Birds of the Hanford Reach
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Much more than a nuclear waste site, over 258 species of birds call the Hanford Reach home. Keep this guide with you throughout the day; as you go on a boat tour, participate in the hike, or just explore on your own keep your eyes open for different species of birds!
How many can you find?

Key
A: Abundant
C: Common, see in moderate numbers
Ca: Casual, not recorded every year
Fc: Fairly Common, observed daily but in small numbers
*Known to nest locally

Blackbirds

Brewer's Blackbird* C—Medium sized with a full body, round head, and straight bill. Males are glossy black with a piercing yellow eye. Females are plain brown, darkest on the wings and tail, with a dark eye, though some females have a pale eye.

![Male Brewer's Blackbird](image1)
![Female Brewer's Blackbird](image2)

Brown-headed Cowbird* Fc—Chunky, with a thick conical bill. Adult males have black bodies and brown heads which can appear all black. Females are plain brown, lightest on the heads and underparts, with fine streaking on the belly and a dark eye.

![Male Brown-headed Cowbird](image3)
![Female Brown-headed Cowbird](image4)
Blackbirds

Red-winged Blackbird* A—Stocky with broad shoulders and a slender conical bill. Males have a red shoulder patch bordered in yellow. Females are brown and heavily streaked all over with a yellowish wash around the bill.

Yellow-headed Blackbird* C—Large with a stout body, large head, and long conical bill. Males have a bright yellow head and breast and a black body, with white patches on the wing. Females are brown instead of black, with a duller yellow head and breast.

Doves

Mourning Dove* Fc—Gray above with large black dots on the wings and pale peach colored below, with a long thin tail. Thin black bill and pinkish legs.
**Ducks**

**Blue-winged Teal**—who Males have a buffy colored body with dense black speckles. Blueish-gray head with a bold white crescent in front of eye, black bill, and black wings and tail. Females and non-breeding males have a coarsely marked brown body with darker cap and eye line on head and a black bill.

Male  
Female

**Cinnamon Teal**—Males have a deep brown-reddish body, long black bill, red eye, and a black back and rear. Females and non-breeding males have a coarsely marked brown body, with a faint darker cap and eye line, with a long black bill.

Male  
Female

**Common Merganser**—Males are large with long straight bill, mostly white with a green head and orange-red bill. Females and non-breeding males are also large with long slender bills. Have warm reddish head with a ragged crest, white chin, and sharp border with white chest.

Male  
Female, Non-breeding
Ducks

**Gadwall*** Ca—Males are intricately patterned with gray, brown, and black. Also have a black rump patch. Females and non-breeding males often look square-headed with a steep forehead. Longer, thinner beaks than their similar counterpart, the mallard.

**Mallard*** C—Males have a gray body with a darker brown chest and black rump with a white streak. A bright green head cuts off from the chest with a white line. Also have yellow bills. Females have a distinct blue patch on their wings with white lines surrounding and a dark eye line.

**Northern Pintail*** Fc—Females are slender with a long neck and tail. Compared to other females ducks their tan heads are more plain. Males have a very long tail, a white breast, and a white neck stripe.
Ducks

Redhead* Fc—Medium sized diving duck, with a steep forehead and abrupt transition to bill. Females are medium brown all over with a pale face and a dark gray bill with a black tip. Males have a cinnamon-red head with a gray bill with a black tip, black chest and rear, and gray body.

Eagles

Golden Eagles Ca—Very large with long wings. All dark brown with slightly paler flight feathers. Golden nape can be seen from some angles. Females are larger than males.

Falcons

American Kestrel* Fc—Males are rusty above with slate blue wings, females are rusty all over with a gray crown on the face. Both have two black slashes on the face.
**Finches**

**American Goldfinch** *Fc*—Small with a short conical bill and short, notched tail. Breeding females are duller yellow beneath and more olive above. Breeding males are bright yellow with black forehead and black wings with white markings.

