



Birding at Abbotts Lagoon

A wide diversity of waterfowl enjoys this protected lagoon, which is accessible via a 1.5-mile-long trail. The route passes a stock pond and takes you between grazed pasture and coastal scrub (composed mostly of coyote bush and bush lupine). While some ducks and grebes winter on the first two lakes, the lower (westernmost) lagoon tends to have the best waterbird diversity. This is also a sensitive nesting area for the federally threatened western snowy plover. Some sections of the beach and dunes are usually closed to entry during the plover nesting season. Please observe the closures and tread carefully on the sandy beaches during the spring and summer months.

Resident Birds (Present all year - numbers vary)

Pied-billed Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Great-blue Heron
Gadwall
Mallard
Ruddy Duck
Turkey Vulture
White-tailed Kite
Northern Harrier
Red-tailed Hawk
California Quail
Virginia Rail
Coot
Snowy Plover
Western Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Black Phoebe
Common Raven
Marsh Wren
Bewick's Wren
Western Bluebird
Wrentit
Common Yellowthroat
Spotted Towhee
Savannah Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Song Sparrow
House Finch
Red-winged Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Western Meadowlark
Wood Duck

Summer Birds

Brown Pelican
White Pelican
Heermann's Gull
Elegant Tern
Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Murre
Pigeon Guillemot
Osprey
Allen's Hummingbird
Anna's Hummingbird
Grasshopper Sparrow
Caspian Tern
American Goldfinch
Chipping Sparrow

Winter Birds

Red-throated Loon
Pacific Loon
Common Loon
Horned Grebe
Eared Grebe
Red-necked Grebe
Western Grebe
Clark's Grebe
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
American Bittern
Green-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Mallard
Northern Pintail
Gadwall
American Wigeon
Canvasback
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
White-winged Scoter
Common Goldeneye
Bufflehead
Red-breasted Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Golden Eagle
Northern Flicker
Cooper's Hawk
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk

Winter Birds (continued)

Merlin
Rough-legged Hawk
Peregrine Falcon
Prairie Falcon
Willet
Black-bellied Plover
Mew Gull
California Gull
Herring Gull
Thayer's Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Sanderling
Marbled Godwit
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Horned Lark
American Pipit
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Tricolored Blackbird

Migrants

Abbotts Lagoon is most known for its fall passage (late June through September) of shorebirds. Forty-two species of shorebirds have been documented here, including rarities like Hudsonian and bar-tailed godwits and sharp-tailed and buff-breasted sandpipers.



Birding at Bear Valley

The Bear Valley area surrounds the park's main visitor center. Check inside with the park rangers to learn about recent interesting sightings. The Bear Valley Visitor Center also contains museum exhibits focusing on park wildlife and their habitats, accessible restrooms, and a bookstore with maps, local checklists, and books.

From the visitor center, proceed in any direction for an excellent day of birding. For instance, across the road, to the east, is a picnic area beneath majestic Douglas firs laden with the acorn woodpecker's beakwork. Just beyond that is the Earthquake Trail, a 0.6-mile-long loop, which passes through a riparian woodland of alders and willows.

The Woodpecker Trail and the Bear Valley Trail begin at the south end of the parking lot. The Woodpecker Trail (1 mile loop) winds through dense forests and open fields. For those with a little more time, the Bear Valley Trail (4 miles one-way) creates a bird watching corridor all the way to the ocean as it passes through riparian zones, fields, forests and coastal scrub.

Resident Birds (present all year - numbers vary)

Turkey Vulture
White-tailed Kite
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
California Quail
Band-tailed Pigeon
Barn Owl
Great-Horned Owl
Western Screech Owl
Anna's Hummingbird
Acorn Woodpecker (abundant)
Nuttall's Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Black Phoebe
Steller's Jay
Scrub Jay
American Crow

Resident Birds (continued)

Common Raven
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Bushtit
Pygmy Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Bewick's Wren
Pacific Wren
Western Bluebird
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Hutton's Vireo
Spotted Towhee
California Towhee
Song Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Brewer's Blackbird
Purple Finch
House Finch
Pine Siskin
Black Phoebe

Summer Birds

Great-blue Heron
Osprey
Allen's Hummingbird
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Pacific Slope Flycatcher
Western Wood Pewee
Tree Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Swainson's Thrush
Warbling Vireo
Wilson's Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
Black-headed Grosbeak
American Goldfinch
Bullock's Oriole

Winter Birds

Cooper's Hawk
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Merlin
Say's Phoebe
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Hermit Thrush
Varied Thrush
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Golden-crowned Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird
Tri-colored Blackbird

Migrants

Ash-throated Flycatcher
Cedar Waxwing
Cassin's Vireo
Yellow Warbler
Western Tanager
Black-throated Gray Warbler



Birding at Five Brooks

The old mill pond at Five Brooks and the vegetation surrounding it offers excellent avian diversity. The pond is located about 100 yards from the parking lot. A short trail encircles the pond, but hikers can also link up to three longer trails, each of which differ dramatically from the others. From the southwest end of the pond, the Olema Valley Trail leads southeast through mature, mixed forest. The Stewart Trail winds its way west through old growth Douglas fir to Wildcat Beach. And the Rift Zone Trail leads north, paralleling Olema Creek and the San Andreas Fault, through woodlands to open (cleared) pastureland.

