

Bolsa Chica Bird Checklist

The area covered by this checklist includes the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, Harriett Wieder Regional Park, and several small open-space areas of private ownership adjacent to the north end of the reserve. The Ecological Reserve is a 1,445-acre wildlife area operated by the California Department of Fish & Game. The reserve has two parking lots, one on Warner Avenue just east of Pacific Coast Highway and another on Pacific Coast Highway about 1.5 miles south of Warner Avenue (access is right-in, right-out only). Harriett Wieder Regional Park is a 104-acre park operated by the County of Orange and is adjacent to the south end of the reserve. The park has a parking lot accessed from Seapoint Avenue in Huntington Beach.

Bolsa Chica is one of the premier birding locations in southern California. This list includes 186 regularly occurring species. A supplemental list includes 116 less frequently seen species, defined as species that are seen at Bolsa Chica less often than once per year.

Bolsa Chica has two distinct seasons with distinct populations of migratory birds. In summer, Bolsa Chica hosts breeding colonies of numerous tern species, including the largest colony of Elegant Terns in the USA. In winter, shorebirds and waterbirds predominate, while terns have largely gone south.

Abundance for each species is designated by the symbols below. The numerical categories for each abundance level reflect approximations on the part of the compilers. Abundance codes apply to the bird in its expected habitat. Species are listed in accordance with the *American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds*, 7th edition (1998) as amended through the 52nd supplement.

Seasons

Winter (W) = December, January, February
Spring (Sp) = March, April, May
Summer (Su) = June, July
Fall (F) = August, September, October, November

Abundance Code

A = Abundant (over 50 individuals / day)
C = Common (11-50 individuals / day)
Fc = Fairly common (6-10 individuals / day)
U = Uncommon (up to 5 individuals / day)
R = Rare (1-10 sightings / season)
* indicates species that nested at Bolsa Chica

This bird checklist is a publication of the Bolsa Chica Conservancy and was first published in 1994 and subsequently in 1997 based on research and compilation by Louann W. Murray, Ph.D.

This third edition was compiled by Conservancy volunteers Terry Hill, Victor Leipzig, Ph.D. and Claire Grozinger, and Conservancy staff led by Katalin Patonai. Data were drawn from Christmas Bird Counts by Sea & Sage Audubon, monthly surveys by the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, and the observations of Brian Daniels, Peter Knapp, Doug Willick, Dick Erickson, Sylvia Gallagher, and many other Orange County birders.

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GEESE AND DUCKS

	W	Sp	Su	F
__Brant	U	Fc	R	R
__Canada Goose*	A	C	U	C
__Gadwall*	A	C	C	Fc
__American Wigeon	A	C		C
__Mallard*	C	C	C	C
__Blue-winged Teal*	C	C	R	C
__Cinnamon Teal*	C	C	Fc	Fc
__Northern Shoveler	A	A		A
__Northern Pintail*	A	Fc	R	C
__Green-winged Teal	A	C		C
__Redhead*	C	C	C	C
__Greater Scaup	U	U		R
__Lesser Scaup	A	A		C
__Surf Scoter	A	U	R	U
__Bufflehead	A	C		Fc
__Red-breasted Merganser	C	Fc	R	U
__Ruddy Duck*	A	A	U	A

LOONS

__Red-throated Loon	R	R		R
__Pacific Loon	R	R		R
__Common Loon	U	R		R

GREBES

__Pied-billed Grebe*	C	Fc	Fc	C
__Horned Grebe	Fc	U		Fc
__Eared Grebe*	C	C	R	C
__Western Grebe	C	Fc		Fc
__Clark's Grebe	U	U		U

CORMORANTS

__Double-crested Cormorant*	A	C	A	A
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PELICANS

__American White Pelican	C	C	C	C
__Brown Pelican	C	A	A	A

BITTERNs AND HERONS

__American Bittern	U	R		R
__Least Bittern*		R	R	
__Great Blue Heron*	C	C	C	C
__Great Egret	C	C	C	C
__Snowy Egret	A	A	A	A
__Reddish Egret	U	U	U	U
__Green Heron*	U	U	U	U
__Black-crowned Night-Heron*	C	Fc	Fc	C

IBISES

__White-faced Ibis	U			U
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VULTURES

__Turkey Vulture	U	U	U	U
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OSPREYS

__Osprey	U	U	U	U
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HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES

__White-tailed Kite*	U	U	U	U
__Northern Harrier	U	U	R	U
__Sharp-shinned Hawk	R	R		R
__Cooper's Hawk*	U	U	U	U
__Red-shouldered Hawk	R	R	R	R
__Red-tailed Hawk*	Fc	U	U	U

FALCONS

__American Kestrel*	Fc	U	U	Fc
__Merlin	R			R
__Peregrine Falcon	U	U	U	U

RAILS AND COOTS

__Virginia Rail*	R	R	R	R
__Sora*	U	U	U	U
__Common Gallinule	R	R		R
__American Coot*	A	A	C	A

PLOVERS

__Black-bellied Plover	A	C	C	A
__Pacific Golden-Plover	R	R		R
__Snowy Plover*	U	C	C	U
__Semipalmated Plover	A	A	A	A
__Killdeer*	A	C	C	C

