

Regional in Nature

Activity Guide

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2020

East Bay 
Regional Park District
Healthy Parks Healthy People

Check Our Website for Information
on Reopenings - Camping,
Boating, and Fishing.



BE A PUP PRO!



**New Shoreline Park Offers
Spectacular Bay Views.** See *page 3*.

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General Information 1-888-EBPARKS or 1-888-327-2757
Camping and Picnic Reservations...1-888-EBPARKS
Naturalist and Recreation Programs.....1-888-EBPARKS
TRS Relay Service.....7-1-1

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Visit ebparks.org for map downloads, activity and event information, and much more!



REGIONAL PARKS HIT BY Unprecedented Number OF WILDFIRES

A MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER
ROBERT E. DOYLE



This year's fire season has been extreme, both locally and statewide. As of this writing, over 8,320 CalFire incidents have been tracked in California. In the East Bay, the SCU Complex Fire, started by lightning in mid-August, included fires in Round Valley, Morgan Territory, Mission Peak, Sunol Wilderness, and Ohlone Wilderness regional parks. It burned 396,624 acres and was active for 44 days.

Climate change is accelerating the risk of catastrophic fires. Eight of the most destructive fires in California history have occurred in the past four years, with the SCU Complex Fire being the third largest on record.

Our full-time and on-call fire crews – employees, including park rangers, trained and available to fight wildfires when needed – made significant contributions to battling the fires. The Park District's Eagle 7 helicopter pilots dropped water and provided tactical guidance as the “eye in the sky” when state air resources were unavailable.

Even with Covid restrictions in place, our fuels reduction

effort has continued, and our Wildland Fire Fighters were dispatched not only to our own area, but also to assist CalFire in surrounding counties as requested. I am very proud of our own EBRPD heroes.

During the fires, our parks benefited from our continuous and ongoing trails and fuels maintenance programs and grazing. In many cases, the fires stopped at properly maintained fire roads and slowed down in grazed grasslands. Grazing cattle also play an important role in wildfire protection as “Four-Hoofed Firefighters”, reducing flammable grass and brush in parks. The Park District grazes approximately 65 percent of the parklands with cattle, goats, and sheep throughout the year.

In the parks that are burnt, we are clearing debris from trails and removing safety hazards. Sadly, a great number of wildlife and heritage oaks were lost in the fires.

Hopefully, nature will recover and heal itself over time, with help and attention from our staff and volunteers.

Thank you to all the firefighters that have been battling this year's fires. We appreciate your courage and dedication as you work hard 365 days a year to prepare, train, and protect people and Regional Parks from wildfire.



Fire along the Ohlone Wilderness Trail.

Camping, Boating, and Limited Capacity Day Use Return to Some Regional Parks

After many months of anticipation, camping, boating, and limited day use have returned to Del Valle, Quarry Lakes and Anthony Chabot. Del Valle once again features boat launching/fishing by boat, boat rentals, and reduced capacity day-use (east side only) and family camping. Quarry Lakes is now open for boat launching/fishing by boat, and Anthony Chabot is now accepting reservations for the family campground.

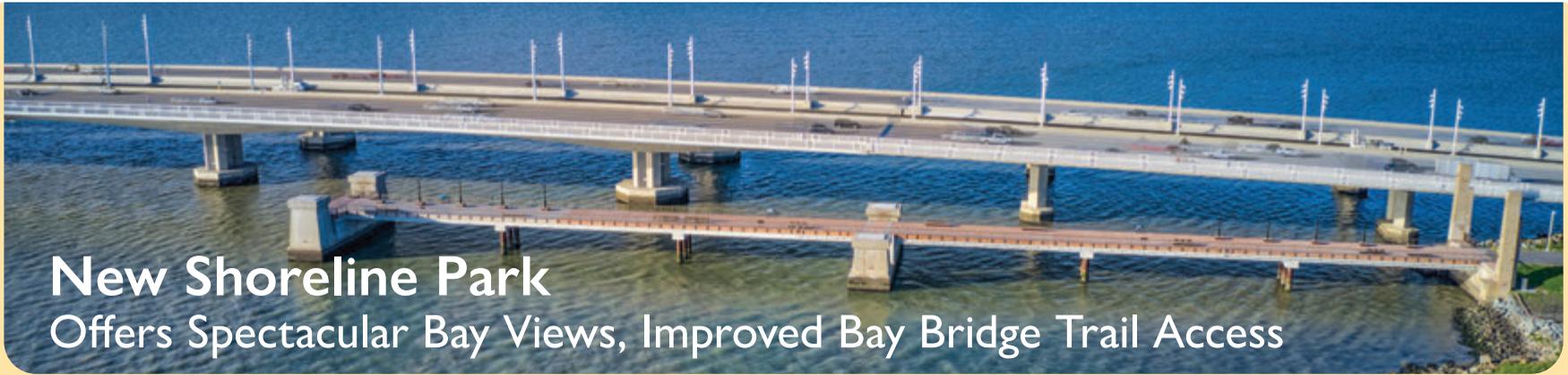
While this is welcome news, visitors should

be aware of some changes to these park activities due to COVID-19. For example, camping reservations and boat inspection/launch fee payments are required in advance. Reopened park areas and facilities have limited capacity with day use vehicle entrance provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. Additionally, all picnic areas, barbecues, and group campsites will remain closed in accordance with

state and local health orders.

Plan ahead: Prepay boat inspection and boat launch at Del Valle and Quarry Lakes at ebparks.org/register and bring proof of payment to limit touchpoints. Camping reservations can be made online at ebparks.org/register or by phone at 1-888-327-2757, option 2: Monday – Friday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.





