

Beginning Birding
Monterey Bay and Wetlands

What Bird is That?

By Mary Feliz



ABOUT THE BOOK

Welcome to the wealth of wildlife on Monterey Bay and its surrounding wetlands. To learn more check the resources at the back of the book.

All photographs by Mary Feliz unless noted otherwise.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Feliz is a certified California Naturalist who lives full-time on Monterey Bay. She also writes adult mysteries. To learn more, visit her website at <http://www.maryfeliz.com>.



MALLARD

- Pond, bridge, slough
- Year round
- These ducks appeared in the popular children's book:
Make Way for Ducklings
- Males: Green heads and yellow bills
Females: Brown heads, brown bills
Both: Bright blue band on wings
- Mallard ducklings can be seen on the pond in May.



BLACK-NECKED STILT

- Pond, bridge, slough
- Year round
- Black and white
- Long red legs
- Looks like it's wearing red tights



CINNAMON TEAL

- Pond, bridge, slough
- Year round
- Cinnamon body, bright red eye (Males)
- Smaller than a Mallard
- Looks like it could be made of chocolate



NORTHERN SHOVELER

- Pond
- Winter
- Beak flattened like a shovel
- Green head (Male)
- White body with brown central splotch makes it look like a saddle shoe (Male)



YELLOWLEGS

- Pond edges or slough
- Late fall to early spring
- Bright yellow legs
- "Lesser" Yellowlegs has a shorter bill, just a little longer than its head.
- "Greater" Yellowlegs has a longer, slightly upturned bill.



Lesser Yellowlegs by
Randy Wardle

EGRET: GREAT or SNOWY?

- Pond, bridge, slough
- Year round
- Great Egret is larger than Snowy.
Yellow bill & black legs.
- Snowy Egret has fancy head feathers.
Black bill & yellow feet.

Great Egret



Snowy Egret

GREAT BLUE HERON

- Pond, bridge, slough
- Year round
- Black and white head
- Dusky blue/gray body
- Looks a bit like a Pterodactyl when it flies.
- Biggest local wading bird



LONG- BILLED CURLEW

- Beach
- Year round
- Long beak curls down
- Tawny color



WILLET

- Beach
- Straight bill, mostly dark
- White ring around eye
- Mostly seen in winter.
Some non-breeders are here
in summer.



SANDERLING

- Beach
- Late fall to early spring
- Tiny shorebird
- Easy to confuse with Snowy Plovers, which are even smaller.
- From a distance a group of these busy birds can look like ping-pong balls rolling around on the beach.



BUFFLEHEAD

- Pond
- Winter
- Male has a white "pizza slice" on its otherwise black head
- Female has a black head with a white spot on her cheek



WHITE-FACED IBIS

- Winter
- Flooded areas around pond
- Bird looks black with red tinged feathers. Other colors may show up in certain lights.
- Makes a strange wooden croaking sound.



MARBLED GODWIT

- Beach
- Winter
- Cinnamon colored wings visible in flight
- Two-toned bill curves up slightly
- Memory aid: The Godwit's bill curves up "to God."

Randy Wardle



RED- NECKED PHALAROPE

- Pond
- Bobs head quickly and spins in circles
- Typically seen in during fall migration July-September



Juvenile
Red-necked Phalarope by
Randy Wardle

GREBE ^{13"}

- Pond and slough
- Very quick diving bird. Often, by the time you say "Oh look, grebes," the only things visible on the surface are ripples.
- All three of these small grebes visit our pond and slough. Pieded-billed Grebes live here year round. The others visit in winter.



Horned Grebe
(photo by Randy Wardle)



Eared Grebe



Pied-Billed Grebe
(Striped Bill)

WESTERN GREBE

25"

- Pond, slough, and beach
- Larger and slower moving than the smaller Grebes.
- Commonly seen in winter, but a few can be spotted year round.



BLACK PHOEBE

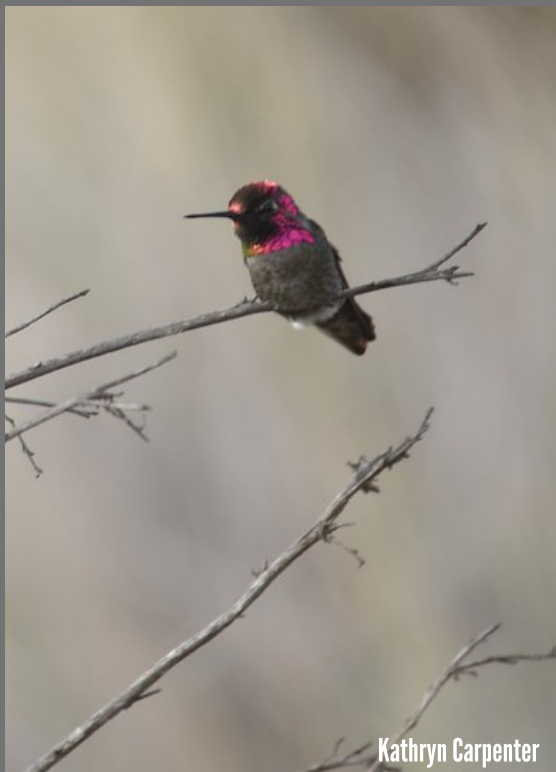
- Near Pond
- Year round
- Black head and body with white belly
- Fast moving and chatty

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ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD

- Throughout the property
- Year round
- Male: Red head and throat
Female: Red specks on throat
- Smaller, copper-colored, migratory
Allen's Hummingbirds visit here in
spring and summer



Kathryn Carpenter

DOUBLE- CRESTED CORMORANT

- Year round
- Slough, bridge, and surf
- Yellow bill, black body
- Juveniles have pale chests and necks



BROWN PELICAN

- Year round but more prevalent in summer.
- Seen near the ocean, skimming the waves and diving for fish.
- Juveniles are all brown with paler bellies. Adults have white throats and heads with red on throats during mating season.



