



Executive Director's Corner

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Internet Archive
courtesy SFNE



Green Heron
courtesy raphaeko@gmail.com



Say's Phoebe
courtesy Grant Ly



Female House Finch eating Toyon berries.

Next: Heron's Head Park

Dear Friends,

Save the Date!!!! We are celebrating our 25th Anniversary with an exciting program and fundraiser at the beautiful Internet Archive (in the Richmond District) on the evening of Tues. May 20th! Stay tuned for invitation and details!



Our monthly field trips- Birding for Families and Beginning Birding for Teenagers & Adults have become very popular- lots of sightings of fabulous wild birds! Trips fill up early. Register at www.sfnature.org

The Great Blue Herons have arrived back for the 32nd year at Blue Heron Lake (formerly Stow Lake) to commence courtship and nest building activities! Currently the Great Blues occupy two islands at the Lake! 2025 may be our best nesting season ever!!!! Our premier program Heron Watch will commence at Blue Heron Lake on Saturdays in starting April 12 through May 17 from 10-1pm. The program is free. Volunteers will operate high powered spotting scopes at our Observation Site near the Boathouse and show the Herons and their chicks in their nests at the top of nearby Pine Trees.

SFNE offers internships at Heron Watch in the spring for students in 5th grade through college. Visit sfnature.org and click on Youth Internships for more information. Applications are due by Feb. 23, 2025.

We look forward to seeing you at Heron Watch, our monthly field trips and our 25th Anniversary Party!

Best regards,

Nancy

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Birding Heron's Head Park - January 2025

Trip Report by Alan Hopkins, Leader

The weather was perfect for our first field trip to Heron's Head Park in years. It was a nice change from the earlier trips that needed to be canceled due to poor weather. As our groups came together our first bird was the male **Anna's Hummingbird** that has been sitting on its favorite twig for years. With a king high tide at nearly seven feet there was very little shoreline to see for feeding shorebirds. We did see **Snowy Egrets** feeding in the pickleweed and on the new berm there was a large flock of roosting **Short-billed Gulls**.



Common Bufflehead, male - courtesy Grant Ly

There were ducks on the ponds and in the channel- they included **American Wigeon, Mallards, Buffleheads and Ruddy Ducks**. As the tide began to recede, we found two **Greater Yellowlegs** feeding in the pickleweed and soon a few **Willetts** joined them. The Toyon trees were full of ripe red berries and **House Finches** and **White-crowned Sparrows** were there in numbers to eat the berries. Across the channel both all black adult **Double-crested Cormorants** and juvenile Double-crested Cormorants with white on their throats and bellies roosted on the old pier pilings. One of our sharp young birders spotted our only **Western Grebe** for the day.

There is some nice new signage on the walk out, unfortunately the designers grossly misidentified two birds: An American Oystercatcher is labeled as a Black Oystercatcher. An American Oystercatcher has white underparts and is not found here, while a Black Oystercatcher's body is all black and is common. The second bird is labeled as a Western Sandpiper but is actually a Sanderling in breeding plumage. Western Sandpipers are not all that common at Heron's Head, while Least Sandpipers are the common "peep" here.



Willet - courtesy Grant Ly



Black-necked Stilt - courtesy Grant Ly

Lurking among the sleeping gulls was a flock of **American Avocets** and beyond that the resident **Western Gulls** and a few **California Gulls** in for comparison. As we approached the end of the peninsula someone in the group spotted a nice **Say's Phoebe** flycatching from some low brush. Beyond the Phoebe we found a flock of **Greater Scaup** sleeping on the bay. Although it was time to return. I never give up! On the way back we had a **Whimbrel** flying along the rocky shoreline calling. The bird was nice and close and it gave some of the photographers among us excellent images. The tide had receded enough for a **Spotted Sandpiper** to make an appearance for the day's final bird-33 total!!!



American Wigeon - courtesy Grant Ly

33 Species Spotted:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Canada Goose | Spotted Sandpiper |
| American Wigeon | Whimbrel |
| Mallard | Least Sandpiper |
| Greater Scaup | California Gull |
| Bufflehead | Short-billed Gull (formerly Mew Gull) |
| Ruddy Duck | Western Gull |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Glaucous-winged Gull |
| Western Grebe | Rock Pigeon |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Anna's Hummingbird |
| Great Blue Heron | Say's Phoebe |
| Snowy Egret | American Crow |
| American Coot | Common Raven |
| Black Oystercatcher | Bushtit-30 |
| American Avocet | California Towhee |
| Black-necked Stilt | White-throated Sparrow |
| Greater Yellowlegs | House Finch |
| Willet | |

Heron's Head Park Family Field Trip Report



On a bright, sunny morning, families and children gathered at Heron's Head Park for an exciting birding field trip. Armed with binoculars, they meandered along the winding trail, spotting an array of birds, including the majestic **Great Blue Heron** and the elegant **Great Egret**.

During a leisurely break, the children sketched their favorite birds in journals, their pages coming alive with colorful drawings. They shared stories about their favorite sightings and compared the sketches of the birds they had spotted. Venturing to the shoreline, the children were excited as they discovered sea glass, delicate shells, and uniquely patterned rocks. Parents and kids enjoyed the chance to spend time outdoors, connecting with nature and discovering new things together.

- **Beth Brumell, Family Trip co-leader**



Above photo courtesy SFNE