

**BIRDS OF THE
GOLDEN GATE
PARK LAKES**



**YSP ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATOR TEAM 2021-22**

CANADA GOOSE



**BEST SEEN:
EARLY FALL-EARLY
SUMMER**

CANADA GOOSE

'BRANTA
CANADENSIS'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, PINE LAKE, LAKE
MERCED, GRASSY
LAWNS/GOLF COURSES

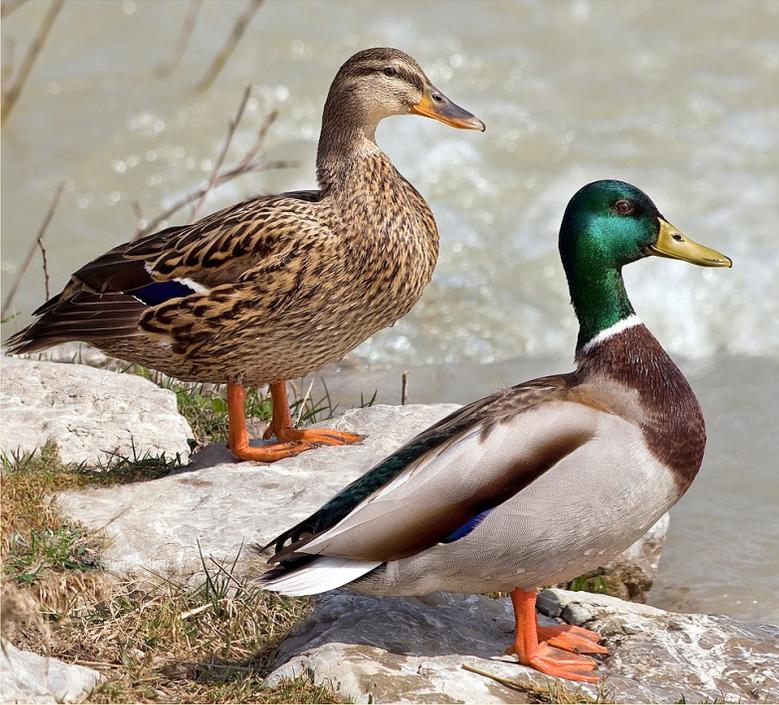
ABOUT:

- HABITAT: PONDS, LAKES, GRASS AREAS
- MIGRATION: ANNUAL, SOME RESIDENTS
- DIET: SPR/SUM- GRASSES AND LEAFY PLANTS, FALL/WIN - BERRIES, SEEDS, GRAINS

FEATURES

- CHECK OUT: DARK BLACK NECK WITH WHITE CHEEKS AND 'CHINSTRAP' MARKING
- CANADA GEESE OFTEN MATE FOR LIFE, 'ASSORTATIVELY'--MEANING THEY OFTEN CHOOSE MATES THAT ARE THE SAME SIZE
- CAN BE AGGRESSIVE WHEN THREATENED

MALLARD



**BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND, LAKES
AND PONDS**

MALLARD

'ANAS
PLATYRHYNCHOS'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

**STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, PINE LAKE, LAKE
MERCED**

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: PONDS, LAKES
- MIGRATION: RESIDENTS TO BAY AREA
- DIET: DABBLE FEEDERS--DIP (NOT DIVE)
TO EAT SEEDS + AQUATIC VEGETATION
- FUN FACT: MALLARDS ARE THE ANCESTOR
TO NEARLY ALL DOMESTICATED DUCKS

FEATURES

- CHECK OUT: SHINY GREEN HEAD (MALES),
BLACK TAIL CURL
- DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
- DUCK QUACKS COME FROM THE FEMALE
DUCKS, MALES DON'T QUACK, THEY MAKE
QUIETER RASPY SOUNDS

AMERICAN COOT



BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND, MOST
BODIES OF WATER

AMERICAN COOT

'FULICA
AMERICANA'

TYPE

RAILS

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, PINE LAKE, LAKE
MERCED, HERON'S HEAD
PARK

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: PONDS, MARSHES, RESERVOIRS, BODIES OF WATER
- FLIGHT PATTERN/MIGRATION: YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS
- DIET: AQUATIC PLANTS, SOMETIMES INSECTS + SMALL VERTEBRATES

FEATURES

- CHECK OUT: THEIR FEET! NOT WEBBED, BUTS THREE SEPARATE DIGITS, WITH FLAPS OF SKIN THAT CAN FOLD UP.
- DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: LONG YELLOW GREEN LEGS WITH LOBED FEET, DISTINCTIVE RED 'THIRD EYE'. BRIGHT WHITE BEAK.

