

Common Bird Species of Naval Base Point Loma for the AKN Training Course



30 Jan 2024

Habitat of Naval Base Point Loma

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types on Naval Base Point Loma (on Peninsula) based on 2009 Navy Survey

Vegetation Community / Land Cover Type	Acres
Low shrublands	602.5
- Southern coastal bluff scrub	36.1
- Maritime succulent scrub	275.6
- Diegan coastal sage scrub	118.3
- Diegan coastal sage scrub / southern maritime chaparral	55.3
- Southern maritime chaparral	116.2
- Maritime succulent scrub / southern maritime chaparral	1.0
Woodlands and forests	18.3
- Torrey pine forest	1.2
- Eucalyptus woodland	17.1
Others	92.6
- Southern foredunes	1.6
- Ruderal	91.0
Total Vegetated Acres	713.4

Source: U.S. Navy 2009d



Common Year-round Bird Species of Naval Base Point Loma



Anna's Hummingbird
(*Calypte anna*)



Bewick's Wren
(*Thryomanes bewickii*)



Bushtit
(*Psaltriparus minimus*)



California Towhee
(*Melospiza crissalis*)



Orange-crowned Warbler
(*Leiothlypis celata*)



Spotted Towhee
(*Pipilo maculatus*)



Wrentit
(*Chamaea fasciata*)

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)



• Identification:

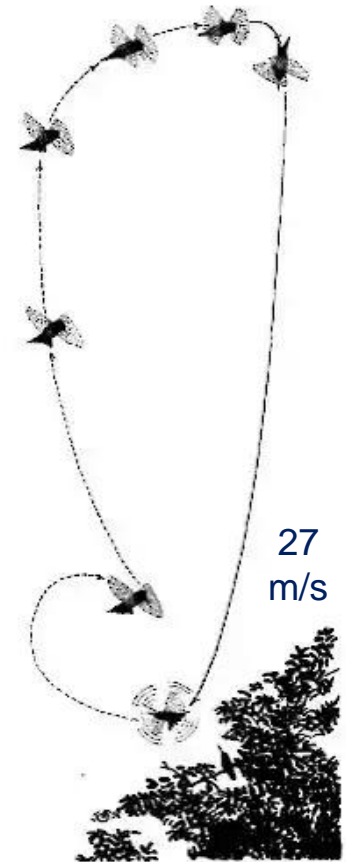
- Medium sized
- Stocky (4–4.5 g)
- Iridescent bronzy green dorsally
- Grayish below
- Straight bill of medium length
- Fairly broad tail
- Males have rose gorget
- Adult females may have some (≤ 25) rose feathers
- Juveniles may have some gorget color



Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)



- **Habitat:** Riparian woodlands, coastal scrub, chaparral, parkland, and urban/suburban environments
- **Behavior:**
 - Flies and hovers well
 - Uses feet for clinging, does minimal walking
 - Highly aggressive, male territorial dive display
 - Courtship shuttle display
- **Breeding:**
 - Onset of winter rains starts nesting, not before mid-Nov.
 - No pair formation
- **Residency:** Year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Chip note = short, sharp, dry *tzip*
 - Song = 3 phrase groups, described as *bzz* phrases, *chur-ZWEE* phrases, and a *dzi! dzi!*
 - Flight note = low-pitched, rolling *brrrt*



Dive Display of male Anna's Hummingbird, modified from Stiles 1982 and Wells and Baptista 1979. This display is used by a male to defend its territory.

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)



- **Identification:**

- Medium sized (length 13 cm; mass 11 g)
- conspicuous white line over eye
- Relatively long tail, middle tail feathers barred, other tail feathers tipped with white spots
- Wags tail from side to side
- Upperparts brown to grayish brown
- Throat and underparts whitish
- Washed gray on sides and flanks
- Legs grayish
- Sexes identical



Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

- **Habitat:** Brushy areas, scrub and thickets in open country, open and riparian woodland, and chaparral
- **Behavior:**
 - In foraging, uses short, quick hops between perches
 - Highly active, usually pausing only 1-2 s at a time
 - Hops when foraging on ground
 - Quick, direct, non-undulatory flights, generally short, 1-12 m
 - Aggressive
- **Breeding:**
 - Non-migratory populations in CA, commonly form pairs in March.
 - Resident populations, begins late Feb–Apr
- **Residency:** Year-round in CA
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Songs given by male only
 - Territorial Song = typically consists of 3–5 phrases, including 1–2 trills: *t-t zree drr-dree tutututututu*
 - Calls generally dry, harsh, un-musical: *jree or beee*



Bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*)

- **Identification:**

- Very Small (70–80 mm, 4-5 g)
- Long tail (46–62 mm)
- Short wings
- Small black bill
- Long black tarsi
- Plain medium gray above
- Paler gray below
- Pale brownish cap from forehead to upper
- Adult female iris is light (cream, yellow, or white)
- Adult male iris dark brown
- Juvenile iris gray (female) or brown (male)



Disheveled balls of fluff

Bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*)

- **Habitat:** In general, prefers open mixed woodland with some evergreen foliage or shrubby understory. Also found in second growth and riparian and canyon areas in xeric habitats, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and other shrub habitats. Adapts readily to suburban and edge environments.
- **Behavior:**
 - Mostly flies short distances within a tree and from tree to tree
 - Foliage-gleaner specialist
 - Often hangs upside down and by one foot
 - Very agile and active
 - Individuals huddle together if cold
 - Live in flocks of between about 10 to >40 individuals year-round
- **Breeding:**
 - Jan-Feb, form pairs within flocks.
 - Pairs can persist from year to year, possibly non-monogamous
- **Residency:** Year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Contact Call = distinct *tsit*
 - Long-Distance Contact Call = very high frequency, bell-like *sre-e-e-e*
 - Avian Predator Warning Call = high-pitched, warbling *sre-e-e-e e-e-e*



California Towhee (*Melospiza crissalis*)



• Identification:

- Large (length 21–25 cm, mass 37–67 g)
- Long-tailed
- Ground-dwelling, forages mainly on ground
- Sexes similar in plumage, Male slightly larger
- Uniformly gray-brown
- Slightly darker wings, tail, and crown,
- Eyelids (especially below eye) and throat tinged cinnamon-brown
- Malar region and border of throat indistinctly marked with dusky streaks or spots
- Eyes orangish-brown
- Legs grayish pink
- Bill dusky with paler gray base to lower mandible



California Towhee (*Melospiza crissalis*)



- **Habitat:** Occurs most often in chaparral and in coastal sage scrub, riparian, but also in residential and agricultural areas, oak woodland
- **Behavior:**
 - Often hops or runs if frightened or pursued
 - Uses modification of hopping in foraging called bilateral scratching
 - Short, broad wings and long tail make flight seem jerky and awkward
 - Males and females vigorously defend breeding territories
- **Breeding:**
 - Nest building occurs mid-Feb to late Aug
 - Long-term socially monogamous, life-long pair bond
- **Residency:** Year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Male song = repetition and elaboration of basic metallic sounding *chip*, *tsip*, or *chink*, starting with 3 or 4 notes at short intervals, ending in trill-like series
 - Call notes = many variations of basic note *chip*, *tsip*, or *chink*
 - Mate-Call = *squeal-churrrr* or *squeal-squeal-squeal-squeal*



Orange-crowned Warbler (*Leiothlypis celata*)



- **Identification:**

- Medium sized (length 11-14 cm)
- Plain dusky olive-green above
- Brighter yellow on rump and upper-tail coverts
- Grayer on crown and hind-neck
- Crown with brownish-orange patch, usually concealed
- Eyes black surrounded by partial whitish or yellow eye-ring, separated by dusky eye-line
- Underparts greenish-yellow, faintly streaked, and varying from dull to rather bright yellow depending on race
- Bill small and sharp with fine tip
- Bill and legs dark
- Sexes similar, but female tends to be duller with indistinct or absent orange crown-patch



Orange-crowned Warbler (*Leiothlypis celata*)



- **Habitat:** Shrublands and riparian corridors.
- **Behavior:**
 - Primarily hops while moving within foliage, only infrequently reaching ground to forage or seek nest material
 - Flight usually direct with rapid wing beats.
 - Will hover briefly when gleaning insects from vegetation or hawking
 - Displays fluttering flight during Song Flight and when pairs are courting
- **Breeding:**
 - Onset in mid-Feb
 - Stop singing upon pairing, and temporarily stay silent if pair bond is formed
- **Residency:** Year-round, also migrants
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Chip note = sharp *chip*
 - Song = high pitch trill becoming weaker toward end; or as full and strong, not very high pitched, and ending abruptly on a rising scale; a *chee chee chee chew*.



Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)



• Identification:

- Medium-sized (length 17.5–21.3 cm; mass 33–49 g)
- Mainly ground-inhabiting
- Female paler and browner, Male blacker
- Both sexes similarly patterned, with dark hood, dorsum, tail, and wings
- Clear white abdomen; reddish brown sides and flanks
- Scapulars and tertials variably streaked with white
- White spotting on tips of greater and median secondary coverts form two wing bars
- Tail moderately long, rounded, with white patches in outer corners
- Iris of immatures brown in first fall and winter, turns red by first spring
- Juveniles brown and streaky with brown eyes.



Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)

- **Habitat:** Riparian woodlands, coastal scrub, chaparral, parkland, and urban/suburban environments
- **Behavior:**
 - Hops forward on ground during locomotion
 - Hops backward during bilateral scratching while foraging
 - Longer, directed, undisturbed flights are steady, or slightly jerky or undulatory
 - Disturbed or alarm-calling bird on perch often flicks wings, sometimes also flashes tail
- **Breeding:**
 - Nest-building begins early–late Apr
 - Only female incubates/broods, male guards and brings food
- **Residency:** Year-round, migrants
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Call = harsh descending *gree-er*
 - Song = harsh, buzzy, rapid trill
 - Flight note = high, thin, buzz *zeeeweeee*



Wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*)

• Identification:

- Small wren-like bird (14–15 cm, mean mass 14.5 g)
- Sexes and all plumages nearly identical
- Plumage loose in texture, varying from, dark ruddy brown to pale brown
- Upperparts contrasting with paler rufous-brown, or reddish- to pinkish-brown underparts
- Faint supercilium subtly contrasts with crown and face
- Throat and breast may also be vaguely streaked
- Wings short and rounded
- Legs long
- Distinctive long, graduated tail most often held at angles askew to the body
- Bill short, slightly curved, and horn colored
- Outer iris is dark brownish gray to maroon (depending on age) contrasting with light inner iris



Wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*)

- **Habitat:** Coastal sage scrub, northern coastal scrub, chaparral, riparian, suburban parks and larger gardens
- **Behavior:**
 - Generally hops or walks through shrubs with slow, deliberate movements
 - Flight is weak and slow with tail slightly pumping to maintain elevation
 - Most flights < 30 m; often hesitates or even avoids flights > 10 m
 - Both sexes defend and hold territories year-round
- **Breeding:**
 - First nests Mar-Jun, often double broods
 - Monogamous, pair for life
- **Residency:** Year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Song = Male, series of short, clear, overslurred whistles accelerating into a rapid chatter, *pit-pit-pit-pit-pit-tr-r-r-r-r*. Female similar, but with even rhythm, *pit-pit-pit-pit-pit-pit*.
 - Scold = wooden rattle, (*churr* or *krrr*), given when startled or threatened, particularly near the nest



Common Wintering Bird Species of Naval Base Point Loma



Lincoln's Sparrow
(*Melospiza lincolnii*)



Ruby-crowned Kinglet
(*Corthylio calendula*)



White-crowned Sparrow
(*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)



Wilson's Warbler
(*Cardellina pusilla*)

Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*)



- **Identification:**

- Small (total length 13.5–15.3 cm)
- Mixed brown and gray above
- Pale below with a buffy breast marked with fine black streaks
- Reddish edges to wings and tail feathers
- Broad gray supercilium
- Narrow buffy eye-ring
- Yellowish at base of bill
- Sexes are similar in all plumages
- Legs pinkish



Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*)

- **Winter Habitat:** Winters in grassy patches around brush and trees, often near water.
- **Behavior:**
 - Usually solitary, and secretive in behavior
 - Rarely ventures more than a few meters from dense cover
 - Walks on the ground while foraging
 - Will feed opportunistically with small mixed-species groups of sparrows
 - Flight usually straight and direct, not undulating, and rarely erratic
 - Capable of quick, leaping hops while chasing prey or seeking cover
 - All populations are migratory
- **Breeding:** Does not breed here
- **Residency:** Winter only
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - this species rarely, if ever, sings during the overwintering period
 - has a wide variety of calls with a sharp chip being most commonly heard year-round.



Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*)



- **Identification:**

- Very small (9–11 cm long, 5.0–9.7 g)
- Olive green-gray on upperparts
- 2 strong white wing bars (the lower wing bar wider and with a darker band on posterior edge)
- Broken, white eye ring
- Underparts dusky white
- Males have scarlet crown patches generally concealed except when agitated
- Females identical to males but lack red crown patches



Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*)



- **Winter Habitat:** Widely varied, including oak woodlands, riparian deciduous forests, urban parks and neighborhoods, especially with brushy understory.
- **Behavior:**
 - Moves amid foliage and along branches with short hops, often aided by a flick of wings.
 - Prefers to move on horizontal or near-horizontal branches
 - Does not climb up or down vertical branches or trunks
 - Short bursts of rapid wingbeats result in slight, jerky zig-zags from side to side
 - Flight quick and direct
 - Northern populations complete migrants
 - Some western populations altitudinal migrants, in winter occupying lower altitudes
- **Breeding:** Does not breed here
- **Residency:** Winter only
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Call = Low, husky, dry *jidit*
 - Song = Complex series of notes, most developed in male but also given (abbreviated) by female, *sii si sisisi berr berr berr pudi pudi pudi see*
 - Song exceptionally loud for such a small bird; can be heard for > 1 km



White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)



• Identification:

- Medium sized- geographically variable
- Sexes are similar in all plumages
- Top of head with 2 broad black stripes, separated by a broad median white stripe
- Narrow black line extends from eye to back of nape
- Remainder of face, sides of neck, and breast gray, fading to white on throat and abdomen
- Back and scapulars light gray streaked with brown
- Tail Brown, rump and uppertail-coverts pale brownish
- Legs brown to flesh-pink.
- Iris brown
- Bill color varies with subspecies, pinkish brown to yellowish
- Juvenile similar to adult, but more brown, less gray, brown head-stripes rather than black, buffy median head-stripe rather than white, streaks on back and scapulars black rather than brown.



White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)



- **Winter Habitat:** Flocks in fields, near roadsides, close to thickets/shrubbery. Roost in trees or perennially-leaved shrubs at night. Common at feeding stations.
- **Behavior:**
 - Hops along ground while foraging
 - Performs "double-scratch" movement
 - Wintering flocks consist of multiple subspecies
 - Follow their own flight schedules and do not migrate as cohesive flocks

 - Individual return to same winter home range
- **Breeding:** Does not breed here
- **Residency:** Winter only
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Call = sharp *pink*
 - Flight call = high, thin, rising *seeep*
 - Song = begins with clear whistles then a series of buzzes or trills on different pitches, varies regionally
 - Typical male song is 2–3 s long
 - Female singing is relatively uncommon



Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*)



- **Identification:**

- Small wood-warbler, length 10-12 cm, mass 5.4-10.5 g
- Adult male plumage has upperparts uniformly yellowish olive green; forehead, supercilium, lores, and entire underparts lemon yellow, and crown glossy black cap
- No wing-bars or tail spots.
- Black eye stands out conspicuously on yellow face
- Female similar to male but duller overall with crown that is highly variable amounts of olive and black
- Characteristic behaviors include frequent lateral tail-flicking, tail-waving, rapid body movements, and fluttering in mid-air while hawking insects



Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*)



- **Winter Habitat:** Riparian woodlands, coastal scrub, chaparral, parklands, and urban/suburban environments
- **Behavior:**
 - Primarily hops among vegetation of trees and shrubs while gathering food
 - Restless hopping from perch to perch characteristic of species
 - Flight usually direct with rapid wing beats
 - During flight song, wing beats more fluttering
- **Breeding:**
 - Mostly wintering only
 - Some breeding locations in Southern CA (Camp Pendleton)
- **Residency:** Winter only and year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Call = soft, nasal, but ringing, distinctive *chip* or *jip*
 - Song = two-parted rapidly delivered series of similar chip notes, the second half being slightly lower and faster than the first, *chchchchchchchch*



Common Sensitive Bird Species of Naval Base Point Loma



Coastal California Gnatcatcher
(*Poliptila californica californica*)



Costa's Hummingbird
(*Calypte costae*)



Peregrine Falcon
(*Falco peregrinus*)

Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*)



- **Identification:**

- Very small and slender, length 9.5-10.6 cm, mass 5-7 g
- long-tailed, tail length 4.4-5.3 cm
- Tail graduated, mostly black. Outer 2 or 3 rectrices narrowly edged and tipped with white
- Bill short and slender
- Wings short, rounded
- Males with gray underparts and head; back and wings gray with brownish tinge.
- Breeding males with black cap, n Basic plumage, short black line over eye to base of bill
- Females more strongly washed with brown, especially on back, flanks, belly
- Both sexes with indistinct white eye-ring; eye-ring on males limited to area below eye during breeding



- **Status:** Federally Threatened, CA Species of Concern

Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*)



