



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

About Nature: Birds

Stop, look and listen! On a typical daytime hike, you will see and hear many bird species. Red-tailed hawks, white-tailed kites, and northern harriers soar overhead. They spot, catch, and eat squirrels, rabbits, and other small animals. Other common birds are ravens, crows, mallards, quail, mourning doves, egrets, herons, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, black phoebes, bluebirds, thrashers, bushtits, wrentits, finches, and towhees. Early morning and dusk are the best times to see, hear, and photograph birds.



Mourning Dove - top bird species on eBird check lists for PQ Preserve!

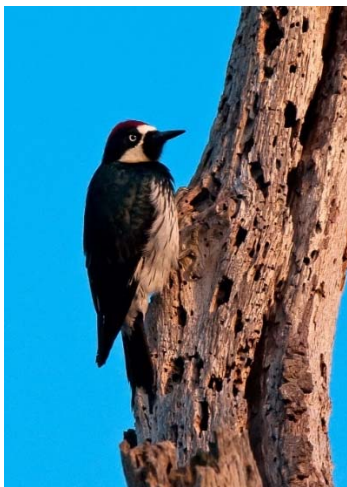
You can find these Doves on the ground foraging for seeds. You will hear their mournful cooing before you see them. Look for black spots on their wings and on the males, a bright iridescent patch on the neck.

Doves have a special ability to sip water with their heads down... unlike other birds that must tilt up to swallow.

California Scrub-Jay – formerly Western Scrub-Jay

We hear the Scrub Jays before we see them in the canyon. They are found in the trees typically. A loud repeating “Shuk... Shuk... Shuk-Shuk-Shuk”.

Jays are in the Corvid family – think Ravens and Crows – and they are very intelligent. They eat many different food items and especially love peanuts!



Acorn Woodpecker – this clown like denizen of our canyons lives in social groups where they support a granary tree to cache their acorns for future meals. In the Preserve, dead trees serve Acorn Woodpeckers for both acorn storage and nests sites.

You will hear the Acorns before seeing them with their raucous laughing calls.

Listen for “wheka... wheka” or “RACK-up RACK-up...”



Anna's Hummingbird – our most common species of Hummingbird, forages for nectar from the flowers in the fields and gnats as well for their protein source. This male is showcasing his breeding finery in December.

The female Anna's builds her nest of lichens, moss and spider web. She lays 2 eggs and does all the nurturing for her young.



American Crow – This is the fifth most frequently observed bird species. Crows are members of the Corvid family and congregate in groups in trees to share foraging secrets.

Listen for their call: “Caaw... Caaw”



California Towhee – The Cal Towhee, a ground feeding bird in the sparrow family, is a year round denizen of the Preserve.

They seek seeds in leaf litter and are frequently seen foraging at the trail edges. They forage by jumping up and pulling back with their claws as they land to clear the area in hopes of finding seeds.

Their call is sharp “Teek”.



House Finch - this lovely little bird is a seed eater. You can observe House Finches feeding on tall grasses and flowers in the fields. The females are drab with brown speckled breasts while the males are bright red if a healthy diet the last season.

Listen for the males singing song in early May before nesting:

Per Sibley: a varied warble; beginning with husky, whistled notes and ending with slightly lower, burry notes.

European Starling - as their name tells, we imported these songsters from Europe. They are cavity nesters and regularly fight with Acorn Woodpeckers over prime real estate.

Although they are “black” in color, their feathers have wonderful iridescence in the right light.

Listen to them sing in groups... and you will be enchanted by their chorus. They are related to mynah birds and can mimic.



Bushtit – this lovely little songbird makes a living in groups foraging for insects, making them a dream for gardeners. They can hang upside down looking for bugs on the underside of leaves.

We hear and see them in flocks of some 15 or more. This is a Bushtit male. Females have a white iris ring. Listen for their sweet calls that are reminiscent of “tinkling jingle bells”.

Black Phoebe - this little flycatcher is a year round resident of PQ Preserve. He will find a nice vantage point 4 feet high – on a branch, post, or fence – and watch for flies and other delicacies.

