



Birdwatching at Abbotts Lagoon

A diversity of waterfowl enjoys this protected lagoon, which is accessible via a 1.5 mile trail. The route passes a farm pond and takes you between grazed pasture and coastal scrub (mostly Coyote Bush and Bush Lupine). While some ducks and grebes winter on the first lake, the lower lagoon has the best waterbird diversity. This is also a sensitive nesting area for the federally threatened western snowy plover. Please 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.



Birdwatching 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 in the wind-blown Cypress trees along the way to the Lighthouse. From the Lighthouse Observation deck or the Lighthouse itself (which is down 308 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 Murres 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.