



Important Bird Areas

Important Bird Areas: What Are They?

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are special sites that provide habitat for groups of birds during breeding, wintering or migrating seasons. These areas have been identified by scientists as critically important because the birds that use them are endangered, have small or limited ranges, or are species that congregate in high numbers (such as waterfowl during the winter).

The Important Bird Areas Program was created as a worldwide effort by Birdlife International in the 1980s. Audubon California administers the program in California.

Important Bird Areas and California State Parks

In some cases these IBAs are located on private lands and have no assurance of long-term protection, but in many areas these sites overlap public lands, such as State Parks property. In fact, 79 state parks are within one of the 145 IBAs in California.

Important Bird Areas are recognized by State Parks as priority areas for long-term habitat protection. In areas damaged from past land use or degraded by



non-native species, habitat restoration projects are undertaken. For example, riparian habitat in Coyote Canyon in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park was restored by removing hundreds of acres of tamarisk, a very invasive non-native shrub that had eliminated much of the least Bell's vireo's natural nesting habitat. This endangered bird now flourishes in this portion of the Anza-Borrego Riparian IBA.

In addition to restoring and protecting important bird habitat, state parks also provides the public with excellent access to world-class bird watching.

California State Parks and Audubon Society: A Partnership

For years State Parks and Audubon California have collaborated on projects that benefit birds and other wildlife on park lands. Audubon members have volunteered to work on educational programs and to improve bird habitat by planting native species and other resource management activities. In 2007 Audubon California established an endowment to sponsor conservation actions in state parks. This endowment funds projects that support IBAs through habitat restoration, monitoring, and public education on State Parks land.

For more information on Important Bird Areas go to:

<http://ca.audubon.org/iba>