HOODED MERGANSER



**BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND, STOW
LAKE**

HOODED MERGANSER

'LOPHODYTES
CUCULLATAS

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, PINE LAKE, LAKE
MERCED, HERON'S HEAD
PARK

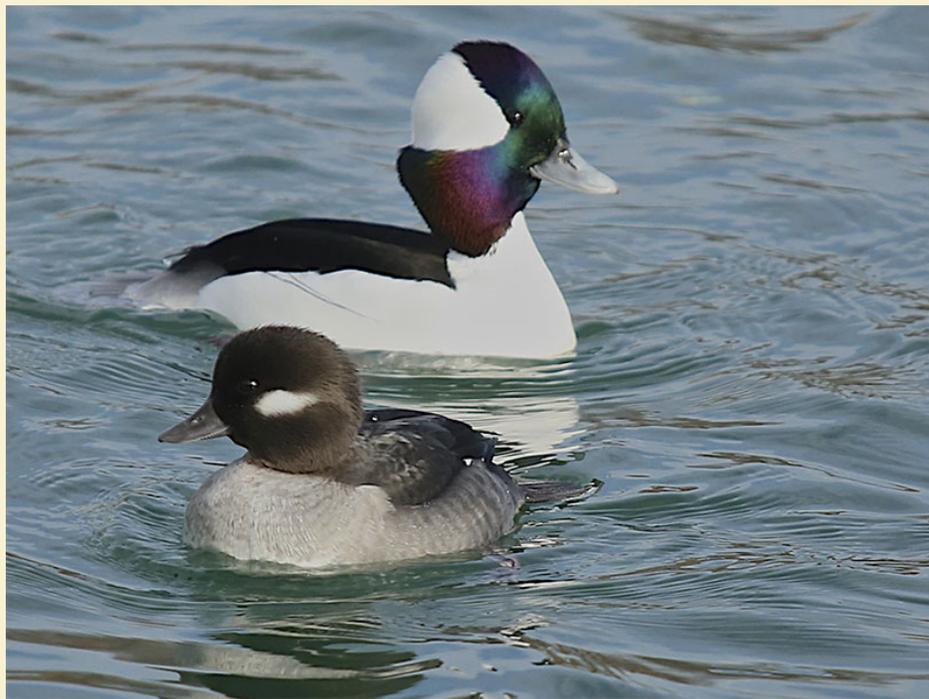
ABOUT:

- HABITAT: MARSHES, FORESTED WETLANDS, LAKES, RIVERS.
- MIGRATION: SOME RESIDENTS, SOME ONLY DURING NON-BREEDING SEASON
- DIET: FISH, CRUSTACEANS, MOLLUSKS, AQUATIC VEGETATION

FEATURES

- CHECK OUT: DISTINCT "HOOD" ON MALE AND FEMALES
- NON-BREEDING MALES LOOK SIMILAR TO BROWN FEMALES
- CAVITY NESTERS--NEED TREE CAVITY FOR NESTING

BUFFLEHEAD



**BEST SEEN:
AUGUST-MAY**

BUFFLEHEAD

'BUCEPHALA
ALBEOLA'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

**STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE**

ABOUT:

- **HABITAT:** BAYS, ESTUARIES, LAKES, RESERVOIRS
- **MIGRATION:** PRESENT IN THE BAY DURING NONBREEDING SEASON (AUG-MAY), NORTH FOR SUMMER BREEDING
- **DIET:** SURFACE DIVE FOR AQUATIC INVERTS, CRUSTACEANS, AND MOLLUSKS.

