

Birds of the Castroville Slough Wetland

Year-Round



© Evan Lipton



© Claude Nadeau



© Davey Walters



© Steve Hillebrand



© Doran Anderson

GREAT BLUE HERON

GREATER
YELLOWLEGS

KILLDEER

GREAT EGRET

BLACK-NECKED STILT

Ardea herodias

An elegant & adaptable forager who nests in trees or shrubs near the water. Diet includes fish, frogs, snakes, & rodents.

Tringa melanoleuca

An active feeder with a loud alarm call who builds a well-concealed nest near the water. Diet includes insects & small fish.

Charadrius vociferus

A species famous for its "broken wing" trick to steer intruders away from its nest. Often nests far from water. Diet consists primarily of insects.

Ardea alba

A graceful bird historically hunted for its plumage. Nests in trees & shrubs. Prefers large, open water bodies. Diet consists primarily of fish.

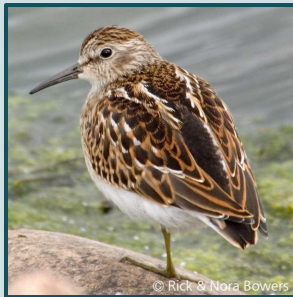
Himantopus mexicanus

A coastal resident who prefers freshwater habitat. Nests on bare, unvegetated ground near water. Diet includes fish & crustaceans.

Winter



© Brian E. Stull



© Rick & Nora Bowers



© G. Masley



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LONG-BILLED
DOWITCHER

LEAST SANDPIPER

RED-WINGED
BLACKBIRD

MARSH WREN

Limnodromus scolopaceus

A winter migrant who prefers freshwater habitats. Breeds on the Arctic coast. Diet consists primarily of aquatic insects & their larvae.

Calidris minutilla

The smallest member of the Sandpiper family. Prefers small water bodies with less competition from large birds. Diet includes insects & crustaceans.

Agelaius phoeniceus

A distinctive bird, known for its bold behavior & territorial nature. Nests in tall reeds or bunches of grass. Diet consists of insects and seeds.

Cistothorus palustris

A species that has declined with the loss of freshwater habitat. Males sing to defend their nesting territory. Diet includes insects, their larvae, & snails.

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Spring



AMERICAN AVOCET

Recurvirostra americana

A striking species with rusty plumage marking it as a breeding adult. Nests in open areas near water. Diet includes insects & crustaceans.



CINNAMON TEAL

Spatula cyanoptera

A common bird with a bill adapted to straining food items out of water. Nests in vegetated areas near water. Diet consists of seeds & insects.



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

Spinus tristis

An eye-catching finch with an affinity for diverse habitats. Nests in dense vegetation. Diet consists primarily of seeds, but also of insects.



CLIFF SWALLOW

Petrochelidon pyrrhonota

A fan of a wide range of habitat types, but seeks out vertical cliffs for nesting. Nests in large colonies. Diet almost entirely made up of insects.

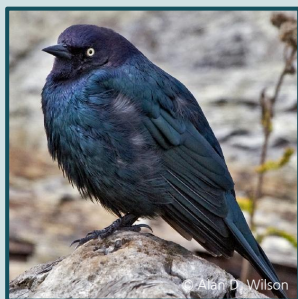


AMERICAN COOT

Fulica americana

An abundant species that prefers freshwater habitat for breeding. Highly territorial over nesting area. Diet is very diverse.

Fall



BREWER'S BLACKBIRD

Euphagus cyanocephalus

A widespread species that often flocks in groups in areas inhabited by humans. Nests primarily in trees. Diet includes insects, berries, & seeds.



BLACK PHOEBE

Sayornis nigricans

A sharp whistle identifies this bird. Found in open habitats, nests in sheltered places such as eaves or culverts. Diet consist of insects.



HOUSE FINCH

Haemorhous mexicanus

A distinctive bird often found around farmland. Nests high up in trees or human-made structures. Diet consists mostly of plant material.

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Hawks



MERLIN

Falco columbarius

A rather small falcon, compact and fast-flying. It feeds mostly on small birds, capturing them in mid-air in rapid pursuit.



RED-TAILED HAWK

Buteo Jamaicensis

This is the most widespread and familiar large hawk in North America, designed for effortless soaring. It is commonly seen perched on roadside poles or sailing over fields and woods.



NORTHERN HARRIER

Circus hudsonius

Harriers are very distinctive hawks, with a white patch on their rump. The face of our Northern Harrier looks rather like that of an owl. It relies on its hearing to help it locate prey as it flies low over the fields.



WHITE-TAILED KITE

Elanus leucurus

A small hawk, it is often seen hovering on rapidly beating wings over open fields, looking for small rodents, its main food source.



AMERICAN KESTREL

Falco sparverius

Our smallest falcon, the kestrel is commonly seen perched on roadside wires, or hovering low over a field on rapidly beating wings. Kestrels nest in cavities in trees.

Rare Sights



WHITE-FACED IBIS

Plegadis chihi

White-faced Ibises wander through the wet during the warmer months, and they may quickly find and take advantage of temporary new habitat after rains or flooding. Even their nesting sites often change from year to year with changes in local water levels.



GREAT HORNED OWL

Bubo virginianus

Nicknamed the tiger owl, this owl has an aggressive hunting style. It will eat rabbits, hawks, snakes and skunks. Great Horned Owls begin nesting early and their deep hoots can be heard clearly on mid-winter nights.



BARN OWL

Tyto alba

This owl eats only mice and rats. This is one of the most widespread land birds being found on six continents. Due to its appearance and rasping shrieks it has attracted a lot of superstition.