

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; 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 Erikson, Sylvia Gallagher, and many other Orange County birders.

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TOWHEES	W	P	S	A
___ Spotted Towhee	R	C	U	U
___ California Towhee*	C	R	Fc	C

SPARROWS	W	P	S	A
___ 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-eyed Sparrow	U	R		U
___ Dark-eyed Junco	R	R		R

TANAGERS, GROSBEAKS, BUNTINGS	W	P	S	A
___ Western Tanager			Fc	U
___ Black-headed Grosbeak			R	
___ Blue Grosbeak*			R	R
___ Lazuli Bunting			R	R

BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES	W	P	S	A
___ 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	W	P	S	A
___ House Finch*	A	A	A	A
___ Lesser Goldfinch*	C	C	C	C
___ American Goldfinch	U	C	C	C

OLD WORLD SPARROWS	W	P	S	A
___ House Sparrow	U	U	U	U

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

# 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 and Wildlife (CDFW). The reserve has two parking lots, on 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 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 season 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 birds in its expected habitat. Species are listed in accordance with the American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds, 7th edition (1998) as ammended through the 52nd supplement.

**Seasons**

Winter (W) = December, January, February  
Spring (P) = March, April, May  
Summer (S) = June, July, August  
Autumn (A) = September, October, November

**Abundance Code**

A = Abundant (over 50 individuals per day)  
C = Common (11-50 individuals per day)  
F = Fairly Common (6-10 individuals per day)  
U = Undercommon (up to 5 individuals per day)  
R = Rare (1-10 sightings per season)  
\* = a species that nests at Bolsa Chica

GEESE & DUCKS	W	P	S	A
___ Brant	U	Fc	R	R
___ Canada Goose*	A	C	U	C
___ Gadwall	A	C	C	Fc
___ American Wigeon	A	C	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

PELICANS				
___ American White Pelican	C	C	C	C
___ California Brown Pelican	C	A	A	A

BITTERNS & 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

VULTURES				
___ Turkey Vulture	U	U	U	U

OSPREYS				
___ Osprey	U	U	U	U

HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES	W	P	S	A
___ 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 & COOTS				
___ Ridgway's 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 & AVOCETS				
___ Black-necked Stilt*	A	A	A	A
___ American Avocet*	A	A	C	A

SANDPIPERS & 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

GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS	W	P	S	A
___ 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 & 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

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

WOODPECKERS				
___ Nuttall's Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
___ Downy Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
___ Northern Flicker	U	U	U	U

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS				
___ 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	W	P	S	A
___ Loggerhead Shrike*	R	R	R	R

VIREOS				
___ Warbling Vireo		U		U

JAYS & CROWS				
___ American Crow*	C	C	C	C
___ Common Raven*	U	U	U	U

LARKS				
___ Horned Lark*	R	C	C	U

SWALLOWS				
___ Tree Swallow	R		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

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

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

STARLINGS				
___ European Starling	A	A	A	A

PIPITS				
___ American Pipit	A	C		C

WAXWINGS				
___ Cedar Waxwing	C	C		C

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
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	C		C
___ Black-throated Gray Warbler		R		R
___ Townsend's Warbler	R	U		U
___ Wilson's Warbler	R	C		Fc