

P11004 # 2499 ✓

AN ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS FOUND ON
THE PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO
(1966 through March 1988)

compiled by

Mary Louise Rosegay
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Key to occurrence codes:

ab. = abundant v.c. = very common c. = common
occ. = occasional u.c. = uncommon

✓ COMMON LOON, f.c., seen regularly in winter, off shore from Ft. Point past the Coast Guard Station.

✓ YELLOW-BILLED LOON, one known record, in same area as above.

PACIFIC LOON, occasionally, but usually farther off shore, same general area as above, in winter.

✓ RED-THROATED LOON, f.c., in area above, in winter.

WESTERN GREBE - large numbers winter around Ft. Point, and many be seen in smaller numbers all along the Presidio Bay front.

CLARK'S GREBE, rare, in winter.

✓ RED-NECKED GREBE, rare, in winter.

✓ EARED GREBE, u.c., as above.

PIED-BILLED GREBE, occ., as above, and at Mountain Lake, on the s.w. edge of the Presidio.

NORTHERN FULMAR, rarely seen inside the Bay, but on some occasions, as during herring runs in January or February, they may become fairly common, and visible from the Presidio Beaches.

SOOTY SHEARWATER, can be abundant in some years, usually coming into the straights as far as the Golden Gate Bridge, in late summer and early fall. Other species of Shearwater are sometimes with the Sooties, but may be difficult to pick out of the thousands of birds in these milling flocks.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD - I have seen one individual of this species enter the Bay, flying under the Golden Gate Bridge and past the Presidio. It was with a flock of gulls following a fishing boat.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - rarely seen over the Bay, from the Presidio.

BROWN PELICAN - quite common, returning to our area after their very early breeding season south of us, mostly in Mexico. Usually, large numbers have returned by June, and they are present through the rest of the summer and into fall. Some years, as in '87 - '88, a few may be seen all winter.

RED-FOOTED BOOBY, one seen following fishing boats, outside the Golden Gate, and on at least one occasion, actually into the Bay, where it could have been seen from the Presidio. Late August, or September, 1987.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT
BRANDT'S CORMORANT
PELAGIC CORMORANT

All three species f.c. - c, and sometimes abundant, off shore, especially from Ft. Point, and often farther east along the Presidio shore.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - rare. Sometimes seen in trees around Palace of Fine Arts, and may come onto the Presidio where this property adjoins the Presidio under Daggle Drive (across from the Commissary). Other herons, such as Great Blue and Snowy and Great Egret may fly over from time to time, and are probably most likely to be seen at Mountain Lake.

TUNDRA SWAN - a small flock of about 6 birds was recorded one winter several years ago flying east along the Golden Gate Straights, with one larger swan, identified by several birders as a Trumpeter Swan.

SNOW GOOSE - I picked up a dead bird at Ft. Point one winter several years ago, but this would be a very rare visitor in this area.

AMERICAN WIGEON - are seen occasionally close to shore on the Presidio, and some years ago, a large flock of Wigeon fed during the winter in the grass around Crissy Field. Most of the ducks seen along our shores are wintering diving ducks and include the following.

RUDDY DUCK, c. in winter, depending on food supply.

CANVASBACK, r., winter

GREATER SCARP, c., as above

LESSER SCARP c., as above

SURF SCOTER, can be abundant, winter

WHITE-WINGER SCOTER, occ., winter

BLACK SCOTER - possible, but n. rare inside the Golden Gate

HARLEQUIN - can be abundant, winter

OLDSQUAW - rare, but three immat. birds, one male and twp female, seen at herring run at Coast Guard station in Jan '88.

COMMON GOLDENEYE - f.c. winter

BUFFLEHEAD - c., winter

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - f.c., winter

COOT - f.c., and regular in area along waterfront of the Presidio.

KILLDEER - c. - and sometimes very common in winter, along waterfront grassy areas; breeds

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER - f.c., winter, especially on old Coast Guard pier, and in this generally area.

LESSER GOLDEN PLOVER - a single individual of the race fulva, has been appearing among Black-bellied Plover on the old pier as mentioned above, for the last 2 winters ('86-'87, and '87-'88).