New Shoreline Park Offers Spectacular Bay Views, Improved Bay Bridge Trail Access

A new 45-acre shoreline regional park has opened at the eastern touchdown of the Bay Bridge. The park – named Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline after East Bay civic and environmental leader and former Park District board member John Sutter – includes the historic and newly renovated Bridge Yard building for events, a recently constructed 600-foot observation pier with views of the bay, and access to the bicycle and pedestrian path on the eastern span of the Bay Bridge.

The site of the new park has an interesting history. From 1903

to 1960 it served as the base of operations for the electric railway Key System that transported passengers around the East Bay and across to San Francisco via the lower deck of the Bay Bridge. A substation located at the site provided electrical power to all of the Key System trains.

The site was also part of the Oakland Army Base, which served as a transportation port and distribution terminal for the Pacific from 1941 to 1999, before it closed.

Historic Bridge Yard Building:
The restored 1930s-era Bridge Yard

building – previously, a maintenance facility for the Key System trains – will serve as the future activity hub with interpretive and recreational programming, equipment rentals, food concessionaires, and space for events and conferences. The 24,000 square-foot building was renovated by Caltrans and the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) and has been leased to the Park District by Caltrans.

Bay Observation Pier:
A 600-foot observation pier was recently completed by BATA atop six pilings from the old Bay Bridge. The

pier provides spectacular Bay views and connects visitors to the site's transportation history.

Bay Bridge Trail Access:
The new park also provides parking and access to the Alexander Zuckermann Bay Bridge Trail which crosses the Bay Bridge to Yerba Buena Island and Treasure Island.

Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline is an example of multi-agency collaboration between Caltrans, BATA and the Park District, and a result of the Park District's long-time efforts to reclaim the shoreline for public use and enjoyment.

Don't Just Be a Pup Owner

BE A PUP PRO!

#PupPro

The East Bay Regional Park District manages 73 Regional Parks within 125,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The Park District is one of the most dog-friendly districts in the nation and welcomes dogs with both on-leash and off-leash options in designated areas of the parks.

Dog owners comprise one of the largest user groups, and a recent survey showed dog walking was the preferred activity among 39% of respondents, second only to hiking.

To keep trails and parks enjoyable for everyone, including pups and park goers, the District has launched a public information campaign to encourage all visitors to be respectful and share their parks.

"Being out in nature with our dogs is a huge benefit, for us and for them," says Mary Barnsdale, a board member of Point Isabel Dog Owners. "It's on us to keep the parks clean, respect wildlife, and be sensitive to the needs of other park users."

Follow these tips to be a Pup Pro:

- Bag It (the poop) and Bin It
- Leash your pup in designated areas (parking lots, trailheads, picnic areas, paved trails, wildlife protection areas, etc.)
- Keep your dog safe (leash up around cattle and horses)

Visit ebparks.org/PupPro for a quick guide to the dog rules.



Amber and Bruce
at Lake Chabot
Regional Park

Bridging the Nature Gap

Rue Mapp, the Oakland-based founder of Outdoor Afro — a national nonprofit focused on connecting Black communities with open-air experiences — has called nature a true equalizer: “You go out in nature and the trees don’t know you are Black. The birds are going to sing, no matter how much money is in your bank account. The flowers are going to bloom, no matter what your gender is or whether you are a Democrat or Republican.”

Unfortunately, while Mother Nature may not see skin color or wealth, the distribution of parks, beaches and other open spaces is far from equitable in the United States. In fact, a July 2020 study by the Center for American Progress found that people of color are three times more likely than white people to live in an area that is nature-deprived; 70% of low-income communities are in nature-deprived locales.

“The distribution of these nature disparities is not an accident,” Shanna Edberg, one of the report’s authors, told National Geographic magazine. “It was a choice made over generations, from redlining, to choosing to exclude minorities from certain neighborhoods, to choosing to put parks in certain neighborhoods, to choosing to pave over communities of color to build highways and coal plants.”

This “nature gap” impacts these communities in myriad ways, including restricted access to no or low-cost exercise, reduced mental and physical health advantages, and fewer learning opportunities for young people. Even with the East Bay’s wealth

of regional parks, there are barriers such as transportation or lack of exposure to outdoor opportunities.

“People need to understand the benefits that nature can provide,” says Keith White, Regional Parks Foundation board member and chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. “What is missing is the spark that gets people off of their traditional paths and on to something that they probably haven’t tried before. Families may play basketball or go to amusement parks — very often camping or hiking isn’t even on the list of activities. Our goal is to get those things on the list. Why not add exploration of our parks to how we relax and enjoy ourselves?”

To that end, White hopes to build on outreach to churches, the NAACP and other local organizations, as well as hold more events (post-social distancing) that specifically draw people of color to the parks — complete with social media postings, advertising in newspapers and on radio stations within those communities.

“There needs to be a change in thinking in all areas,” says White. “The board needs to change how we approach diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging. The people we are reaching out to need to meet us halfway and come see what we’re about. That’s the formula for us as a society coming together.”

This summer, the Regional Parks Foundation committed to funding 750 one-year Memberships



Keith White

Says White, “Our goal is not only to make people feel welcome, but feel like they belong.”

Healthy Parks, Healthier People

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting social distancing restrictions reaffirmed the vital role that parks play in health for all communities.

“Human beings didn’t start out in urban concrete and buildings. We started out in nature, and it’s really important to us as human beings and to our overall health,” says Erica Pan, M.D., acting state health officer at the California Department of Public Health.

“Nature and parks provide medicine for our mind, body and emotions during this stressful prolonged pandemic,” concurs Rohan Radhakrishna, M.D., deputy health officer – Contra Costa County. “They can help mitigate the impact of past and

for families of color, available through local community and nonprofit organizations. (Marathon Petroleum recently made a generous \$5,000 donation to that effort, along with a \$15,000 donation for the purchase of three e-bikes to support public safety in the parks.)