FEATURES

- BOLD BLACK AND WHITE MARKINGS ON BODY WITH GLOSSY GREEN HEAD (MALES)
- NEST IN OLD WOODPECKER HOLES (CAVITY NESTERS), SPECIFICALLY FLICKER NESTS/HOLES
- SURFACE DIVE FOR 12-25 SECONDS, THEY OFTEN FEED AT LOW TIDE AND IN SHALLOW WATER

RUDDY DUCK



**BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND**

RUDDY DUCK

'OXYURA
JAMAICENSIS'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

**STOW LAKE, HERON'S HEAD
PARK**

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: MARSHES + WETLANDS
- MIGRATION: SHORT DISTANCE
MIGRATION, RESIDENTS
- DIET: SHALLOW DIVERS-AQUATIC
INSECTS, CRUSTACEANS, OTHER
INVERTEBRATES, PLANT
MATERIAL

FEATURES

- CHECK OUT: SMALL DUCK WITH LONG STUFF TAIL OFTEN HELD
UPRIGHT. BREEDING MALES HAVE BRIGHT BLUE BILL.
- RUDDY DUCKS SWIM AND DRIVE TO AVOID PREDATORS SUCH
AS RED-TAILED HAWKS, GREAT HORNED OWLS, AND
RACCOONS
- RUDDY DUCKS ARE VERY AGGRESSIVE TOWARD EACH OTHER
AND TOWARD OTHER SPECIES, ESP. DURING THE BREEDING
SEASON

WOOD DUCK



**BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND, AT
NATURAL LAKES**

WOOD DUCK

'AIX SPONSA'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

**STOW LAKE, HERON'S HEAD
PARK**

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: FORESTED WETLANDS, SWAMPS, FRESHWATER MARSHES, LAKES
- MIGRATION: YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS
- DIET: SEEDS, FRUITS, INSECTS, ACORNS AND AGRICULTURE GRAINS

FEATURES

- CHECK OUT: COLORFUL AND DECORATIVE PLUMAGE ON BREEDING MALES. DURING LATE SUMMER (ECLIPSE PLUMAGE) MALES LOSE THEIR BOLD MARKINGS
- WOOD DUCKS ARE CAVITY NESTERS AND NEST IN TREE CAVITIES AND NEST BOXES

LESSER SCAUP



**BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND**

LESSER SCAUP

'AYTHYA AFFINIS'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

**STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, HERON'S HEAD
PARK, LAKE MERCED**

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: LARGE LAKES, RESERVOIRS, COASTAL BAYS, AND ESTUARIES
- MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND RESIDENTS
- DIET: MOSTLY AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES SUCH AS MOLLUSKS, INSECTS, AND CRUSTACEANS, SOMETIMES AQUATIC PLANTS AND SEEDS

FEATURES

- MEDIUM-SIZED DICING DUCK WITH A FLAT BACK OF HEAD AND NECK
- LESSER SCAUPS OFTEN FORM TIGHT AND MIX WITH OTHER DIVING DUCKS LIKE RING NECKED DUCKS, AND GREATER SCAUPS
-

AMERICAN WIGEON



BEST SEEN:
SPRING TO LATE
SUMMER

AMERICAN WIGEON

'MARECA
AMERICANA'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, HERON'S HEAD
PARK

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: MANY-WETLANDS, PONDS, LAKE, MARSHES. PARKS, PASTURES, GOLF COURSES FOR GRAZING
- PATTERN/MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND IN BAY AREA
- DIET: PRIMARILY PLANTS, AQUATIC AND TERRERSTRIAL

FEATURES

- BREEDING MALES HAVE BROWNISH GRAY HEAD WITH WIDE GREEN STRIPE BEHIND THE EYE AND WHITE CAP
- THEY OFTEN SIT ON WATER WITH THEIR HEADS PULLED IN, FOR A NO-NECKED LOOK
- CHECK OUT THEIR PALE GRAY BILL WITH A BLACK TIP

RING-NECKED DUCK



**BEST SEEN:
MID TO LATE
SUMMER**

RING-NECKED DUCK

'AYTHYA COLLARIS'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: FRESHWATER MARSHES, SHALLOW LAKES
- PATTERN/MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND BAY AREA
- DIET: SUBMERGED PLANTS AND AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES, MOLLUSKS, SMAILS, INSECTS, WORMS