![Male Goldfinch](image1.png)  ![Female Goldfinch](image2.png)

**House Finch** *Ca*—Small, with a conical, seed eating bill and notched tail. Adult males are rosy red around the face and upper breast, with a streaky brown back, tail, and belly. Females and immatures are brown all over with blurry streaks down the belly.

![Male House Finch, Adult](image3.png)  ![Female House Finch, Immature](image4.png)

**Pine Siskin** *Ca*—Small with a sharp, pointed bill and a short, notched tail. Adults are brown and streaky overall with subtle yellow edgings on the wings and tail.

![Pine Siskin, Adult](image5.png)
Flycatchers

**Eastern Kingbird** Fc—Large-headed with upright posture and a white-tipped square tail. Blackish above with a darker head and white below.

**Say's Phoebe** Fc—Slender and long-tailed with a relatively large head. Brownish gray above with cinnamon belly and gray breast.

**Western Kingbird** C—Large and hefty with a thick bill, pale gray head, and bright yellow belly.
Gallinaceous Birds

**California Quail** Fc—Males have a forward facing comma crest on the head, scaled white and black belly, chestnut belly patch, and fine black and white markings on neck. Females are brownish-gray on the face.

**Chukar** C—Chicken-like with a small round head and plump body. Bold stripes on side, red bill, and creamy throat bordered in black.

**Ring-necked Pheasant** Fc—Fairly large, long tailed, long necked. Females are brown all over marked with black, particularly on the back and wings. Males have a green head, white collar, and coppery body plumage with black and white spots.

**Gray Partridge** Fc—Females are slender with a long neck and tail. Compared to other females ducks their tan heads are more plain. Males have a very long tail, a white breast, and a white neck stripe.
Geese

Canada Goose C—Large with a long black neck and white cheek patches. Brown body with paler chest and white underbelly. Black legs and feet.

Goatsuckers

Common Nighthawk* C—Medium, slender bird with long, pointed wings. White patch on the wings located close to the bend in the wing.

Grebes

Pied-billed Grebe* Fc—Small, chunky water bird with a blocky head, thick bill, and almost no tail. Breeding birds have a vertical black stripe on their bill.
Goatsuckers

Common Poorwill* Fc—Flat-headed with a short tail. White band marks the throat, but is difficult to see.

Gulls

California Gull* C—Medium sized with a white head, yellow legs, a dark eye, and a red spot on the lower bill.

Ring-billed Gull C—Medium sized with a shorter bill. Breeding adults have a black band across their yellow bill, yellow legs, a pale eye, and a pale gray back.
Hawks

Northern Harrier* Fc—Broad wings, long tail, characteristic white patch on rump. Males are grayish above with a dark trailing edge on the wings. Females often fly with wings in a “V” shape and are pale below with light brown streakings.

Red-tailed Hawk* Fc—Large with a red tail, mostly pale below with a darker belly band, wing tips, and edges of the flight feathers. Brown head with a white throat.

Swainson’s Hawk* Fc—Large hawk with large wings that have pointed wingtips. Dark trailing edge to the wings and a brown upper chest creating a hood appearance.
Herons & Egrets

**Black-crowned Night Heron** C—Stocky and compact heron, usually tucks its neck into its body creating a hunched back look. Adults have a black cap and back, with whitish to pale gray belly and gray wings. Juveniles are brown and streaky with yellowish bills.

**Great Blue Heron** Fc—Very large and tall with a long neck. Grayish-blue overall with long orangish-yellow bill, black crown, and black head plumes.

Jays, Magpies & Crows

**American Crow** C—Large black bird with slight gloss to the plumage and a relatively long, thick bill.

**Black-billed Magpie** C—Long tail and heavy bill. Appears entirely white and black but in good light the wings and tail shine with a blue-green iridescence.
Jays, Magpies & Crows

Common Raven* Fc—Long, thick-necked bird with a hefty bill and shaggy neck.