**Increasing flexibility at
Multicultural Wellness Walk.**



**Children enjoying the outdoors
and building connections.**



**Family activities at All Abilities Day - games,
storytelling, naturalist-led tours.**



Aquatic Adventure Crew program

organizations need to diversify all levels of staff, executive leadership and boards to better reflect and represent the communities they aim to serve,” adds Dr. Radhakrishna.

A Fundamental Obligation

Outgoing Park District General Manager Robert Doyle is a longtime believer in his field’s “fundamental democratic obligation to provide places for everyone, not just the rich and powerful.” The Park District has focused on developing parklands near urban centers since the 1970s and maintained a commitment to funding aquatic programs to expand recreational opportunities and enhance water safety.

“Access to lakes and swimming pools is critically important for people who don’t have the wealth to belong to a gym or have a pool in their backyard,” says Doyle.

In addition to breaking down language barriers, diversity in staffing, improving park access and welcoming new users through programs like the District’s Multicultural Wellness Walks and All Abilities Days, Doyle says it’s also important that park visitors feel safe.

“The great thing about our interpretation program is we invite people to come along with us — providing guidance about exploring the parks and creating a safe environment,” he says. “One simple barrier to access is allaying people’s concerns about safety in the parks, everything from crime to rattlesnakes to poison oak. Once people learn how to be safe in the parks, they will visit parks with confidence and experience the healing power of nature.”

Doyle cites the need for national and statewide efforts to invest in public lands — helping with fuels management and fire prevention, funding safety officers and maintenance staff, and mitigating the impact of climate change (see page two for wildfire protection).

“We have to address those really colossal issues right now,” he says, “in addition to inviting more people into our parks who have not felt invited in the past.”

current trauma and minimize the effects of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. To heal and recharge our spirit, children and adults need less screen time and more green time.”

Data shows that COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color, in part due to limited health care access, exposure to the virus at work, crowded housing, and other social determinants of health.

“This pandemic has further exposed gross inequities in our society. We must ensure that

“We see a future moving beyond simply facilitating access and more toward creating a truly inviting and inclusive park experience particularly for all Black, indigenous, and people of color.”

— Jess Brown, Regional Parks Foundation board president

park access isn’t just for the privileged,” says Dr. Radhakrishna, who is also the co-chair of the Health Equity Committee for the California Conference of Local Health Officers. “For the great outdoors to truly be great, it must be welcoming and inclusive for low-income communities and people of color that often suffer the worst health and socioeconomic inequities and have the most to gain from the salubrious effects of nature.”

Like Keith White, Dr. Radhakrishna sees the need for more multilingual outreach to engage diverse peoples, as well as partnerships with government, faith-based and other community organizations. Inclusion efforts also have to happen at the agency level. “We must move beyond words and confessions. Nature and park

How You Can Support Your Parks

If you are enjoying the benefits of nature and the amenities of your East Bay Regional Parks, you can share these gifts with another by:

Making a donation: Consider becoming 1-in-a-Million by joining our monthly sustainers program. We are looking for 4,000 individuals to give \$21/month or \$250 a year. Together we will raise \$1M to support our East Bay Regional Parks and programs.

Making a Matching Gift: Many employers offer matching gift programs where they will match your donation \$1 for \$1. You can check to see if your employer has a gift matching program here: regionalparksfoundation.org/support/corporate-giving

Becoming a Member/Giving the Gift of Membership: During Covid-19, we recognize people may not be able to fully access tangible membership benefits; however, 100% of membership revenue supports programs for children, seniors, veterans and people living with disabilities. Your membership support gives the gift of nature to thousands.

Leaving a Legacy: Attend a Regional Parks Foundation free Planned Giving Seminar (now on Zoom) where you can learn the basics of wills, trusts and estate planning. Learn how you can leave a lasting gift to support the causes you love. regionalparksfoundation.org/PlannedGiving

Shopping for a Cause: We believe in shopping locally if possible, but when ordering online several retailers will pass along a portion of your sale to the nonprofit of your choice. If you shop online, please consider selecting the Regional Parks Foundation as your charity.

We know there are competing priorities and demands for resources right now. We want you to know you are appreciated and we do not take your support for granted. Thank you for loving your East Bay Regional Parks.

To learn more, become a member, or make a donation visit: RegionalParksFoundation.org



Ardenwood

HISTORIC FARM

As autumn fades to winter, we look forward to the warmth of baked goods, that special crispness in the air, and – perhaps most notably – the hopeful return of the monarch butterflies.



Monarchs at Ardenwood

Every year in late October, we start searching the eucalyptus groves around the farm for overwintering monarch butterflies. It's always a thrill to spot a cluster high in the trees, hanging together through cold, wet, and windy weather. On sunny days, standing deep in the grove surrounded by thousands of flying monarchs is like being inside a magical butterfly-filled snow globe!

In early February, we say farewell as the butterflies fan out across the West to lay their eggs on milkweed and complete their life cycles in places as far away as Washington, Idaho, and Utah.

Ardenwood is one of about 400 known overwintering sites along the California coast, and for many years was one of the largest in the area, with groups of 1000-6000 butterflies. We've worked hard to keep our forest healthy and safe for the monarchs, planting new trees and shrubs and removing dead and dying ones. Still, in 2018, only a few monarchs passed through, and none stayed for the winter. Sites up and down the coast reported the same. In 2019, the total population reached the lowest level ever recorded.

The decline in monarch numbers has been attributed to habitat loss and degradation, pesticides, and climate change, as well as other factors that are not yet clear. Although not all the causes are known, many solutions are, and there is plenty you can do to help.

Please join us as we take actions to save the western population, and together we hope to enjoy these magnificent insects for years to come.