MARbled GODWIT, occ., along Presidio shores.

WHIMBREL - occ., along Baker Beach and nearby shores.

WILLET - f.c., same as above.

WANDERING TATTLER - possible in winter along any of Presidio's rocky shore, but on one occasion it was seen along sandy shore near Coast Guard Station.

RED-NECKED and NORTHERN PHALAROPE - are certainly possible after winter storms, and should be watched for.

RUDDY TURNSTONE - u.c., in winter along Bay shore rocky areas.

BLACK TURNSTONE - f.c., in winter, as above, especially in stormy weather.

SANDERLING - nearly always present, in good number during winter.

PEEPS, such as Least and Western Sandpipers, and Dunlin do occur during winter, and migrations, but are seen only locally, usually near Coast Guard Station.

JAEGERS have been seen from the Presidio, flying into and out of the Bay. Either Pomarine or Parasitic might be expected.

Gulls can be abundant in winter. During the January herring runs in 1988, the following 10 species were seen:

GLAUCOUS GULL	- 1 only
GLAUCOUS - winger	- c.
WESTERN	- c.
HERRING	- u.c.
THAYERS	- sev.
RING-BILLED	- sev.
MEW GULL	- v.c.
CALIFORNIA GULL	- f.c.
HEERMANN'S GULL	- 1 only
BONAPARTE'S GULL	- 1 only

The only other species we might have had was the Bl. L. Kittiwake. I have seen it at Ft. Cronkhite, but not yet from the Presidio.

FORESTER'S TERN - u.c., winter

ELEGANT TERN - can be quite common from the end of June through September; does not breed.

LEAST TERN - rare: recorded near Coast Guard Station.

CASPIAN TERN - f.c., during spring and summer.

COMMON MURRE - occ., usually well out in the Bay, but can be seen from Presidio beaches, especially in winter.

PIGEON GUILLEMOT - occ., as above, but does nest in rocky cliffs near, if not actually on, Presidio.

MARbled MURRELET - rare

Several birds of this species observed by Alan Hopkins and me off the Coast Guard Station. Easily overlooked because of small size. Many records for channel off Sutro Baths in Lincoln Park nearby.

TURKEY VULTURE - f.c., present all year more common during fall migration.

GOLDEN EAGLE - u.c., noted each fall over the "Hawk Mt" at GGNRA, with many of these flying over Presidio.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK - u.c., but regular, especially spring and fall. This is one of the most common migrants over the "Hawk Mt" (Pt Diablo), and many of those birds pass high over the Presidio.

COOPER'S HAWK - u.c., as above

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - occ.

I have seen this hawk more frequently here in recent years, and judging from successful breeding in Golden Gate Park, would expect more records here.

RED-TAILED HAWK - f.c.

Several resident pairs, and many migrants over in fall.

Other buteas which might be expected flying over in fall, but I have not personally seen are Ferruginous, Rough-legged Hawk, and Broad-winged Hawk.

OSPREY, u.c., as above, but I have seen as many as five or six over the Presidio in one fall afternoon.

KESTREL - f.c., regular breeding species on Presidio - as many as 4 or 5 pairs.

MERLIN - rare, but seen a few times; more often observed in Lincoln Park. Peregrine a real possibility but I have no certain records.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL - abundant, wherever there is suitable habitat on Presidio; breeding successfully most years.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON - f.c., all seasons

MOURNING DOVE - abundant, especially in winter flocks; breeds.

CANARY-WINGED PARAKEET

Flocks of 10-20 birds fed on Presidio during late sixties and early seventies. I have not seen them recently, though I suspect they still visit, especially in winter.

GREAT HORNED OWL - u.c.

Probably several pairs nesting. I knew of 2 pairs, one near our house on Presidio Blvd., another on Washington Blvd., in the 60's and 70's.

WESTERN SCREECH OWL - rare. One pair in residence near our house, 60's and 70's

VAUX SWIFT and WHITE-THROATED SWIFT flying over, during migration.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD - c., permanent resident; breeding from early January into spring.

ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD, c., spring and summer resident, arriving usually in early February, breeding soon thereafter and departing usually by the end of August.