Kingfishers

Belted Kingfisher* Fc—Stocky, large-headed bird with a shaggy crest and dagger-like bill. Females are blue-gray with a chestnut belly band and flanks. Males are blue-gray with a white collar and blue-gray breast band.

Kinglets, Bluebirds, Thrushes

American Robin* C—Large, round bellied. Males have a dark head, yellow bill, rusty belly, and dark back.
Larks

Horned Lark* A—Small with a long body and small bill. Males are brownish above and pale below with a black chest band. Males also have a black mask and variable amounts of yellow on the head and throat as well as two feathers that stick up on the side of the head like horns. Females lack the black mask and are generally paler, with only a slight yellow wash.

Meadowlarks & Orioles

Bullock’s Oriole* C—Slim but sturdy songbirds, with a medium-long tail and a sharply pointed bill. Males are bright orange with a black back and large white wing patch. Females have a yellowish-orange head and tail, a grayish tail, a grayish back, a whitish belly, and white wing bars.

Western Meadowlark* A—Chunky with a short tail, flat head, and long-slender bill, and rounded shoulder posture. Breeding adults have bright yellow underparts with a prominent V on the chest.
Old World Sparrows

**House Sparrow** C—A chunky, full breasted bird with a round head and a stout bill. Breeding males have gray crowns, white cheeks, a black bib, and a chestnut neck. Females are a plain buffy brown overall with dingy gray-brown underparts. Their backs are noticeably striped with buff, black, and brown.

[Image of male House Sparrow]

[Image of female House Sparrow]

Pelicans & Cormorants

**American White Pelican** Fc—Huge snow white water bird with a long neck and massive bill. A yellow plate forms on the upper bill of breeding adults.

[Image of American White Pelican]

**Double-crested Cormorant** C—Large with long tail and neck. Breeding birds have small tufts on the side of their head and orange-yellow skin on base of bill and chin.

[Image of Double-crested Cormorant]
Plovers

**Killdeer** Fc—Slender with long tail and wings. Adults have two black neck bands. Tail is rusty colored during flight.

Rails

**American Coot** A—Plump water bird with a rounded head and a sloping bill. Adults are dark gray with a white bill tipped with a ring of black.

**Virginia Rail** Fc—Chicken-like bird with gray cheeks, reddish bill, cinnamon neck and black and white on the flanks. Walks with its tail held up.
Shorebirds

Long-billed Curlew* Fc—Large and long-legged with a very long curved bill. Underparts are washed with a pale cinnamon color.

Spotted Sandpiper* C—Medium sized with a unique bobbing behavior. Breeding adults have dark spots on the belly and an orangish bill.

Shrikes

Loggerhead Shrike* Fc—Chunky, big-headed songbird with a thick, hooked bill, gray head with a black mask that wraps across the top of the bill. Prominent white patches on wings.
**Sparrows & Buntings**

**Brewer's Sparrow*** A—Dainty and slim with a long notched tail, short rounded wings, and a small sharpy conical bill. Adults are dusky gray-brown with grayish underparts, a thin white eyering, and a streaked nape.

[Image of a Brewer's Sparrow]

**Grasshopper Sparrow*** A—Small and flat-headed with a deep bill. Unstreaked and buffy below with rust spotting or streaking on the back and an orange-yellow stripe in front of the eye.

[Image of a Grasshopper Sparrow]

**Lark Sparrow*** Fc—Chunky, big-headed songbird with a thick, hooked bill, gray head with a black mask that wraps across the top of the bill. Prominent white patches on wings.
Sparrows & Buntings

**Lazuli Bunting** Fc—Small songbird with a cone-shaped bill and a gently sloping forehead. Males are brilliant blue above with a pumpkin colored breast, white belly, and white shoulder patch. Females are warm grayish-brown above, with an unstreaked pale cinnamon or tan breast.

