

San Pedro Valley County Park

Scott Smithson (1985)

Updated by

Judy Spittler (1993)

San Pedro Valley County Park is a beautiful wilderness area located in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range in the city of Pacifica. The park's variety of plants and wildlife brings enjoyment to all levels of nature lovers.

The park's trails are very well-marked, and there are good maps available at the Visitors' Center. There are four well-traveled short trails in the park: the Old Trout Farm Trail, the Brooks Falls Overlook Trail, Weiler Ranch Road and the Valley View Trail. These trails abound with plants and wildlife.

There are two longer trails: the Hazelnut Trail, a circular trail that begins on the Plaskon Nature Trail behind the Visitor Center and ends on the Weiler Ranch Road, and the Montara Mountain Trail, a 6 mile trail that eventually takes you to Montara State Beach. Both have substantial elevation gains, and the Montara Mountain Trail has spectacular views.

The Old Trout Farm Trail yields a variety of birds, mainly because it parallels the willow bushes and riparian areas along Brooks Creek. This trail is broad and level and is .8 miles long. The largest concentration of warblers in the park is found on this trail. Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers are common nesting residents. Always keep an eye out for Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks in this area of the park.

The Brooks Falls Overlook Trail starts in the same kind of habitat as does the Old Trout Farm Trail. It then runs up the hillside into brushy areas with scattered young pine and eucalyptus trees. This .7 mile hike is significant because of the beautiful overlook of Brooks Falls, a seasonal waterfall. The falls flow into Brooks Creek, a feeder stream to the south fork of San Pedro Creek, which is tapped annually by the North Coast County Water District to provide 10% of Pacifica's drinking water.

The Plaskon Nature Trail is a very short trail beginning about a hundred feet to the right of the Visitor's Center as you face it. It crosses Brooks Creek and provides an entry into the creek's riparian area. This trail can be checked when you're traveling between the valley trails described above and those described below. Also be sure to check the area directly

behind the Visitor Center.

The Weiler Ranch Road is the other wide, level trail in the park. This 1.4 mile trail goes through a rather dry area. There are beautiful meadows to the south and grass-covered hills to the north. At the beginning of the trail, check the Walnut Grove Group Picnic Area. Hairy Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers and Red-breasted Sapsuckers love the walnut trees, and they usually stay year-round.

The Valley View Trail is much like the Weiler Ranch Road, except that it is somewhat longer, more winding and has some incline. This 1.6 mile trail has the same species of birds as does the Weiler Ranch Road. Wildflowers are the special attractions here. Look for them in the spring. Unfortunately, the trail also is also noted for poison oak. Many mammals can be found on both the Valley View Trail and the Weiler Ranch Road.

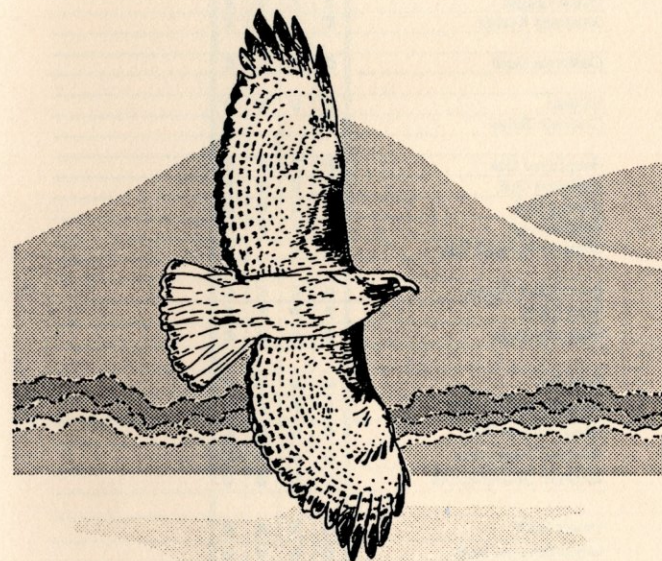
Directions: Take Coastal Route 1 to the city of Pacifica, 10 miles south of San Francisco. Turn east on Linda Mar Boulevard. At its end, turn right on Oddstad Boulevard, and make an immediate left into the Park.

Publications: There are free trail maps and checklists for birds, mammals, plants, and flowers available in the Visitors' Center. The center is normally open on the weekends and may be open on other days, depending on the availability of volunteer staffing. The center has a small, but surprisingly good, reference library with a comfortable reading area. You can purchase field guides, other books and environmentally-oriented articles at the modest gift shop. The Visitors' Center also stocks brochures for other county parks. The phone number for the park headquarters is (415) 355-6489.

Nearby Points of Interest: The Sanchez Adobe, located west of the park on Linda Mar Boulevard is one of the oldest buildings in northern California. Lovingly restored, it is visited by thousands of school children and tourists each year.