BELTED KINGFISHER - rare, but in the 50's, I once saw a pair at a nest hole on the Presidio. The nearest fresh water was Mountain Lake. They may also be around Lobos Creek.

RED-SHAFTED FLICKER - c., in wooded areas, and open fields year round.

RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER, u.c., but easily overlooked; recorded previously along "Lover's Lane" and other areas behind Presidio Blvd. More recently, a single bird has been seen at El Polin Springs.

DOWNY WOODPECKER, f.c., year round

HAIRY WOODPECKER, rare

NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER, accidental, seen once or twice in the few oaks left along Lobos Creek.

WESTERN KINGBIRD, rare, during spring migration

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER, rare, as above

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - c., and very visible - breeds at several locations.

WESTERN WOOD PEWEE - u.c., spring and summer.

BLACK PHOEBE - c., and breeding

SAY'S PHOEBE - rare, on migration.

EMPIDONAX FLYCATCHERS - f.c., spring and fall; WESTERN is the most common; WILLOW less so. Hammonds and Dusky have been recorded in nearby parks and should be watched for.

SWALLOWS:

TREE - c., probably breeds

VIOLET-GREEN - c

ROUGH-WINGED

CLIFF

all recorded but not certain of

status.

BARN

SCRUB JAY - c., permanent resident

STELLER'S JAY - one record. Lobos Creek, but should be watched for.

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER - an early record (early 60's ?) by Naomi Sveningsan of a small flock on Washington Blvd, in fall; recently, fairly large numbers of Nutcrackers have come over Hawk Mt., and across the straights, and many, if not most of these must come into, or over, the Presidio.

AMERICAN CROW - u.c., over most of Presidio, but sometimes quite common around the Commissary, near the bay shore.

RAVEN - more common and widespread than crow; seems well adapted to city life, living on the squab of Rock Doves, and on Western Gull eggs and young along the cliffs.

WRENTIT - accidental,

Seen only once in the nine years I lived on Presidio Blvd. However, in March '88, Alan Hopkins located a pair on Lincoln Blvd hill, above the ocean.

CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE - c., permanent resident

start
BUSHTIT - v.c., permanent resident

BROWN CREEPER - f.c., permanent resident

PYGMY NUTHATCH - c., permanent resident

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - u.c., to c., numbers vary from year to year but there are usually at least a few in conifers of the area. I have one record of White-Breasted Nuthatch.

WINTER WREN - u.c., winter visitor

BEWICK'S WREN - f.c., permanent resident

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET - u.c., winter visitor, in coniferous woods.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET - c., winter resident.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH - u.c., in suitable habitat on Presidio, except in winter.

HERMIT THRUSH - f.c., winter visitor, even around residential areas.

VARIED THRUSH - rare, some winters, to quite common in others; usually in more remote, wooded areas.

AMERICAN ROBIN - c., resident; somewhat more numerous in winter.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE - rare, in open areas.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD - f.c., in shrubby areas along residential streets, gradually increasing in numbers in this area over the years.

CEDAR WAXWING, irregular, but very c. at times of good berry crops, and during the Eucalyptus bloom.

EUROPEAN STARLING - c. - ab., mostly along northern stretches of Presidio.

HUTTON'S VIREO - f.c., permanent resident, breeding in undisturbed wooded areas.

SOLITARY VIREO - rare transient on Presidio.

WARBLERS

TENNESSEE WARBLER - rare vagrant.

I have two spring records for El Polin springs.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER - c., and probably nesting; very rare in winter.

NASHVILLE WARBLER - u.c., transient

NORTHERN PARULA, probably vagrant; found in similar habitats in city.

BLACK-AND-WHITE, and BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER - vagrants, as above

Several other warblers probably fall in the above category but I have no definite written records.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, both races - the most common warbler, winter, well into spring.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER - u.c., winter visitor.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER - f.c., winter

HERMIT WARBLER, v.rare, winter and sporing.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER, one of the more "common" vagrants in the general area.

✓ YELLOW WARBLER - f.c., through the Presidio in spring and fall migration - I do not know if it nests.