STILTS AND AVOCETS

__Black-necked Stilt*	A	A	A	A
__American Avocet*	A	A	C	A

SANDPIPERS AND PHALAROPES

__Spotted Sandpiper	U	U		U
__Solitary Sandpiper				R
__Greater Yellowlegs	C	Fc	Fc	C
__Willet	A	A	A	A
__Lesser Yellowlegs	U	U	R	U
__Whimbrel	U	Fc	Fc	Fc
__Long-billed Curlew	C	Fc	Fc	C
__Marbled Godwit	A	A	C	A
__Ruddy Turnstone	Fc	U	U	Fc
__Black Turnstone	R	R		R
__Surfbird		R		
__Red Knot	Fc	Fc	R	Fc
__Sanderling	Fc	Fc	R	Fc
__Semipalmated Sandpiper				R
__Western Sandpiper	A	A	C	A
__Least Sandpiper	A	A	Fc	A
__Baird's Sandpiper				R
__Pectoral Sandpiper				R
__Dunlin	C	C		C
__Stilt Sandpiper			R	R
__Short-billed Dowitcher	A	A	Fc	A
__Long-billed Dowitcher	A	A	Fc	A
__Wilson's Snipe				R
__Wilson's Phalarope		R	C	A
__Red-necked Phalarope		U	C	A

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GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS

	W	Sp	Su	F
__Bonaparte's Gull	R	R		R
__Heermann's Gull	R	R	R	R
__Ring-billed Gull	A	C	Fc	C
__Western Gull	A	C	A	A
__California Gull	A	Fc	Fc	A
__Herring Gull	U	U		U
__Thayer's Gull	R	R		
__Glaucous-winged Gull	U	U		R
__Least Tern*		A	A	R
__Gull-billed Tern		R	R	
__Caspian Tern*	Fc	A	A	Fc
__Black Tern			R	R
__Common Tern		R	Fc	Fc
__Forster's Tern*	C	A	A	A
__Royal Tern*	R	A	A	U
__Elegant Tern*		A	A	R
__Black Skimmer*		A	A	U

PIGEONS AND DOVES

__Rock Pigeon*	C	C	C	C
__Eurasian Collared-Dove	R	R	R	R
__Mourning Dove*	A	A	A	A

BARN OWLS

__Barn Owl	R	R	R	R
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TYPICAL OWLS

__Great Horned Owl*	U	U	U	U
__Burrowing Owl	R	R		R

SWIFTS

__Vaux's Swift		U		U
__White-throated Swift	R	R		R

HUMMINGBIRDS

__Black-chinned Hummingbird		R		R
__Anna's Hummingbird*	C	C	C	C
__Rufous Hummingbird		R		
__Allen's Hummingbird*	C	C	C	C

KINGFISHERS

__Belted Kingfisher	U	U		U
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WOODPECKERS

__Nuttall's Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
__Downy Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
__Northern Flicker	U	U	U	U

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

	W	Sp	Su	F
__Olive-sided Flycatcher		U		R
__Western Wood-Pewee		U	U	U
__Willow Flycatcher		R	R	R
__Pacific-slope Flycatcher		U	U	U
__Black Phoebe*	C	C	C	C
__Say's Phoebe*	Fc	Fc	U	Fc
__Ash-throated Flycatcher		U	R	U
__Cassin's Kingbird	Fc	Fc	Fc	Fc
__Western Kingbird		U		U

SHRIKES

__Loggerhead Shrike*	R	R	R	R
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VIREOS

__Warbling Vireo		U		U
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JAYS AND CROWS

__American Crow*	C	C	C	C
__Common Raven*	U	U	U	U

LARKS

__Horned Lark*	R	C	C	U
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SWALLOWS

__Tree Swallow	R	C	Fc	U
__Violet-green Swallow		R		
__Northern Rough-winged Swallow		C	C	U
__Cliff Swallow*		C	C	
__Barn Swallow*	R	C	C	U

BUSHTITS

__Bushtit*	A	A	A	A
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WRENS

__House Wren*	U	Fc	Fc	Fc
__Marsh Wren*	U	U	U	U

GNATCATCHERS

__Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	U	U	R	U
__California Gnatcatcher*	R	R	R	R

KINGLETS

__Ruby-crowned Kinglet	U	U		U
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THRUSHES

__Western Bluebird	U	U	U	U
__Swainson's Thrush		R		R
__Hermit Thrush	U	U		U
__American Robin	R	R	R	R

MOCKINGBIRDS

__Northern Mockingbird*	R	R	R	R
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STARLINGS

__European Starling*	A	A	A	A
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PIPITS

__American Pipit	A	C		C
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WAXWINGS

__Cedar Waxwing	C	C		C
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WARBLERS

__Orange-crowned Warbler	U	U	R	U
__Nashville Warbler		R		R
__MacGillivray's Warbler		R		R
__Common Yellowthroat*	C	C	C	C
__Yellow Warbler	R	Fc	R	Fc