Ways to Help Monarchs:

- Choose local, organic produce.
- Plant native milkweed. Remove tropical milkweed species that can spread disease.
- Plant flowers that bloom February-April and September-October in your garden or on your balcony.
- Take steps to reduce your climate impact by buying only what you need and choosing reusable items over consumables.



At holiday celebrations around the world, food brings together communities, families, and friends. Special recipes bring to life history and traditions, and every winter gathering is made even better when there is good food to be had!

Here is one of our seasonal favorites using a fruit (yes, pumpkin is a fruit!) native to the Americas.

Pumpkin Pie

- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons molasses
- 1 1/2 cups cooked and pureed pumpkin or canned pumpkin
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 cup evaporated milk or cream
- 9-inch unbaked pie shell

Blend the dry ingredients and molasses with the pumpkin. Beat the eggs slightly or until just foamy. Add the eggs and then the milk to the pumpkin, mixing well. Pour into the pie shell. Bake at 450 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350 degrees and bake for 30-45 minutes.

Recipe from Clark, Grace Grosvenor. The Best Cookery In The Middle West. Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956.



Big Break

REGIONAL SHORELINE



Big Break's Shoreline Beacon

Big Break is dotted with old sunken vessels, including the shoreline's iconic, once tall-standing A-frame dredge. It guided kayakers to shore, led strolling guests to the waterfront, and posed patiently for countless photographs.

Those scuttled relics must have fascinating histories. What was news the day they were launched? Who commissioned, designed, built, and sailed them? Although the A-frame commanded the most curiosity, beyond a few anecdotes we simply didn't know its story.

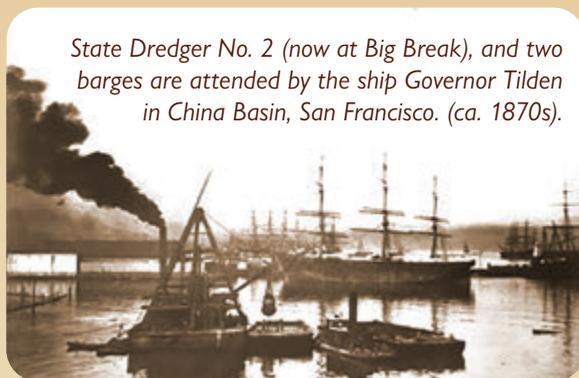
That tale, like so many things here, came to light through a most improbable chain of events! During a September 12, 2013 kayak training, staff heard two loud cracks! Two of the A-frame's four diagonal supports had broken, and the structure now tilted. Though leaning, it held steady into winter.

On a February 27, 2014 bird walk to the pier something seemed different. Something was different! The A-frame had fallen over, coming to rest on its dilapidated deck.

We forwarded the news to the Dutra Museum of Dredging in Rio Vista. In 2017 Museum Director Janet Bennett sent an excerpt from the oral history of Ed Dutra, long-time president of the family dredging business.

"(This) is the State Dredge #2, authorized in 1878 by the (San Francisco) harbor commissioners...By 1928 and 1929 she was owned by the American Dredging Company, renamed the Alcatraz... Captain Pedie was the captain who I was fortunate enough to work under in 1932. Her hull was sold to H.F. Lauritzen ...during World War II. Her hull was sunk in back of Oakley in back of H.F. Lauritzen yard ... what is known as the Big Breaks (sic). She had already been sunk by 1954, how long she had been there I don't know, without a doubt her remains are still there....."

Bring your curiosity to your parks! Any visit may unleash some improbable chain of events leading to yet another discovery!



State Dredger No. 2 (now at Big Break), and two barges are attended by the ship Governor Tilden in China Basin, San Francisco. (ca. 1870s).

Photo courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, San Francisco. Source: *The Tule Breakers: The Story of the California Dredge* by John Thompson and Edward A. Dutra (1983).



A-frame State Dredger No. 2, September 12, 2013.



A-frame State Dredger No. 2, March 2014.

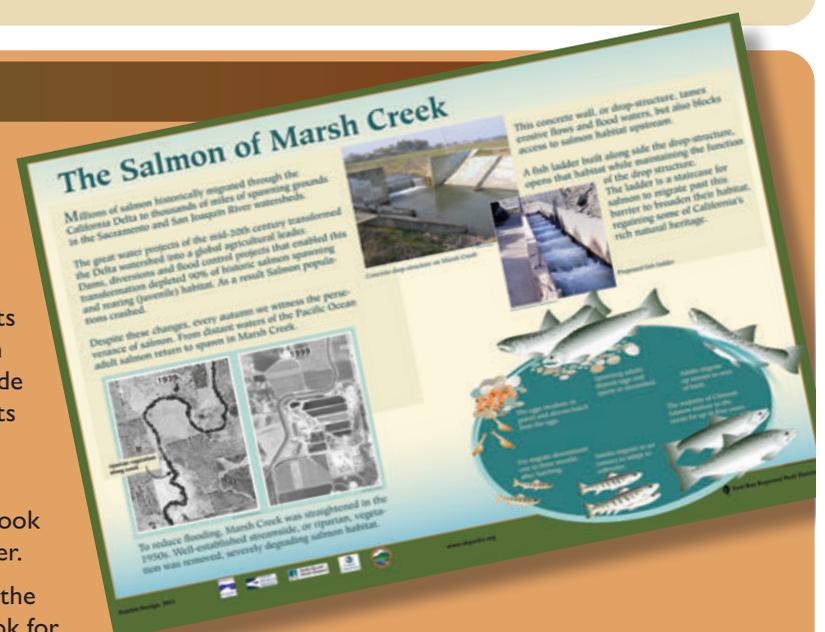
Salmon Season!