WILSON'S WARBLER - f.c., migrant and possible breeding bird here.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT - a few resident, in wetter areas, as Lobos Creek and around Mt. Lake.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK - a few during migration; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a possible vagrant.

LAZULI BUNTING - a few observed during spring migration; Indigo Bunting, a possible vagrant.

BROWN TOWHEE a fairly new resident bird in San Francisco; the first of the species were seen on the Presidio around 8 or 10 years ago.

RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE - v.r., in heavy undergrowth, at least formerly.

CHIPPING SPARROW - regular, in small numbers during migration.

DARK-EYED JUNCO - v.c., permanent resident, breeding.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - ab., permanent resident (race nuttalli), race gambelii, r - u.c. in winter.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW - v.c., ab., winter resident.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW - v.rare, but recorded most winters, with flocks of other Zonotrichias.

FOX SPARROW - f.c., winter

LINCOLN SPARROW - r., winter

BOBOLINK - accidental - I know of one record of a small flock flying over Presidio in late 60's or early 70's (M.L.R. and Mike Wihler).

WESTERN MEADOWLARK - f.c., summer; ab., winter resident.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - ab., especially around Crissy Field, PX and Commissary areas; sometimes Redwinged Blackbirds may show up in these flocks, and Cowbirds may be quire common at times.

NORTHERN ORIOLE - a transient in spring and fall.

HOODED ORIOLE - the first breeding colony that I know of in S.F., I discovered near the Lombard Str. entrance to the Presidio in spring of 1966 (it had probably been here for some years previously). Ever since that time, the birds have been observed each year, returning to the fan palms around the small frame buildings here, and as the Letterman Hospital and buildings along Presidio Blvd. nearby. The earliest birds show up around the first week in April, build their nests, mostly out of sight, under the lower leaves of the palms, rear their young, probably two broods for most pairs, then depart in August. Birds from this colony seem to have spread to a few spots farther north and west on the Presidio, and into the area called Sea Cliff just west of the Presidio, where fan palms grow.

HOUSE SPARROW - f.c., locally

PINE SISKIN - v.c., permanent resident, and breeding

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - may be seen almost any time of year; may breed.

LESSER GOLDFINCH - as above

RED CROSSBILL - c., in some years, feeding mostly in older Monterey pines; almost certainly breeding. Flocks often have young birds. Adults seen feeding young, here and in nearby parks, as Lincoln Park and Golden Gate Park.

HOUSE FINCH - ab., permanent resident breeds on Presidio.

PURPLE FINCH - f.c. - c., permanent resident, known to breed on Presidio.

EVENING GROSBEAK seen a few times on Presidio, mostly during fall migration, where it is seen fairly regularly over the Hawk Mountain at Fort Cronkhite.

COMMENTS

It is certainly obvious that the Presidio is a haven for birds in the city, making up, as it does, one of the largest open areas within the city limits. The large plantings of Eucalyptus, Monterey Pine, and Monterey Cypress, as well as abundant shrubbery, ornamental plantings, and some wild underbrush, all contribute to cover and adequate food supply. There is a program underway to replant some, if not all, of the aging forest trees, and some consideration is given to preserving wild flowers. I notice, however, that the understandings reached with the higher levels of command do not always reach down to the lower levels of the workman on the "clean-up" and "cut-up" shifts. The slick, clean, clear-cut look seems to be preferred by the military, and the conservationists must be grateful for even the glimmerings of cooperation. El Polin Springs, off McArthur Blvd. is a case in point. This has been a delightful little park for many years and an Ecology Trail was set-up to preserve wildflowers. But within the last two years, it has been nearly destroyed, by dumping of unwanted huge tree trunks, earth, rocks, waste cement from a field above, and run over by earth-moving equipment along the back border (south side). I watched spring wildflowers being mowed along the Ecology Trail, and the workers were absolutely adamant against protestations of visitors. Also, a great deal of natural undergrowth has been cut away and trees removed or cut back, when it was not necessary for the beauty of the park. Such excesses are devastating to the bird life, and we can only hope that those in authority will eventually see the terrible errors of their ways. We need an army of new Salea Burtons.