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SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK



BIRD CHECKLIST

SAN MATEO COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AGENCY

590 Hamilton St., 4th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

(415) 363-4020

Reservations: 363-4021

(415) 355-8289 Park Office

Species	W	Sp	Su	F	Notes
Fork-tailed Storm-petrel	X				
Double-crested Cormorant	U	U	U	U	
Great Blue Heron	C	O	O	O	
Cattle Egret	R			R	
Black-crowned Night-heron	C				
Mallard		C			
Common Goldeneye	X				
Turkey Vulture	C	C	C	C	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	F	R	R	F	
Cooper's Hawk	F	F	F	F	
Red-tailed Hawk	C	C	C	C	
Ferruginous Hawk	X				
Golden Eagle	X	X	X	X	
American Kestrel	C	U	U	C	
California Quail	C	C	C	C	
Killdeer	U	U	U	U	
Common Snipe	X				
Ring-billed Gull	F	F	F	F	
California Gull	F	U	U	F	
Herring Gull	U	U	U	U	
Western Gull	F	F	F	F	
Glaucous-winged Gull	F	U		U	
Band-tailed Pigeon	C	C	C	C	
Rock Dove	F	F	F	F	
Mourning Dove	C	C	C	C	
Barn Owl	U	U	U	U	
Western Screech-owl	F	F	F	F	
Great Horned Owl	C	C	C	C	
Northern Pygmy-owl	U	U	U	U	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	U	U	U	U	
Vaux's Swift	R	R	R	R	
White-throated Swift	U	U	U	U	
Anna's Hummingbird	C	C	C	C	
Rufous Hummingbird		U			
Allen's Hummingbird		C	F	U	
Belted Kingfisher	C	U	U	C	
Acorn Woodpecker		X			
Red-breasted Sapsucker	U	U	O	U	
Nuttall's Woodpecker	X				
Downy Woodpecker	C	C	C	C	
Hairy Woodpecker	U	O	O	U	
Northern Flicker	C	C	C	C	
Olive-sided Flycatcher		C	C		
Western Wood-pewee		C	C		
Pacific-slope Flycatcher		U	C		
Black Phoebe	C	C	C	C	
Say's Phoebe	U	U		U	
Western Kingbird		R			
Tree Swallow	R	C	C	U	
Violet-green Swallow		C	C		
Cliff Swallow		C	C	R	
Barn Swallow		C	C	R	

Species	W	Sp	Su	F	Notes
Steller's Jay	C	C	C	C	
Scrub Jay	C	C	C	C	
American Crow	U	U	U	U	
Common Raven	C	C	C	C	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	A	A	A	A	
Bushtit	A	A	A	A	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	O				
Pygmy Nuthatch		R			
Brown Creeper	O				
Bewick's Wren	C	C	C	C	
House Wren	R			O	
Winter Wren	C	C	C	C	
Marsh Wren	X	X			
Golden-crowned Kinglet	C	U	R	C	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	A	C	R	A	
Mountain Bluebird	X				
Swainson's Thrush		A	A	U	
Hermit Thrush	C	O		O	
American Robin	C	C	C	C	
Varied Thrush	F			U	
Wrentit	C	C	C	C	
Northern Mockingbird	O	O	O	O	
California Thrasher	U	U	U	U	
American Pipit	X				
Cedar Waxwing	F	U		U	
Loggerhead Shrike	R				
European Starling	C	C	C	C	
Solitary Vireo		U			
Hutton's Vireo	C	C	U	C	
Warbling Vireo		C	C		
Red-eyed Vireo		X			
Tennessee Warbler	X				
Orange-crowned Warbler	R	C	C	R	
Nashville Warbler		R			
Yellow Warbler		U	U		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	A			A	
Black-throated Gray Warbler		O		U	
Black-throated Blue Warbler		X			
Townsend's Warbler	C	U		C	
Hermit Warbler		O		R	
Macgillivray's Warbler				R	
Common Yellowthroat				X	
Hooded Warbler		X			
Wilson's Warbler		C	C	R	
Western Tanager		R			
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		X			
Black-headed Grosbeak		C	C		
Blue Grosbeak				X	
Lazuli Bunting		R	R		

Species	W	Sp	Su	F	Notes
Rufous-sided Towhee	C	C	C	C	
California Towhee	C	C	C	C	
Fox Sparrow	C	R	X	C	
Song Sparrow	C	C	C	C	
Lincoln's Sparrow	X				
White-throated Sparrow	X				
Golden-crowned Sparrow	A	C		C	
White-crowned Sparrow	C	C	C	C	
Dark-eyed Junco	C	F	U	C	
Red-winged Blackbird	U	U	U	U	
Yellow-headed Blackbird				X	
Western Meadowlark	F	U	U	U	
Brewer's Blackbird	C	C	C	C	
Brown-headed Cowbird		X	X		
Northern Oriole		C	C		
Purple Finch	C	C	C	C	
House Finch	C	C	C	C	
Red Crossbill	R		R	R	
Pine Siskin	C	C	C	C	
Lesser Goldfinch	U	C	C	U	
American Goldfinch	U	C	C	U	
Evening Grosbeak	R				
House Sparrow	C	C	C	C	

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS
(with explanatory comments)

Seasons:

F = Fall (Refers to the fall migration and may extend from July through November)

Sp = Spring (The spring migration and breeding season. May extend from January through June)

Su = Summer (The nesting and fledging season when birds are secretive and hard to find. Usually July and August.)

W = Winter (Birds are usually silent and non-territorial. December through February for most species.)

Frequency:

A = Abundant (Both common and easy to see. Should be found in in the first hour of a birding trip.)

C = Common (Should be found on a 1/2 day trip.)

F = Fairly common (Should be found on a full day trip.)

U = Uncommon (Present in small numbers in suitable habitat.)

O = Occasional (Very few records, but not unexpected.

Particularly applicable to irruptive species.)

R = Rare (Present in small numbers in most years.)

X = Vagrant or accidental. (Totally out of range or habitat. A "what the hell was that!?!?" bird.)

Notes:

Frequency records on owls are based primarily on sound identification, rather than sightings. Smaller owls are usually found at higher elevations. Barn owls are usually visitors from outside the park.

Compiled in 1986 by Scott Smithson and Jeff Anderberg
Updated in 1993 by Cliff Richer, Sequoia Audubon Society, with technical assistance and review by Scott Smithson and Judy Spittler of the Sequoia Audubon Society.