Among the many things we celebrate in November and December is migration season! Tiny single songbirds and endless flocks of waterfowl and shorebirds share the skies, fields, woodlands, and wetlands around the Bay and Delta.

Though not as visible, no less spectacular is the upstream migration of salmon from the ocean to rivers and streams along the coast, Bay, Delta, and Central Valley. By coming upstream to spawn (lay and fertilize eggs) and dying soon after, Pacific salmon return nutrients washed from the land into the ocean. Those nutrients feed marine organisms. Salmon in turn eat those organisms during their own ocean journey, and, after dying in inland streams, provide food for everything from raccoons to vultures to eagles. Those animals spread those nutrients around the watershed while leftover decomposing salmon add riches to the stream itself.

Right in our backyard is a seemingly unlikely place to watch these magnificent fish migrate upstream: Marsh Creek, in Oakley and Brentwood. If you're lucky, you can see Fall Run Chinook Salmon by walking along the Marsh Creek Trail after the first rains in November or December.

Check out this interpretive panel that tells the story of Marsh Creek Salmon. It's located on the Marsh Creek Trail between Delta and Sunset Roads in Oakley – one of the best places to look for these fabulous fish!





Black Diamond Mines

REGIONAL PRESERVE



Black Diamond Bingo

Rangers help care for many special things.
How many of these things can you find on your next hike?



Get 3 in a row
to become a well-
fed rattlesnake.



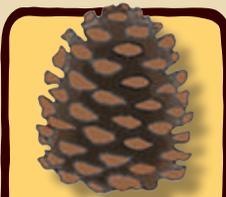
Find 5 spots
to join the
clever coyote pack.

Spot all 8
to show your
owl-like sight.

How wise
are YOU?



Oak Tree



Pine Cone



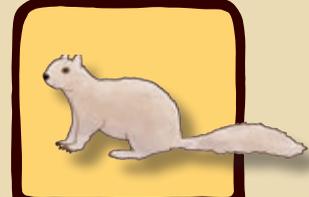
Bird



Rock



Free



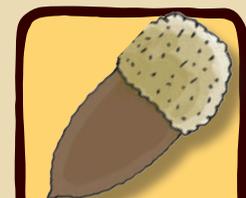
Ground Squirrel



Coal



Park Ranger



Acorn

Martinez Adventure Hike

Adventure into the marsh to discover the secret stories of the shores. Along the flat, one-mile walk you'll unlock stories of hidden history and spectacular wildlife, on your phone, while searching for a sunken ship and clues of untold history. At each location you unlock, a treasure of information and experience will be your reward.



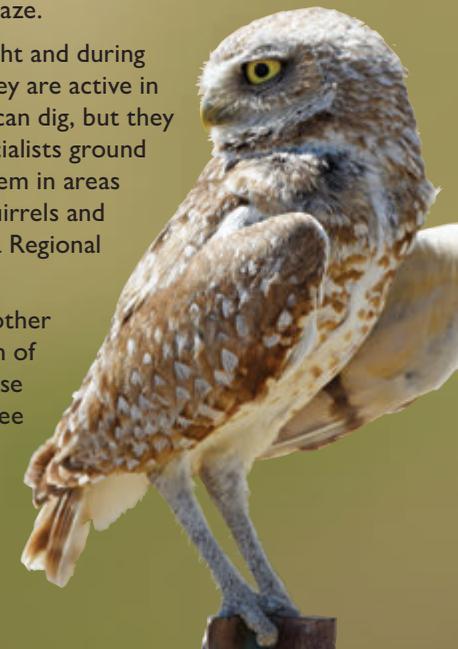
Download the Geocaching Adventure Lab app today in the app store, google play, or through this QR code.

Burrowing Owls

If you have met the burrowing owl, you probably remember when and where you were. This is a small owl that makes a big impression. It is about the same size as a California quail, but its big, powerful wings and thick, strong legs always amaze visitors, as do the size of its eyes and the intensity of its gaze.

Like other owls, they hunt in twilight and during the night, but unlike most owls, they are active in the daytime, too. Burrowing owls can dig, but they would much rather let digging specialists ground squirrels do the work. Look for them in areas where there are lots of ground squirrels and a good lookout spot. Contra Loma Regional Park is a good place to start.

They don't hoot but make lots of other cool sounds, including the imitation of a rattlesnake when you get too close to their underground nest. If you see burrowing owls, watch them from a distance. They are threatened in much of their historical range. In California they are a Species of Special Concern.



Coyote Hills REGIONAL PARK



Ohlone descendant, Mona Garibay, demonstrates how to work with soaproot.



When Monarchs get cranky!

Notable Natives: Soaproot

Native plants hold a special place in the landscape of Coyote Hills. Adaptations to our Mediterranean climate help them thrive, even in times of drought. They support a healthy ecosystem of native insects and animals.

Sharing their stories helps us connect with a long history of people and place. The Ohlone Peoples have called this place home for time immemorial and these plants are an integral part of that history.

One of these plants is soap root. It is the Swiss Army Knife of plants due to its multitude of uses.

In early Spring, the low growing leaves are just starting to emerge. These lovely, wavy-edged leaves can grow up to two feet long! In the early morning, they hold the dew like little jewels. In late Spring, an almost six foot long flower stalk grows. Rejoice when you see the small, white, ephemeral flowers, for they only bloom for a single night and it can take ten years from seed to flower. They are pollinated primarily by native carpenter bees and bumble bees, each needing the other and reinforcing thousands of years of living codependently.