FEATURES

- CHECK OUT THEIR UNIQUE HEADSHAPE-- SLOPING FOREHEAD WITH PEAKED REAR CROWN
- THEY USUALLY BUILD NESTS DIRECTLY OVER WATER OR ON FLOATING VEGETATION
- FEED BY DIVING UNDERWATER RATHER THAN TIPPING FORWARD

GREAT BLUE HERON



**BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND**

GREAT BLUE HERON

'ARDEA
HERODIAS'

TYPE

HERONS, EGRETS,
BITTERNS

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, HERON'S HEAD
PARK, LAKE MERCED

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: FRESHWATER AND SALTWATER HABITATS, FORAGE IN GRASSLANDS AND AGRICULTURAL FIELDS
- PATTERN/MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND
- DIET: FISH, AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES, SMALL MAMMALS, INSECTS, AND OTHER BIRDS

FEATURES

- LARGEST OF THE NORTH AMERICAN HERONS. HEAD, CHEST, AND WING PLUMES GIVE A SHAGGY APPEARANCE
- GREAT BLUE HERONS NEST MAINLY IN TREES--MALES GATHER THE MATERIALS AND FEMALES BUILD THE NESTS
- IN FLIGHT, THE GREAT BLUE HERON CURLS ITS NECK INTO A TIGHT "S" SHAPE
- HERON'S NEST IN COLONIES (HAVE YOU SEEN THE ONE AT STOW LAKE?)

GREAT WHITE EGRET



**BEST SEEN:
YEAR ROUND**

WHITE EGRET

'ARDEA ALBA'

TYPE

HERONS, EGRETS,
BITTERNS

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, HERON'S HEAD
PARK, LAKE MERCED

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: FRESHWATER AND MARINE WETLANDS, DURING BREEDING SEASON, THEY LIVE IN COLONIES WHERE THEY NEST
- PATTERN/MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND RESIDENTS
- DIET: MAINLY SMALL FISH BUT ALSO EATS AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES, BIRDS, SMALL MAMMALS AND INVERTEBRATES SUCH AS CRAYFISH, PRAWNS, SHRIMP, AND GRASSHOPPERS

FEATURES

- ALL FEATHERS ON GREAT EGRETS ARE WHITE. THEIR BILLS ARE YELLOWISH-ORANGE, AND THE LEGS BLACK
- THE MALE BUILDS A NEST PLATFORM FROM LONG STICKS AND TWIGS BEFORE PAIRING UP WITH A FEMALE, AND THEN BOTH MEMBERS OF THE PAIR MAY COLLABORATE TO COMPLETE THE NEST WHICH CAN BE UP TO 3 FT. WIDE AND 1 FT. DEEP
- DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

DOUBLE CRESTED CORMORANT



**BEST SEEN:
SPRING TO LATE
SUMMER**

DOUBLE- CRESTED CORMORANT

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: COLONIAL WATERBIRDS IN LARGE AQUATIC BODIES TO SUPPORT THEIR MOSTLY FISH DIET. THEY MAY ROOST AND FORM BREEDING COLONIES ON SMALLER LAGOONS OR PONDS, AND THEN FLY UP TO 40 MILES TO A FEEDING AREA
- PATTERN/MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND RESIDENT
- DIET: ALMOST ALL FISH, WITH JUST A FEW INSECTS, CRUSTACEANS, OR AMPHIBIANS

'NANNOPTERUM
AURITUM'

TYPE

CORMORANTS
+ SHAGS

LOCATIONS

GGP LAKES, HERON'S HEAD
PARK, LAKE MERCED, PINE
LAKE

FEATURES

- LARGE WATERBIRDS WITH SMALL HEADS ON LONG, KINKED NECKS. THEY HAVE THIN, STRONGLY HOOKED BILLS, ROUGHLY THE LENGTH OF THE HEAD
- MALE CHOOSES NEST SITE AND ATTRACTS A FEMALE. NESTS CAN BE ON GROUND, ON ROCKS OR REEFS, OR ATOP TREES, WHICH MAY BE ALIVE WHEN A CORMORANT COLONY FIRST FORMS BUT TYPICALLY DIE AFTER A FEW YEARS FROM THE GUANO BUILD-UP
- OFTEN SEEN PERCHED WITH WINGS SPREAD TO DRY AFTER DIVING