Resident Birds (Present all year - numbers vary)

Pied-billed Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Wood Duck
Belted Kingfisher
Gadwall
Turkey Vulture
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
California Quail
American Robin
Western Screech Owl
Saw-whet Owl
Band-tailed Pigeon
Anna's Hummingbird
Acorn Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Nuttall's Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pine Siskin
Scrub Jay
Steller's Jay
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Bushtit
Wrentit
Pacific Wren
Bewick's Wren
Hutton's Vireo
Brown Creeper
Black Phoebe
Song Sparrow
Spotted Towhee
California Towhee
Purple Finch
Pygmy Nuthatch

Summer Birds

Green Heron
Great-blue Heron
Barn Owl
Allen's Hummingbird
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Pacific slope Flycatcher
Western Wood-peewee
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Barn Swallow
Rough-winged Swallow
Swainson's Thrush
Warbling Vireo
Orange-crowned Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Black-headed Grosbeak
American Goldfinch

Winter Birds

American Wigeon
Mallard
Ring-necked Duck
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Cooper's Hawk
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Varied Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Fox Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Golden-crowned Sparrow

Migrants

Common Loon
Black-throated Gray Warbler
Cassin's Vireo
Hermit Warbler
Western Grebe



Birding at Limantour

A short walk from the main parking lot will bring you to Limantour's ponds and marshes, creating a virtual paradise for those seeking waterfowl. The wetlands, which are surrounded by coastal strand, coastal scrub, and woodlands, also provide a fairly protective area for several songbirds.

A trail leads west to Muddy Hollow Creek or walk along the edge of Drakes Bay out to the end of Limantour Spit. Pick up the Muddy Hollow trail to the right of the vault toilets and follow it past saltmarsh and through coastal scrub. Late fall and early winter offer the best opportunities for viewing a variety of ducks, including the ring-necked duck and the American wigeon. Continue your exploration on Limantour Spit. Explore the dunes, Drakes Bay, and Estero de Limantour as you look for shorebirds, loons, snowy plovers, and brown and white pelicans.

Resident Birds (Present all year - numbers vary)

Black Phoebe
Marsh Wren
Bewick's Wren
Wrentit
Common Yellowthroat
White-Crowned Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant
Pied-billed Grebe
Black-Crowned Night-Heron
Great-blue Heron
Snowy Egret
Wood Duck
Long-billed Curlew
Belted Kingfisher
Snowy Plover

Summer Birds

Pied-billed Grebe
American Coot
Osprey
Cinnamon Teal
American Bittern
Virginia Rail
Sora
Brown Pelican
Green-backed Heron

Winter Birds

Red-throated Loon
Pacific Loon
Common Loon
Horned Grebe
Red-necked Grebe
Western Grebe
Clark's Grebe
Canada Goose
Green-winged Teal
Mallard
Northern Pintail
Gadwall
American Wigeon
Canvasback
Ring-necked Duck

Winter Birds cont.

Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Common Goldeneye
White-winged Scoter
Bufflehead
Red-breasted Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Black-bellied Plover
Sanderling
Western Sandpiper
Common Snipe
Pine Siskin
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Yellow-rumped Warbler

Migrants

White Pelican
Brant Goose
Short-billed Dowitcher
Red-necked Phalarope



Birding at Palomarin

Coastal scrub (composed primarily of coyote brush and California sagebrush) and Douglas fir forest are the dominant habitats in the Palomarin area. Although you aren't likely to see any waterfowl here, this is a great place to watch songbirds and raptors.

Point Blue Conservation Science's Palomarin Field Station (founded in 1966 as the Point Reyes Bird Observatory), is located in the area. Point Blue works to conserve birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through innovative scientific research and outreach. Feel free to stop by the field station's visitor center and bird banding lab. From dawn to noon, you may accompany field biologists as they check mist-nets for birds, and then watch bird banding in the lab. For specific dates and times to participate, call the field station at 415-868-0655. Continue your exploration by taking a stroll down the nature trail to learn more about local birds and their habitats in addition to Point Blue's bird conservation projects throughout the west.

Resident Birds (Present all year - numbers vary)

Red-tailed Hawk
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
American Kestrel
Northern Saw-whet Owl
Northern Spotted Owl
Anna's Hummingbird
Bewick's Wren
Pacific Wren
Scrub Jay
Steller's Jay
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
American Robin
Western Bluebird

Resident Birds cont.

Black Phoebe
Brown Creeper
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Bushtit
Spotted Towhee
Wrentit
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Oregon Junco
California Towhee
House Finch
Purple Finch
Song Sparrow
Nuttall's Woodpecker
White-crowned Sparrow
Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Summer Birds

Rufous Hummingbird
Allen's Hummingbird
Red-breasted Sapsucker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Pacific Slope Flycatcher
Warbling Vireo
Hutton's Vireo
Tree Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
Swainson's Thrush
Wilson's Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
American Goldfinch
Black-headed Grosbeak

Winter Birds

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Hermit Thrush
Varied Thrush
Fox Sparrow
Golden-crowned Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Townsend's Warbler
Pine Siskin

Migrants

Cassin's Vireo
House Wren
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Hermit Warbler
Black-throated Gray Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow Warbler
Western Tanager
Lincoln's Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Lazuli Bunting



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.