Now, as its name implies, it makes a highly sought-after soap and shampoo, due to chemicals called saponins in the heart of the plant. In addition to allowing a nice sudsy foam to form, these saponins also disrupted the oxygen uptake in fish if many bulbs were smashed and placed in a low-flowing section of a creek. This would stupefy the fish, allowing them to be caught. The effect is reversible so fish not selected for dinner would be allowed to swim on and live another day. Saponins pass easily through our digestive systems, so fish caught this way, and cooked, were not harmful to humans. Before you get any ideas before your next camping trip, however, fishing with poisons, natural or not, is against the law today!

So, as if a wonderful soap, shampoo and fish-catching aid weren't enough, the soap root bulb itself can be eaten and has a sweet taste, but only after being slow-roasted in a pit oven.

But wait, there's more! The tough, hair-like outer fibers are gathered and turned into useful brushes with the handle made out of the bulbs, which turn into a sticky paste when boiled and mashed.

Other uses include medicines like antiseptics, diuretics and laxatives made from the juice of the bulbs.

The Ohlone Peoples, of the past and present, gather these bulbs, gently taking these gifts from the land and leaving behind a landscape that thrives under their knowledgeable touch. Native plants connect us to our past and their survival is the key to our future.



Crab Cove

VISITOR CENTER AND AQUARIUM

Ladybugs, Where Do They Go?



The gardens around Crab Cove are abuzz with insects in summer, including ladybugs. They are a gardener's best friend and an important part of the environment. Over their lifetime of about one year, ladybugs can eat up to 5,000 aphids and other soft-bodied creatures that consume plants. In the warmer months, watch for these attractive beetles around your home and in undeveloped areas as they search for food. Their



larvae, who look like tiny alligators, have just as big an appetite for the same prey. But what happens in the colder months when aphids disappear?

Sometime in early to mid-fall, ladybugs from the Bay Area lowlands seem to fly away with the prevailing winds to the east, settling down in numerous places in the East Bay hills to hibernate. In Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park near the junction of the Stream and Prince Trails, thousands of convergent ladybugs (*Hippodamia convergens*) can often be found huddling together from about late-October to mid-February. They are on objects like bushes, logs, fence posts, and underneath leaves. It is an amazing sight to behold that often brings joy to both kids and adults.



Why do convergent ladybugs come together in such numbers? Possible reasons include:

- ✓ Staying moist and saving energy by hibernating in a cool, damp, and safe location. Cold locations also protect against bacterial and fungal infections.
- ✓ Easily finding mates during warmer periods, especially just before they fly away in February (observe carefully).
- ✓ Protection in numbers — perhaps they are less likely to be eaten when together. Their red color warns predators that they taste yucky,

The hibernating ladybugs have never spent a winter here, so how did they find the same place as previous generations? Perhaps it's instinctual to fly east, and winds may tend to steer them towards certain areas. Pheromones, or scent markers left behind on the ground and possibly in the air, may have attracted them to specific locations.

Fun Facts

- There are about 175 species of ladybugs in California, 5,000 in the world, and they come in many colors.
- Ladybugs can beat their wings about 85 times per second.
- When disturbed, they can emit a toxic, yellow liquid out of their leg joints.
- Ladybugs are actually beetles, not true bugs.

If you want to visit the hibernating beetles, it is a 1.5-mile fairly easy walk one way, up the Stream Trail when starting at the Canyon Meadow Staging Area in Redwood Reinhardt Regional Park. Please respect them by watching from a short distance. Collecting is prohibited, plus they would not survive if taken. For a healthy habitat and to help protect animals like ladybugs, please keep your garden free of pesticides, and consider buying organic food.

For a KQED Deep Look documentary about ladybugs that was partially filmed at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park, go to: kqed.org/science/468582/the-once-in-a-lifetime-ladybug-love-in

Ladybug-Mania: Arts and Crafts

It's that time of the year again: Crab Cove staff celebrates the return of the ladybugs in Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park. Join the fun by making a big beetle bug of your own.

Materials:

- 2 paper plates
- Paint (red and black)
- 1 paper fastener
- Black card stock
- 2 googly eyes
- Black pipe cleaners
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- Elmer's Glue

Instructions:

1. Paint the bottom side of one paper plate black.
2. Cut the other paper plate in half and paint both halves red, bottom side up.
3. Overlap the two red pieces and place them on top of the black circle. Push your paper fastener through.

4. Cut out the head and spots from the black card stock and arrange as desired. Glue on. Or use thumbprints for the dots by dipping finger in black paint and dabbing on.
5. Glue two googly eyes on the head.
6. Cut the pipe cleaner to make two antennae and push them through the head from the front. Twist the end of the pipe cleaner to keep it from coming back through the hole.
7. Cut the pipe cleaner to make six legs and push three on each side of the black plate.



Twist the end of the pipe cleaners to keep it from coming back through the hole.

8. Go celebrate by finding ladybugs around the East Bay Regional Parks!



Winter Water Birds

When summer's heat leaves, winter waterfowl comes to play! The lower lake levels give lots of access to muddy shoreline for water birds to enjoy, and they love all the fish. How many of these beautiful birds have you spotted at Del Valle? Match the bird with their photo!