DOMESTIC MUSCOVY DUCK



**BEST SEEN:
MID TO LATE
SUMMER**

DOM. MUSCOVY DUCK

'CAIRINA
MOSCHATA'

TYPE

WATERFOWL

LOCATIONS

**STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE**

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: PONDS, URBAN PARKS + LAKES
- PATTERN/MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND
- DIET: VARIETY OF PLANT AND ANIMAL FOODS INCLUDING GRASSES, SEEDS, TUBERS, INSECTS, INSECT LARVAE AND ADULTS, SPIDERS, CRUSTACEANS, MOLLUSKS, WORMS, AND SMALL FISH AND REPTILES

FEATURES

- LARGE, HEAVY-BODIED DUCKS WITH LONG NECKS THAT CAN MAKE THEM LOOK LIKE SMALL GEESE
- DOMESTICATED AND FERAL MUSCOVY DUCKS CAN HAVE VARIABLE LARGE PATCHES OF WHITE TO BROWN. MUSCOVY DUCKS HAVE RED FACIAL SKIN WITH ODD WARTY GROWTHS
- WILD INDIVIDUALS ARE RESTRICTED TO SOUTH TEXAS, + COASTAL CENTRAL AMERICA AND SOUTH AMERICA

RED-TAILED HAWK



**BEST SEEN:
MID TO LATE
SUMMER**

RED-TAILED HAWK

'BUTEO
JAMAICENSIS'

TYPE

ACCIPITRIFORMES
(BIRDS OF PREY)

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, GGP

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: OCCUPY JUST ABOUT EVERY TYPE OF OPEN HABITAT IN N. AMERICA: DESERT, SCRUBLANDS, GRASSLANDS, ROADSIDES, FIELDS AND PASTURES, PARKS, BROKEN WOODLAND, AND (IN MEXICO) TROPICAL RAINFOREST
- MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND
- DIET: VOLES, MICE, WOOD RATS, RABBITS, GROUND SQUIRRELS. THE HAWKS ALSO EAT BIRDS, INCLUDING PHEASANTS, BOBWHITE, STARLINGS, AND BLACKBIRDS; AS WELL AS SNAKES AND CARRION

FEATURES

- THE TAIL IS USUALLY PALE BELOW AND CINNAMON-RED ABOVE
- MOST COMMON HAWK IN NORTH AMERICA
- HAWKS LIKE POSTING UP ON TALL TREES, SIGNS, AND TELEPHONE POLES + WIRES

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK



**BEST SEEN:
SPRING TO LATE
SUMMER**

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

'BUTEO LINEATUS'

TYPE

ACCIPITRIFORMES
(BIRDS OF PREY)

LOCATIONS

STOW LAKE, SPRECKELS
LAKE, GGP

ABOUT:

- HABITAT: RIPARIAN AND OAK WOODLANDS, AND ALSO IN EUCALYPTUS GROVES AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- MIGRATION: YEAR ROUND RESIDENT
- DIET: MOSTLY SMALL MAMMALS, LIZARDS, SNAKES, AND AMPHIBIANS. THEY OCCASIONALLY EAT BIRDS, SOMETIMES FROM BIRD FEEDERS: RECORDED PREY INCLUDE SPARROWS, STARLINGS, AND DOVES

FEATURES

- COLORFUL HAWKS WITH DARK-AND-WHITE CHECKERED WINGS AND WARM REDDISH BARRING ON THE BREAST. THE TAIL IS BLACK WITH NARROW WHITE BANDS
- IMMATURES ARE BROWN ABOVE AND WHITE BELOW STREAKED WITH BROWN
- RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS OFTEN REUSE NESTS FROM PAST YEARS

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK



**BEST SEEN:
SPRING TO LATE
SUMMER**

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

'BUTEO LINEATUS'

TYPE

ACCIPITRIFORMES
(BIRDS OF PREY)

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