

# A GUIDE TO: BIRDS OF LOS ÁNGELES



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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the kids growing up in East and South L.A. who feel like nature is some place far, far away.

Nature is all around us everyday. We just have to slow down enough to see it.

Mil gracias to the community members whose expertise and generosity played a huge role in this initiative Araceli Hernandez, Roberto Morales, Montserrat Plascencia, Milena Acosta, Heather Calabrese, Lila Higgins, Phuong Pham, David Aguila, Robert and Tamara Avitia, and the Nature For All Leadership Academy Cohort 18.

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## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:





# A WELCOME NOTE

While we are staying safer-at-home birds are some of the COOLEST animals we can observe from our windows. Los Angeles County has more recorded bird species than any other county in the United States! This book celebrates the incredible birds that either live in or ***migrate*** through our beautiful city.



\*Look out for words that are *Italic* and **Bold**.  
Definitions will be at the end of the book.

# Birds in your Neighborhood

## Black Phoebe

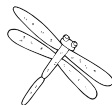


Let's go outside!



This cutie patootie loves to munch on bugs! You can spot the Black Phoebe in East and South L.A. sitting on low benches or fences looking for bugs to chomp on.

You can identify the Black Phoebe by its white belly and a tiny black mohawk on the top of its head! So metal!



The male House Finch is easily confused for the common House Sparrow but you can identify him by his red head and belly.

House finches love sunflower seeds and if one gets word of your bird feeder - it'll tell all of it's friends. I hope you have enough sunflower seeds!

## House Finch



Wikicommons: Rhododendrites

# Red-tailed Hawk

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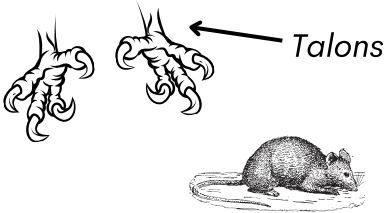


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You can find these bulky and long-winged bird living in East and South Los Angeles. A good place to spot them is perched on top of street lights over freeways.



Red-tailed Hawks like to hunt for their meals perched up high. When they spot a rat, rabbit, or squirrel they will swoop down and grab it with their talons (or claws).



Cooper's Hawks are a bit harder to spot because they are so **stealth**. If you spot one, treat yourself to a scoop of your favorite ice cream!

While the female Cooper's Hawk prepares to lay her eggs the male hawk will feed her at the nest for a month as she gets ready for motherhood.



## Cooper's Hawk



© Evan Lipton | Macaulay Library

# Red Crowned Parrot

There are SO MANY parrots in Los Angeles and it is rumored that they were introduced to our city by escaping local pet stores. This bird is native to Mexico and made very happy lives for themselves here in L.A.

You will usually hear their very loud screech before you see them so keep an ear out!



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# California Scrub Jay



Wikicommons: Rhododendrites

You may hear folks calling this bird a "blue jay" but this bird's name is actually the California Scrub Jay. This bird is omnivorous which means it eats both plants and animals.

The California Scrub Jay is very smart and buries acorns for later. Perhaps you have a furry friend who does the same?



# Acorn Woodpecker

This is a family bird. When baby woodpeckers are born everyone steps up to care of the young. Perhaps like your grandparents, aunts, or uncles might?

This bird also spends much of its time storing acorns in small holes they drill into trees with their beaks. When there is not much food around they have a supply of acorns to choose from! They prepare for food emergencies just like us!



Wikicommons: Jamstechsl

# Allen's Hummingbird



Wikicommons: Mike's Birds

You can spot these birds all around Los Angeles! Mother hummingbirds are skillful builders. They make their cup shaped nests out of soft fuzz from plants, green moss, and spiderwebs.

The Aztecs believed hummingbirds contained the souls of warriors who passed away. This was due to their quick and skillful movements along with their sharp beaks.

# San Gabriel Mountains

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## Macgillivray's Warbler



Wikicommons: VJAnderson

These chunky, small birds love to stay low to the ground and hang out in thick bushes. You might spot them hopping around searching for bugs to eat.

This bird migrates through the San Gabriel Mountains along a bird migration path known as the **Pacific Flyway**. Lots of critters migrate through Los Angeles including **species** of ladybugs, butterflies, and dragonflies.



## White Breasted Nuthatch

The White Breasted Nuthatch is known for putting acorns into tree trunks and WHACKING them with their beaks to get the seed out. They'll also often climb up tree trunks upside down looking for bugs to eat - like spiders!