1. Western Grebe
2. American White Pelican
3. Great Blue Heron
4. Common Goldeneye (male)
5. Common Goldeneye (female)
6. Double-Crested Cormorant

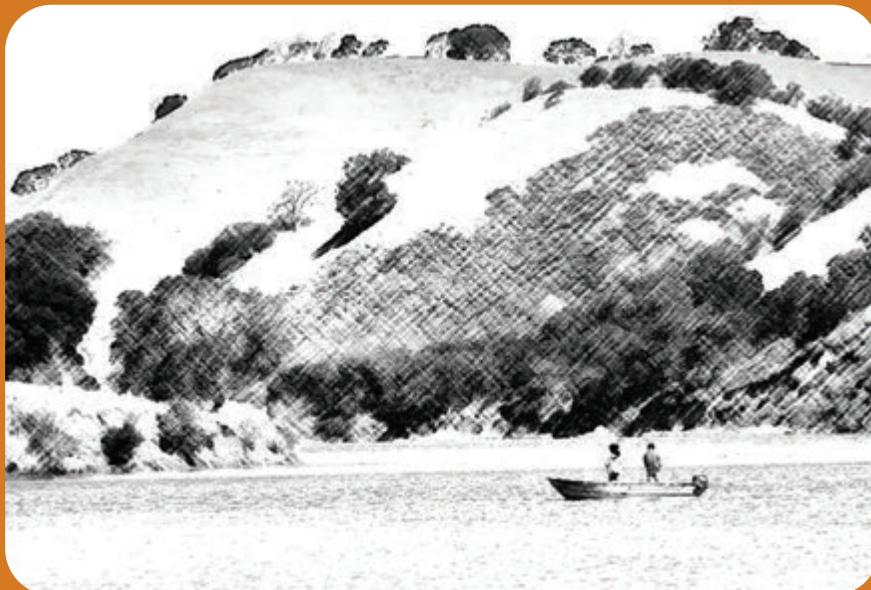


Answers: 1=E, 2=C, 3=A, 4=F, 5=D, 6=B

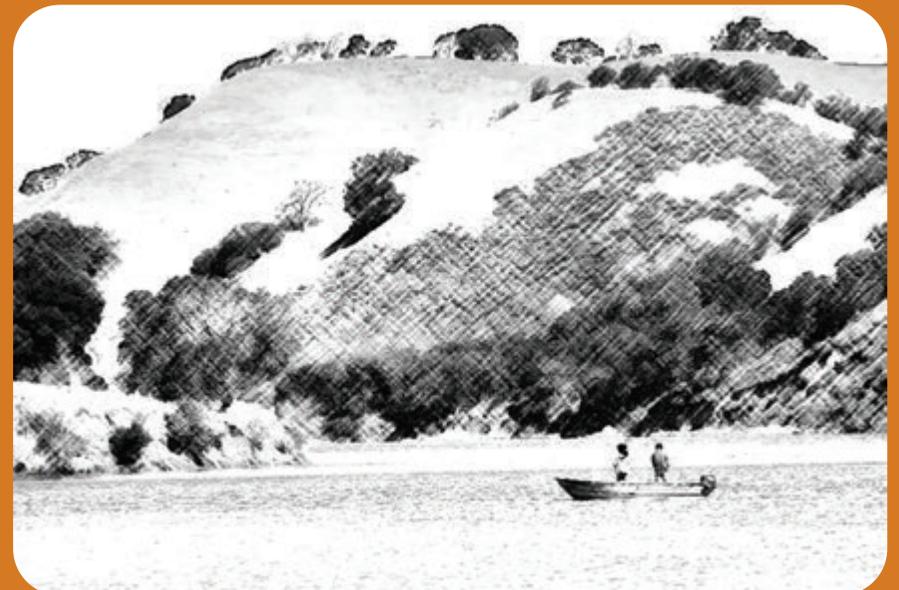
Winter Empty, Summer Plenty – A Coloring Activity

In the summer, the lake is kept full for boating and swimming. In fall, water managers release water through the dam. This gives the lake room to catch winter rains, lessening the risk of floods downstream.

Color in each picture, one side for summer and one side for winter. How will the water change? What color are the hills? Are there different animals visiting? What activities are people enjoying?



Winter



Summer

Mobile Education



Marvels of the First Rain!

Once you hear the pitter-patter of the first rain, make sure to take a look outside to see who's excited for the change in season. All of California's flora and fauna rely on the sustenance water brings to our often-dry state. Some amazing natural wonders happen with that first moisture of the year, and a great long-awaited awakening happens!

Estivating Neighbors

Some creatures have found that the dry, hot summer is way too stressful, and have developed a way to hibernate in the summer! This is called estivation. The majority of the creatures who estivate need water to reproduce and move around. With the first rains, California newts wiggle out of their moist, underground (and under-log) summer homes, and start heading for the ponds and creeks where they were born. Banana slugs estivate too, and when they feel those first raindrops, they "wake up" and begin sliding around the forest again, anticipating fresh mushrooms and easy slippery trails.

Rain Beetles and Termites

Some creative insects have found ways to never really "grow up" until it rains! The rain beetle remains a larva, or adolescent insect, for the majority of its life underground — sometimes up to ten years! — until the time comes to change into an adult. The first rains soften their underground burrows (usually we need at least two inches of rain for this to happen), and they emerge as adults with the purpose of finding a mating partner, flying low in the sky on their search.

Another insect we often see flying during this time is the notorious termite. Often they take flight after a rain, in search of new colonies and some nice soft wood to make new homes in. Most termite species lose their wings once they hit the ground and burrow into wood, ready to munch all winter long.

Both of these species are easy prey for carnivores. A first rain for a hungry fox means dinner is served; oftentimes, it is easy to find fox scat (poop) made entirely of insect bodies during such rains!

Migrating Visitors

It is often said that water brings life, and for migratory animals in California, it literally does! Rain fills marshes, and makes homes for all kinds of waterfowl and migratory birds moving along the Pacific Flyway. When rainwater begins filling creeks and streams, steelhead salmon in the ocean start swimming back to the ponds and creeks where they were born, finding partners to mate and make new babies with.

Flowing Bodies of Sleepy Mycelium

Such mystery lies in sleep under the soil. Mycelium, the living digesting body and moving part of a mushroom, needs water to help it move around. Once rain saturates logs, leaves, trees, and the soil, the party begins! Under different circumstances, when the mood is just right, fungi produce fruiting bodies that we, surface dwellers, call mushrooms. Some mycelium cover acres of soil, and they have been known to pass messages between trees, and to break down pollutants, and even radioactive waste! We should be grateful for these relatives of ours — more closely related to us than plants!

