

BIRDS OF THE FAIRVIEW PARK VERNAL POOLS

Fairview Park's vernal pools filled at beginning of February 2024 due to significant rains and have since dried up. They provide vital habitat for flora and fauna whether they are full or dry. A wide variety of foraging birds were spotted in and around the vernal pools while they were full. Many of these species are wetland-dependent species not often seen when the vernal pools are dry. Some may also be seen in the lower wetlands and riparian habitat area in the northwest portion of the park. Fairview Park's vernal pools create vital habitat and a rich source of nutrients for these species and many other organisms.



BLACK-NECKED STILT

This species can typically be found in shallow wetlands such as salt marshes and is not typically seen in Fairview Park. When the vernal pools at the park fill, they forage in the pools. They eat aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, small crustaceans, and more. The bird has the longest legs in comparison to their body size of any bird.



WESTERN SANDPIPER

This species winters in Southern California, typically in marshes and on the coast. They migrate here after nesting in the Arctic tundra of Alaska. This species is not seen in Fairview Park unless the vernal pools are filled, providing a food source for them. They gather in large flocks and eat insects, spiders, and aquatic invertebrates.



MARbled GODWIT

In southern California, this species can typically be found on mudflats and beaches. In the vernal pools they probe the water and mud using their long bills to catch aquatic invertebrates, insects, aquatic plants, and more. At times their heads will be fully submerged while probing. They sleep on one foot with their heads tucked.



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

This species is typically found at Fairview Park in the lower wetlands section. When the vernal pools fill, they create additional habitat for insects which the red-winged blackbirds eat. They have a distinctive, metallic song that they sing perched from tall plants and trees. The males defend a nesting territory for multiple females, chasing away other birds and predators.



WHITE-FACED IBIS

In southern California, this species can typically be found in shallow wetlands. The vernal pools provide great habitat for them to forage. They probe for invertebrates such as insects and small crustaceans with their long, curved bill. They typically forage in flocks, so you will rarely see one alone. At Fairview, a flock of at least 75 has been spotted foraging.



GREATER YELLOWLEGS

This species inhabits a variety of wetlands. At the vernal pools, they forage for mainly aquatic invertebrates but may also eat frogs and other larger prey. They take large steps as they wade through the water looking for food, allowing a glimpse of their yellow legs. You may hear their call before you see them: "tew tew tew".



NORTHERN PINTAIL

This species can be found in a variety of wetland habitats, including freshwater and saltwater marshes and lakes. In the vernal pools they forage for aquatic insects, invertebrates, and seeds. They migrate to northern parts of the country, Alaska, and Canada to nest. They leave as soon as possible, arriving as the ice begins to melt.



BLUE-WINGED TEAL

This species can be found in freshwater or brackish water. In the vernal pools they forage for aquatic insects, snails, seeds, and more. They are dabbling ducks, meaning that they dip their bill into the water to capture food rather than diving. They migrate long distances and can winter as far as South America.