His call is a thin whistled “tseew-tseew” year-round. Often he is the first bird calling in the morning... my feathered alarm clock.



Spotted Towhee - this is the bright dapper cousin of the Cal Towhee. This Towhee is also a ground- feeding seedeater all dressed up in rufous, black and spots with red eyes and white tail parts. He’s often hiding in the brush, less seen than heard.

His repertoire includes:

- “grreeer” calls,”
- zeeewee” calls (like a cat’s meow)

SEASONAL OCCURRENCE = S**P** = Permanent Year-round Resident**M** = Recurring Seasonal Migrant**S** = Summer Resident, March-September**W** = Winter Resident, September-March**V** = Occasional Visitor or Vagrant**RELATIVE ABUNDANCE = A****a** = Abundant – easily found in suitable habitat**c** = Common – usually found in suitable habitats**u** = Uncommon – present, but can be missed**r** = Rare – seldom or rarely encountered***** = known to nest within the preserve**S A****DUCKS & GEESE**

___ Mallard	P c
___ Northern Shoveler	W u

QUAIL

___ California Quail	P c *
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GREBES

___ Pied-billed Grebe	V u
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HERONS & EGRETS

___ Great Blue Heron	P c
___ Great Egret	P c
___ Snowy Egret	P c
___ Green Heron	P u
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron	V u

VULTURES

___ Turkey Vulture	V u
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RAPTORS

___ Osprey	V u
___ White-tailed Kite	P c *
___ Northern Harrier	W c
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	W u
___ Cooper's Hawk	P c *
___ Red-shouldered Hawk	P a *
___ Red-tailed Hawk	P a *
___ American Kestrel	P a *
___ Merlin	V r
___ Peregrine Falcon	V r

RAILS & COOTS

___ Virginia Rail	
___ Sora	
___ American Coot	

SHOREBIRDS

___ Killdeer	P c
___ Wilson's Snipe	W u

GULLS

___ Ring-billed Gull	V u
___ California Gull	W u
___ Western Gull	V u

DOVES

___ Rock Pigeon (Rock Dove)	P c
___ Eurasian Collared-Dove	P u
___ Mourning Dove	P a *

CUCKOOS

___ Greater Roadrunner	P u
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OWLS

___ Barn Owl	P c *
___ Western Screech-Owl	P u *
___ Great Horned Owl	P c *

NIGHTJARS

___ Lesser Nighthawk	S u
___ Common Poorwill	S u

SWIFTS

___ Vaux's Swift	M u
___ White-throated Swift	P u

HUMMINGBIRDS

___ Black-chinned Hummingbird	S c *
___ Anna's Hummingbird	P a *
___ Costa's Hummingbird	P c *
___ Rufous Hummingbird	M u
___ Allen's Hummingbird	P c
___ unidentified Hummingbird	? ?

KINGFISHERS

___ Belted Kingfisher	P c
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WOODPECKERS

___ Lewis's Woodpecker	V r
___ Acorn Woodpecker	P a *
___ Red-breasted Sapsucker	V r
___ Nuttall's Woodpecker	V r
___ Downy Woodpecker	P c *
___ Northern Flicker (red-shafted)	P c *

S A

W u	
W u	
P c	

P c	
W u	

V u	
W u	
V u	

P c	
P u	
P a *	

P u	
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P c *	
P u *	
P c *	

S u	
S u	

M u	
P u	

S c *	
P a *	
P c *	

M u	
P c	
? ?	