[istock.com/Thom Morris](https://www.istock.com/Thom Morris)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN

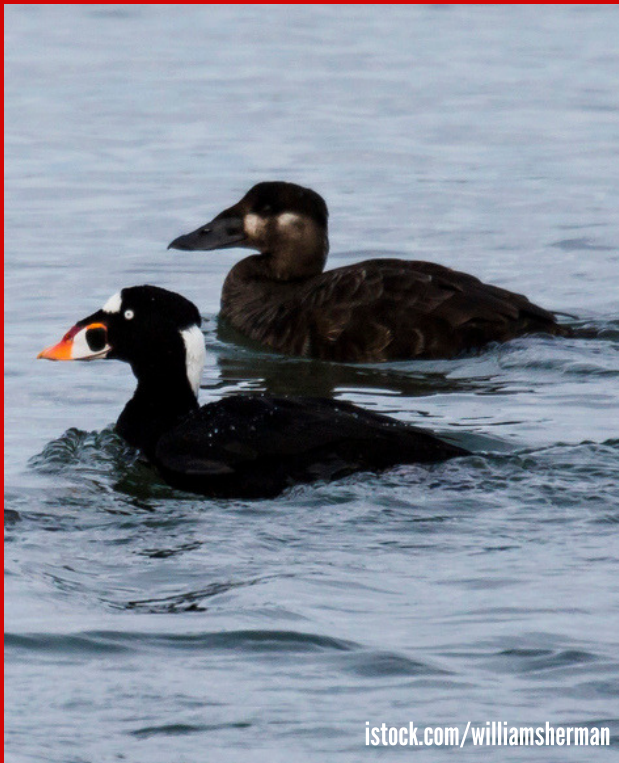
- Winter and early spring
- Near the mouth of the Pajaro River (South of Pelican Point on the South property)
- Adults are all white. Youngsters have black markings on wings.



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SURF SCOTER

- In the surf
- Fall and winter
- Females: Brown with two white spots on face.
- Males: Black with white eyes and mostly orange bill.
- Sometimes referred to as the "Skunk-headed Coot"



[istock.com/williamsherman](https://www.istock.com/williamsherman)

YELLOW- RUMPED WARBLER

- Fall to early spring
- In bushes and scrub
- Yellow splotch on rump most visible when flying
- Often called a "Butter Butt"



[istockphoto.com/MJTPhotography](https://www.istockphoto.com/MJTPhotography)

WESTERN MEADOWLARK

- Meadows of the South Property
- Year round
- Brightly colored in spring and summer. Less yellow in winter.



KINGFISHER

- Year round
- Easiest to spot on wires near Beach Road
- Slate blue body with white belly. Females have a rust belly band.
- Scraggly crest looks like they forgot to comb their hair.



WESTERN GULL

- Year round
- These birds take four years to reach adult plumage. First-year birds are charcoal gray and become lighter each year.
- Adults will typically be found on the outside of the flock, protecting the young.
- Similar to California Gulls, which are lighter in coloring.



[istockphoto.com/williamsherman](https://www.istockphoto.com/williamsherman)

HEERMAAN'S GULL

- On Beach
- Red bills, black feet
- These birds take four years to reach adult plumage. First-year birds are dark smoky brown and become lighter each year.
- Often seen in flocks with Western Gulls



KILLDEER

- On field or pond edges
- Year round
- Distinctive collar bands
- Has a loud piercing call. You'll often hear it before you see it.



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RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

- Year round
- Travel in flocks.
- Found in fields and on wires near Shell Drive.

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SNOWY PLOVER

- Year round on beach
- Thin black bill
- Tiny bird
- Endangered. Nesting areas protected by roped off areas of beach. Keep dogs, kites, drones, and people away from them. Observe from afar with binoculars.



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AMERICAN AVOCET

- Year round on slough
- Upturned bill
- Long legged wading bird
- Breeding adults have cinnamon-brown heads. Nonbreeding juveniles have mostly white heads.



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HOUSE FINCH

- Year round
- Found in brush and on wires near Shell Drive.
- Females are gray-brown, but the vivid red orange heads of the males can be seen at a great distance.



BARN SWALLOWS

- Year round
- Most active in the spring and summer months
- Seen catching insects over pond
- Build nests of mud in the rafters of decks and walkways

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WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- **Phone apps (free)**

Merlin Bird id
iNaturalist

- **Web site**

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org>

- **Groups**

Find a bird group near your home:
<https://www.aba.org/birding-clubs-organizations/>

- **Books**

National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of Western North America
National Geographic Kids Bird Guide of North America



Whose goofy feet are these?

AMERICAN COOT

Found year round in Pond, Slough