- **Habitat:** Obligate resident of coastal sage scrub
- **Behavior:**
 - Not observed to walk, hop, or climb; rarely descends to ground
 - Flights mostly low and <2 m, longer flights when nesting and defending territory
 - Undulatory flight
 - Pairs scold and aggressively chase intruders in territories
- **Breeding:**
 - First-brood eggs laid mostly in late Mar, but can be as early as mid-Feb.
 - Often double brood
 - Apparently monogamous, mostly pair for life
- **Residency:** Year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Mew = both males and females, *zeeeur* or *feeur*
 - Scolds = Short, harsh, wren-like calls given when upset
 - Alarm = 2-3 brief, rapidly delivered, similar notes; phonetically: *chew-chew* or *chew-chew-chew*
 - Contact Notes = very quiet, short buzzy mews given by both sexes



Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*)



- **Identification:**

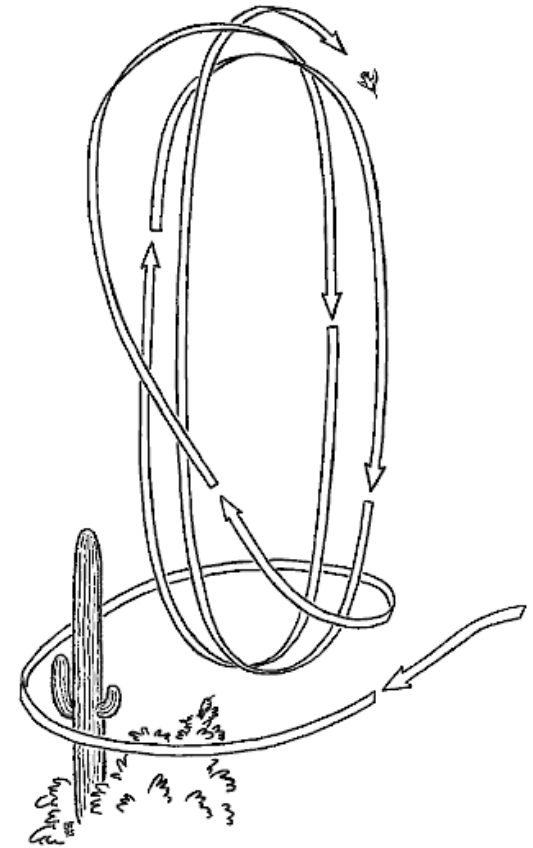
- Small (3 g)
- Iridescent green dorsally
- Whitish below
- Slightly curved bill of medium length
- Short paddle-shaped tail
- Adult male crown and gorget iridescent purple with gorget flared and white eyebrow
- Females pale supercilium and gray auriculars
- Female and young difficult to distinguish from female and young ANHU and BCHU.

- **Status:** Federal Species of Conservation Concern, CA Species of Concern



Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*)

- **Habitat:** Coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and occasionally urban/suburban environments.
- **Behavior:**
 - Flies and hovers well
 - Uses feet for scratching and bill for preening
 - Males perform powerful flight displays during breeding season
- **Breeding:**
 - Breeding initiated around May
 - No pair formation
- **Residency:** Year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Call = light, dry *tink*
 - Song = extremely thin rising and falling high buzzy Szeeeee-eeeeeeew
 - Display = continuous shrill whistle



Looping Dive-and-Whistle Display of male Costa's Hummingbird with female observing -- a sexual display. Drawing by Barbara A. Terkanian (Birds of the World)

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

• Identification:

- Medium to large falcon (Total length: male 36–49 cm, female 45–58 cm; mass: male 410–1060 g, female 595–1600 g Stocky (4–4.5 g))
- Very pointed wings
- Bluish-gray upperparts, becoming more blackish on head
- Blackish facial stripe extending down from eye across malar
- Pale auriculars or “cheek
- Underparts whitish, grayish, or buffy with blackish spotting (female more heavily marked)
- Juveniles browner and streaky

Status: Federal Species of Conservation Concern



Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)



- **Habitat:** Extremely variable
- **Behavior:**
 - Nests on cliffs, buildings, bridges
 - Hunts from perch or high in the air
 - During pursuit of prey can reach speeds of 112 km/h
 - Feeds mainly on small to medium birds
- **Breeding:**
 - First eggs by mid-May
 - No nest built- scrape in substrate
 - Single brood
- **Residency:** Year-round
- **Sounds/Vocalizations:**
 - Cack Call = Repeated, relatively short, harmonic call, *kak kak kak kak*
 - Eechip call = Repeated, 3-part call of variable but relatively long duration, *ku ee chip, ku ee chip...*





Questions?



References

- The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Birds of the World
- The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Macaulay Library (all bird photos)
- Sibley Birds, Volume 2 App