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	W	Sp	Su	F
__Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	C		C
__Black-throated Gray Warbler		R		R
__Townsend's Warbler	R	U		U
__Wilson's Warbler	R	C		Fc
TOWHEES				
__Spotted Towhee	R	U	U	U
__California Towhee*	C	C	Fc	C
SPARROWS				
__Brewer's Sparrow				R
__Vesper Sparrow				R
__Lark Sparrow				R
__Savannah Sparrow				
__Common	C	Fc		C
__Belding's*	A	A	A	A
__Large-billed	R			R
__Fox Sparrow	R	R		R
__Song Sparrow*	C	C	C	C
__Lincoln's Sparrow	U	U		U
__White-crowned Sparrow	A	A		A
__Golden-crowned Sparrow	U	R		U
__Dark-eyed Junco	R	R		R
TANAGERS, GROSBEAKS AND BUNTINGS				
__Western Tanager		Fc		U
__Black-headed Grosbeak		R		
__Blue Grosbeak*		R	R	R
__Lazuli Bunting		R	R	R
BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES				
__Red-winged Blackbird*	A	A	U	U
__Western Meadowlark	A	A	R	A
__Brewer's Blackbird	U	U	U	U
__Great-tailed Grackle	U	C	C	U
__Brown-headed Cowbird		U		U
__Hooded Oriole*		U	U	U
__Bullock's Oriole*		U	R	U
FINCHES				
__House Finch*	A	A	A	A
__Lesser Goldfinch*	C	C	C	C
__American Goldfinch	U	C	C	C
OLD WORLD SPARROWS				
__House Sparrow	U	U	U	U

Exotic Species:

Mute Swan
 Black Swan
 Egyptian Goose
 Cockatiel
 Rose-ringed Parakeet
 Yellow-headed Amazon
 Yellow-billed Magpie
 Northern Cardinal
 Yellow-fronted Canary
 European Goldfinch
 Orange Bishop
 Nutmeg Mannikin
 Pin-tailed Whydah

Less Frequently Observed Species:

Fulvous Whistling-Duck
 Greater White-fronted Goose
 Snow Goose
 Ross's Goose
 Cackling Goose
 Wood Duck
 Eurasian Wigeon
 Canvasback
 Common Pochard
 Ring-necked Duck
 Harlequin Duck
 White-winged Scoter
 Black Scoter
 Long-tailed Duck
 Common Goldeneye
 Barrow's Goldeneye
 Hooded Merganser
 Common Merganser
 Red-necked Grebe
 Red-tailed Tropicbird
 Magnificent Frigatebird
 Brandt's Cormorant
 Pelagic Cormorant
 Little Blue Heron
 Tricolored Heron
 Cattle Egret
 Bald Eagle
 Ferruginous Hawk
 Rough-legged Hawk
 Prairie Falcon
 Clapper Rail
 Lesser Sand-Plover
 Wilson's Plover
 Mountain Plover
 Wandering Tattler
 White-rumped Sandpiper
 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
 Curlew Sandpiper
 Buff-breasted Sandpiper
 Ruff
 Red Phalarope
 Black-legged Kittiwake
 Sabine's Gull
 Laughing Gull
 Franklin's Gull
 Mew Gull
 Lesser Black-backed Gull
 Glaucous Gull
 Sooty Tern
 Bridled Tern
 Arctic Tern
 Sandwich Tern
 Pomarine Jaeger
 Parasitic Jaeger
 Spotted Dove
 White-winged Dove
 Common Ground-Dove
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
 Short-eared Owl
 Common Poorwill
 Black Swift
 Costa's Hummingbird
 Calliope Hummingbird
 Red-breasted Sapsucker
 Hairy Woodpecker
 Least Flycatcher
 Hammond's Flycatcher
 Gray Flycatcher
 Dusky Flycatcher
 Eastern Phoebe
 Vermilion Flycatcher
 Tropical Kingbird
 Bell's Vireo
 Cassin's Vireo
 Hutton's Vireo
 Red-eyed Vireo
 Purple Martin
 Bank Swallow
 Verdin
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
 White-breasted Nuthatch
 Rock Wren
 Bewick's Wren
 Pacific Wren
 Mountain Bluebird
 Sage Thrasher
 California Thrasher
 Red-throated Pipit
 Phainopepla
 Lapland Longspur
 Chestnut-collared Longspur
 Ovenbird
 Northern Waterthrush
 Black-and-white Warbler
 Prothonotary Warbler
 Tennessee Warbler
 American Redstart
 Chestnut-sided Warbler
 Palm Warbler
 Hermit Warbler
 Yellow-breasted Chat
 Green-tailed Towhee
 Cassin's Sparrow
 Chipping Sparrow
 Clay-colored Sparrow
 Black-throated Sparrow
 Nelson's Sparrow
 White-throated Sparrow
 Summer Tanager
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
 Bobolink
 Tricolored Blackbird
 Yellow-headed Blackbird
 Red Crossbill
 Pine Siskin
 Lawrence's Goldfinch