P c	
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V r	
P a *	
V r	
V r	
P c *	
P c *	

S A**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS**

___ Olive-sided Flycatcher	M r
___ Western Wood-Pewee	M c
___ Willow Flycatcher	M u
___ Pacific-slope Flycatcher	S c *
___ Black Phoebe	P a *
___ Say's Phoebe	P c *
___ Ash-throated Flycatcher	S c *
___ Cassin's Kingbird	P c *
___ Western Kingbird	S c *

SHRIKES

___ Loggerhead Shrike	P r *
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VIREOS

___ Bell's Vireo	P r
___ Cassin's Vireo	V u
___ Hutton's Vireo	P c *
___ Warbling Vireo	M c

JAYS & CROWS

___ Western Scrub-Jay (coastal)	P a *
___ American Crow	P a *
___ Common Raven	P a *

LARKS

___ Horned Lark	P c *
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SWALLOWS

___ Tree Swallow	M c
___ Violet-green Swallow	M c
___ N'ern Rough-winged Swallow	M a
___ Cliff Swallow	S a *
___ Barn Swallow	M c

CHICKADEES & TITMICE

___ Mountain Chickadee	V r
___ Oak Titmouse	P c *

BUSHTITS

___ Bushtit	P a *
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NUTHATCHES

___ White-breasted Nuthatch	V u
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WRENS

___ Rock Wren	W u
___ Bewick's Wren	P a *
___ House Wren	P a *
___ Marsh Wren	W c

KINGLETS

___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	W a
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	S	A
GNATCATCHERS		
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	W	c
___ California Gnatcatcher	P	u *
THRUSHES		
___ Western Bluebird	P	c *
___ Swainson's Thrush	M	u
___ Hermit Thrush	W	c
___ American Robin	V	c
WRENTITS		
___ Wrentit	P	c *
MOCKINGBIRDS		
___ Northern Mockingbird	P	a *
THRASHERS		
___ California Thrasher	P	a *
STARLINGS		
___ European Starling	P	a *
PIPITS		
___ American Pipit	W	c
WAXWINGS		
___ Cedar Waxwing	W	c
SILKY FLYCATCHERS		
___ Phainopepla	P	c *
WARBLERS		
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	P	c *
___ Nashville Warbler	M	c
___ Yellow Warbler	S	c
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	W	a
___ Black-throated Gray Warbler	M	c
___ Townsend's Warbler	M	c
___ Hermit Warbler	M	u
___ Common Yellowthroat	P	a *
___ Wilson's Warbler	M	c
___ Yellow-breasted Chat	S	c *
TANAGERS		
___ Western Tanager	M	c

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the biological diversity of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Our heartfelt appreciation to Barbara Zepf, Claude G. Edwards, and Brian Swanson for creating the original bird lists. Thanks to San Diego Bird Atlas survey teams.

	S	A
TOWHEES & SPARROWS		
___ Spotted Towhee	P	a *
___ California Towhee	P	a *
___ Rufous-crowned Sparrow	P	u *
___ Chipping Sparrow	W	u
___ Black-chinned Sparrow	V	r
___ Lark Sparrow	V	u
___ Savannah Sparrow	W	u
___ Grasshopper Sparrow	S	c *
___ Fox Sparrow	W	u
___ Song Sparrow	P	a *
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	W	c
___ White-crowned Sparrow	W	a
___ Golden-crowned Sparrow	W	c
___ Dark-eyed Junco	W	c
GROSBEAKS & BUNTINGS		
___ Black-headed Grosbeak	S	c *
___ Blue Grosbeak	S	c *
___ Lazuli Bunting	S	c *
___ Indigo Bunting	S	r
BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES		
___ Red-winged Blackbird	P	a *
___ Tricolored Blackbird	V	r
___ Western Meadowlark	P	a *
___ Brewer's Blackbird	P	a *
___ Great-tailed Grackle	P	u
___ Brown-headed Cowbird	P	c *
___ Hooded Oriole	S	a *
___ Bullock's Oriole	S	a *
FINCHES		
___ House Finch	P	a *
___ Lesser Goldfinch	P	c *
___ Lawrence's Goldfinch	M	u
___ American Goldfinch	P	c *
OLD WORLD SPARROWS		
___ House Sparrow	P	c *

NOTES:

Field List

The Birds of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve



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Jointly established by the City & County in 1972, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve consists of more than 4,000 acres, including López & Peñasquitos Canyons. More than 14 different habitats account for the diversity of species.

www.penasquitos.org