 feet. The South Fork of the Kern River flows through the property from east to west. Several small irrigation ditches and beaver ponds are scattered about the land. On these rich alluvial soils with their accompanying high-water table a dense growth of riparian trees and shrubs is sup-



ported, known as Great Valley Cottonwood Forest habitat. Most of the preserve is a dedicated riparian forest sanctuary although each year some of our acreage is leased out for cattle grazing and farming. Some of the surrounding property is in private ownership. Most of the land west of the preserve is the Sequoia National Forest's 1200-acre South Fork Wildlife Area and 2,718 acres of land to the north is managed by the California Department of Fish and Game.

**FAUNA:** Wildlife in the preserve is both



varied and abundant. The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, endangered in California, uses the riparian growth for nesting sites, as do many species of hawks, owls and songbirds. More than 240 bird species have been observed, including nesting Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. In addition, the preserve includes the northwestern most range extension of such southwest desert riparian nesting species as Brown-crested Flycatcher and the neon red Summer Tanager. Mammals found here include mule deer, coyote, beaver, dusky-footed wood



rat, long-tailed weasel, California ground squirrel, American black bear, bobcat, and an occasional mountain lion. As one means of monitoring the preserve's rich insect life, an annual butterfly count is conducted under the auspices of the North American Butterfly Association. In addition, annual counts of preserve birds are conducted in spring, summer, and winter under the auspices of Audubon.

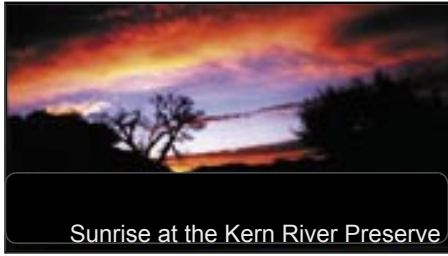
**FLORA:** The riparian forest, although tremendously productive contains only two major tree species: Fremont cottonwood and red willow. Intermixed with these trees are dense stands of mule fat, sandbar



willow, and stinging nettle. Cattails, tules, and yerba mansa abound in wet areas. The beautiful alkali mariposa lily grows in moist meadows near the river. The flora of the preserve has been inventoried and the list can be found on our website and in the visitor's center. The South Fork Valley contains the largest contiguous riparian forest in California.

# Kern River Preserve - The Watershed of South Fork Biodiversity

**ACCESS:** The preserve is open dawn to dusk each day. Feel free to explore the visitor center and follow our self-guided nature trail. A trail guide is available in the mailbox at the beginning of the trail. Please return the guide to the box or help us defray printing costs by depositing fifty cents in the bird box in the visitor center. Schools and other groups may contact the Preserve Staff in advance to arrange guided tours.



Sunrise at the Kern River Preserve

**DIRECTIONS:** The preserve is 57 miles east of Hwy 99 in Bakersfield along Hwy 178. From the Central Valley: At State Hwy 99 take Hwy 178 east. Drive through the beautiful Kern River canyon and along south shore of Isabella Reservoir to KRP in Weldon. The preserve is exactly 1.15 miles beyond Sierra Way (the Kernville turn-off).

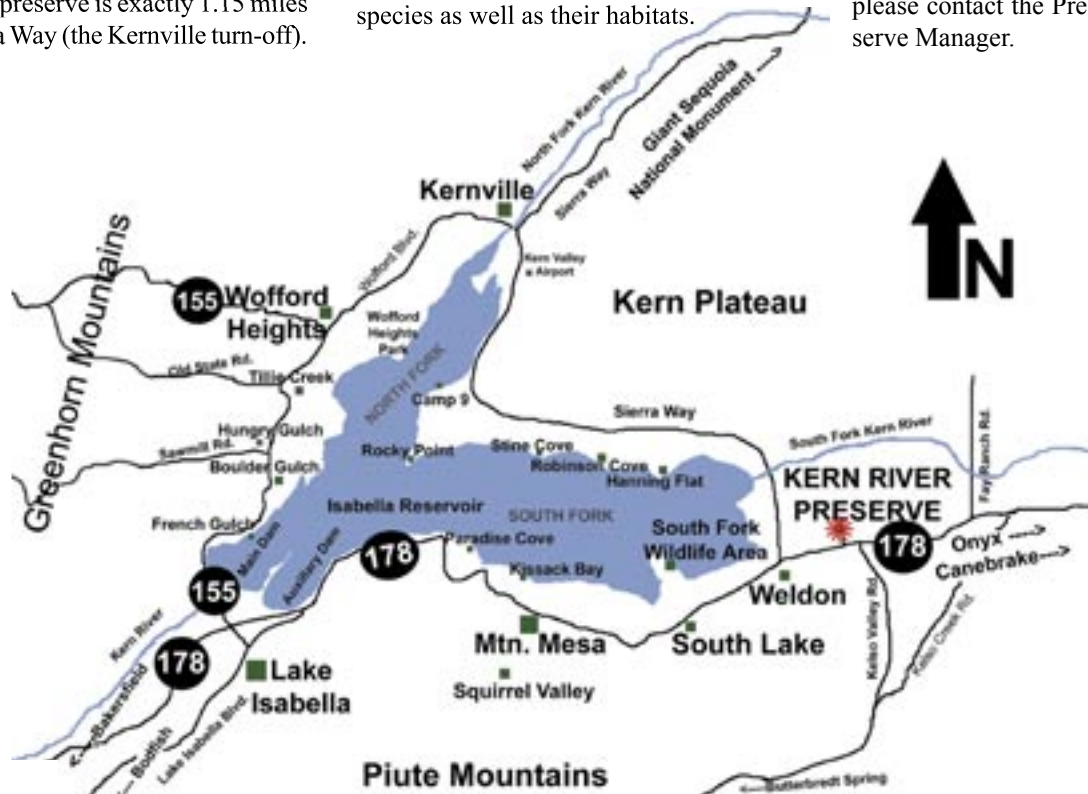
The preserve is on the left. Please turn into the property cautiously as oncoming traffic can be difficult to see around the bend in the road. From the Mojave Desert, from State Highway 14, turn westbound onto Hwy 178. Drive 30 miles to Weldon. Observe Fay Ranch Road and the South Fork School on your right, drive 0.8 miles beyond this road to the preserve entrance on the right.

**RIGHT OF WAY** into the preserve. The access road is an easement through private property, do not stop in the pasture as it is a working cattle ranch. The forest before you is Audubon property. Please drive through the forest and at the headquarters turn to the left and park in the lot by the port-a-potties.

**MANAGEMENT:** A full habitat restoration and research program has been initiated on the preserve, including planting of cottonwood and willow saplings, floral and faunal inventories, and vegetative monitoring. These efforts have resulted in significant benefits to a number of rare species as well as their habitats.

**PUBLIC SUPPORT:** The Kern River Preserve is owned and managed by Audubon-California, a private non-profit conservation organization. Audubon's goal is to preserve natural diversity and educate the public about its importance. Audubon and the Kern River Preserve depend on your generosity to continue this mission. Please consider becoming a member by making a donation of \$25 or more to "NAS/KRPFriends" and sending it to our PO Box in Weldon listed below. Additional information and educational materials may be obtained in the Visitor Center or by inquiring with Preserve Staff.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:** The Kern River Preserve offers a wide range of opportunities for individuals or groups to help us carry out our mission. If you have skills in education, science, construction, maintenance, agriculture, or any other field that you feel can advance our mission, please contact the Preserve Manager.



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Cuckoo logo by Keith Hansen, Sunrise photo by Paul Mason  
Fact Sheet redesign, maps, & images by Alison Sheehy (a friend of KRP)