Wikicommons: Rhododendrites

You can identify this bird by its upturned beak and black stripe on the top of it's head.





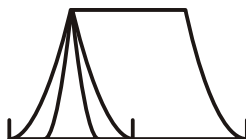
## Steller's Jay

The Steller's Jay is a beautiful blue and black bird that likes to live in flocks. You can often find the Steller's Jay flying one at a time in single file with their flock.

This bird regularly hangs out around campgrounds or picnic areas. You can help the Steller's Jay stick their healthy bird diet by picking up all your food after eating outside. Let's help them stick to eating bugs and seeds which are best for the bird.



Wikicommons: VJAnderson



## Cedar Waxwing



Photo: James Brown/Audubon Photography Awards

The Cedar Waxwing is known for its brown feathers, yellow tail, black mask, and the pop of red in its wings.

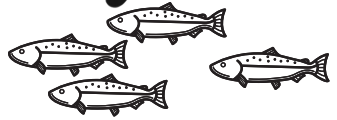
This bird loves to chomp on berries during the Fall and Winter. During the Fall these birds will gather in the hundreds to feast on berries.

To attract these birds to your yard plant **native plants** like toyon, and sugar bush.

# L.A. River

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## Great Blue Heron



Wikicommons: Rhododendrites

If you happen to be walking by the L.A. River (near Elysian Valley a.k.a. Frog Town) in the early morning, chances are you will see this incredibly wondrous and large bird!

This bird is a fisher and will stand very still in shallow water until it spots a small fish to quickly grab with its bill!

## Great Egret



You can also spot this tall bird in the L.A. River **wading** for fish. It has an interesting kink in its neck - almost like an elbow.

This bird nests in large colonies with a lot of other Great Egrets where they make plenty of noise. Their call can get confused with a duck call but Egrets have a much lower tone.



This bird eats mostly fish but also frogs, salamanders, snakes, and aquatic insects.



## Black-necked Stilt

This delicate bird walks on what looks like gorgeous pink chopsticks and has a white belly and black back. The Black-necked Stilt enjoys eating bugs, shrimp, crayfish, snails, and sometimes tiny fish.



Wikicommons: Frank Schulenburg

When the Black-necked Stilt lays its eggs, both the male and female will take turns incubating the egg - or keeping it warm.



## Belted Kingfisher



Belted Kingfishers have a very impressive way of catching prey. They will perch on low branches watching the water closely for small fishes, or crayfish. When they spot one they will dive in beak-first and snap up the fish!

They cough up anything they can't digest like bones, and scales in **pellets**.



Crayfish are a yummy snack for these river birds →

# TIPS FOR BIRD WATCHING

**Use your binoculars!** A good tip for observing these birds through your binoculars is to look at the bird with your eyes and then bring your binoculars up to your eyes without moving.

**Patience.** Spotting birds takes time - perhaps you set up some bird seed in front of your window? It'll take some time before a bird finds it. Be patient and watchful when looking for birds.

**Use a notebook!** This way you can track your progress as a birder. By the end of the year you will know when your local birds show up in your neighborhood by month, season, and time of day.

**Use apps like Seek by iNaturalist.** Curious to learn more about identifying birds? Download the Seek app and upload a picture of the bird you need identified. The app will identify birds for you and share cool information about it.

**Have fun!** Being outside is pretty cool. Why not spend some time learning about the world around you?

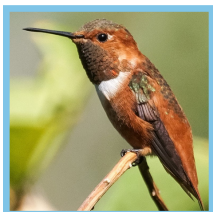
# GLOSSARY

- **Migrate** – moving from one place to another for better weather, food, or living conditions.
- **Native plants** – Plants that grow naturally, or existed for many years in an area. Typically native plants are better for local ecosystems.
- **Pacific Flyway** – A large and long route birds use to fly from Alaska to Argentina.
- **Pellets** – A mass of undigested parts of a bird's food that some birds occasionally "throw up".
- **Species** – A type of living being.
- **Stealth** – Sneaky or quick movement.
- **Wading** – Walking through water.



# BIRD SIGHTING CHECKLIST

What was the bird doing?

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Allen's Hummingbird

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California Scrub Jay

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Black Phoebe

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Red-tailed Hawk

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# MY BIRD WATCHING NOTES

Draw what you see

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# MY BIRD WATCHING NOTES

Draw what you see

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