![Male Lazuli Bunting](image1)

![Female Lazuli Bunting](image2)

**Sagebrush Sparrow** A—Medium sized with a long tail and round head. Face has a white eyering, a white spot before the eye, and a white mustache bordered by a thin black stripe.

![Sagebrush Sparrow](image3)

**Song Sparrow** C—Medium sized with a long, rounded tail. Many in the Pacific Northwest are dark brown and gray with heavy streaking on the breast.

![Song Sparrow](image4)
**Sparrows & Buntings**

**Spotted Towhee**—Large, with a long tail, and thick bill. Females are brown on the head, throat, and underparts, with white spots on the wings and back. Males have a black head, throat, and underparts, with a white belly, rufous sides, and white spots on the wings and back.

![Male Spotted Towhee](image1) ![Female Spotted Towhee](image2)

**Vesper Sparrow**—Medium to large with streaked breast, white eyering, and white outer tail feathers. Rufous patch is usually hard to see.

![Vesper Sparrow](image3)

**Starlings & Mynas**

**European Starling**—Chunky, blackbird sized, with a short tail, and long slender bill. In flight wings are short and pointed. Breeding birds are dark overall with purplish-green iridescent and yellow bills. West are dark brown and gray with heavy streaking on the breast.

![European Starling](image4)
Swallows

Bank Swallow* A—Small songbird with a small head and tiny bill. Adults are brown above with a brown breast band and a white swoosh on the neck.

Barn Swallow* A—Sparrow-sized swallow with broad shoulders that taper to long, pointed wings. Adult males have steely blue-black wings and tail and tawney underparts. Throat and forehead are rusty

Cliff Swallow* A—Compact swallow with pointed, broad wings, a small head, and square tail. In the sun adults have metallic, dark blue backs and pale cinnamon rumps. Rusty face with white forehead.
**Swallows**

**Violet-green Swallow**\* **Fc**—Small, sleek birds with long pointed wings and slightly forked tails and white cheeks. Wings extend beyond tail when perched. In the sun, males have a greenish-bronze back and iridescent violet rump. Females have duller green backs and a brown cap.

![Male Violet-green Swallow](image1)

![Female Violet-green Swallow](image2)

**Terns**

**Caspian Tern** **Fc**—Largest turn in the world, with a large red bill, tail with a shallow fork, and black on the underside of outer primary feathers. Breeding adults have a fully black cap.

![Caspian Tern](image3)

**Forster’s Tern**\* **Fc**—Medium sized with pointed wings and a long, forked tail. Breeding adults have a black cap and black tip on an orange bill. White underparts and pale primaries.

![Forster’s Tern](image4)
**Vultures**

**Turkey Vultures Ca**—Large with long wings. Black body, gray flight feathers and tail, and naked, red head.

![Turkey Vulture](image)

**Warblers**

**Yellow-rumped Warbler Ca**—Adult males have a black mask, white throat, yellow patches on their side, and a yellow rump.

![Yellow-rumped Warbler](image)

**Woodpeckers**

**Northern Flicker* Fc**—Large woodpecker with a black bib and spotted belly. Males in the West have a red whisker (in the East its black). The underparts are mostly brownish-gray with black barring. White rump is sometimes visible when perched.

![Northern Flicker](image)
Wrens

**House Wren** Fc—Small, nondescript brown bird with a short tail, thin beak, and dark barring on wings and tail with a paler throat.

**Marsh Wren** C—Tiny and round-bodied with a short tail, often held up. Rusty-brown above with black and white streaks down its back. Underparts are paler and unstreaked.

**Rock Wren** Fc—Medium sized with long tail and thin bill. Pale brown above and whitish below with slight buffy or peachy wash on the lower belly. Back and wings are finely speckled. Also have a pale eyebrow stripe.
This guide only has the most common birds to the Hanford Reach area. Make sure to take notes of other birds you see and visit allaboutbirds.org to identify those birds and learn more. Thank you to allaboutbirds.org for photos and facts.

Field Notes