



Birding at the Point Reyes Lighthouse

The area around the Point Reyes Lighthouse contains the harshest climate on the peninsula. Between the fog and wind, many land-bird migrants need to stop for rest and refueling in the coastal scrub (mostly bush lupine and coyote brush) which surrounds the parking lot. Some may also be found in the wind-blown cypress trees along the way to the Lighthouse. From the Lighthouse Observation Deck, or the Lighthouse itself (which is down 314 steps), one may also see more pelagic birds on the cliffs, rocks, and in the surf. Be sure to keep your eyes open for passing marine mammals, and, in the summer, look for common murre nesting on the rocks below.

Resident Birds (Present all year - numbers vary)

Brown Pelican
Brandt's Cormorant
Pelagic Cormorant
Turkey Vulture
Peregrine Falcon
Red-tailed Hawk
Black Oystercatcher
Western Gull
Great-horned Owl
Black Phoebe
Rock Wren
Common Raven
Song Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
House Finch

Summer Birds

Brown Pelican
Northern Harrier
Heermann's Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Murre
Pigeon Guillemot
Tufted Puffin
Allen's Hummingbird
Anna's Hummingbird
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Brown-headed Cowbird
European Starling
American Goldfinch

Winter Birds

Western Grebe
Clark's Grebe
Northern Fulmar
Surf Scoter
Black Scoter
Cooper's Hawk
Sharp-shinned Hawk
American Kestrel
Merlin
Wandering Tattler
Black Turnstone
Mew Gull
California Gull
Herring Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Thayer's Gull
Northern Flicker
Say's Phoebe
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Townsend's Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Hermit Thrush
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Purple Finch

Migrants *

Brant Goose
White-winged Scoter
Surf Scoter
White Pelican
Bonaparte's Gull
Sabine's Gull

*Over 400 birds have been seen along the outer edges of the Point! Many of these were far off their normal migratory path, perhaps confused or blown off course by storms. The best time to catch a glimpse of one of these birds, called vagrants, is from mid-May through early June, and from late August through October.