Make Your Own Weather Station

A change in pressure is often a sign of a change in weather. Scientists call the tool that measures pressure a barometer, and you can make one with just a few household items.

What You Need:

- A glass cup or jar
- A big balloon
- Scissors
- Tape or a rubber band
- A small stick or wooden skewer

1. Cut the long end off your balloon so that you have the nice round part left.
2. Stretch the balloon so it fits tight and flat over the mouth of the cup. Use some tape or a rubber band to keep the balloon firmly in place.
3. Tape one end of the stick onto the very middle of the balloon-top. The other end of the stick will jut out straight over the side of the cup.

Take your barometer out on a nice day, not too hot, not too cloudy. Then see what happens to the balloon over the period of a day or two.



When cold air high in the atmosphere pushes down toward the surface, it increases the air pressure. That higher air pressure will push the

balloon into the mouth of the cup, taking the end of the stick with it, and raising the other end into the air. If this happens to your balloon, notice how the weather feels. Often, higher pressure means drier, warmer weather.

When warm air rises up in the atmosphere, it makes clouds and rain, and air pressure decreases. If this happens, the air trapped inside your balloon now has less pressure on it from the outside. Thus, your balloon will bulge at the top, and your stick will bend down.

Outdoor Recreation



Biking Preparedness 101

Know before you go: Basic Bike Check (ABC Quick Check).

A is for **Air**

- Inflate tires to the pressure listed on the side of the tire
- Use a pressure gauge to check pressure
- Check for any tire damage

B is for **Brakes**

- Inspect pads for wear; replace if there is less than 1/4" of pad left
- Check pad adjustment; make sure they do not rub the tire

C is for **Cranks and Chain**

- Pull your cranks away from the bike – if they are loose, tighten the bolt
- Check your that your chain is free of rust and gunk

Quick is for **Q**uick Releases

- Make sure your quick releases are all closed
- They should all be pointing to the back of the bike, so that they don't get caught on anything

Check is for **C**heck Everything Over

Don't Get Stranded

Don't get stranded! Here is a list of quick fix-it items you should carry while biking to and in the parks:

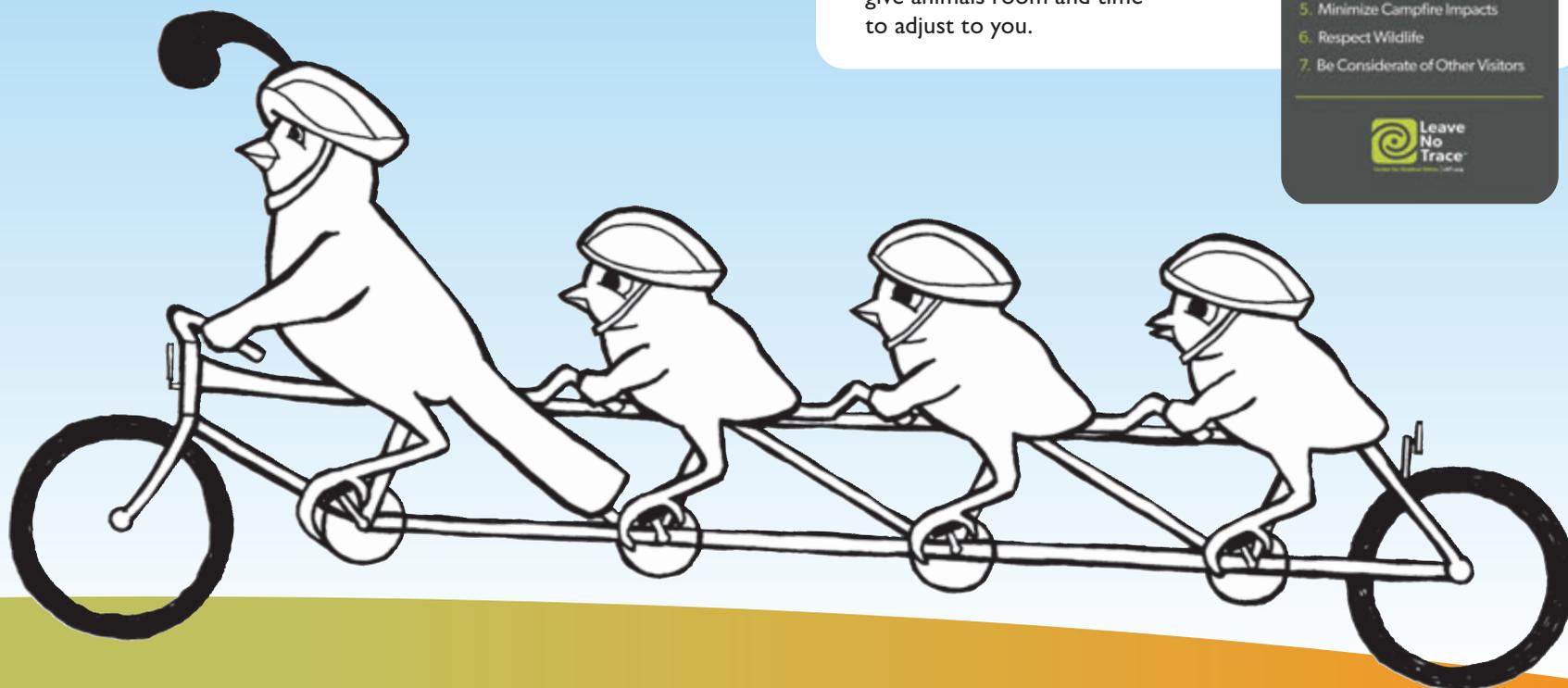
- Spare tube and patch kit
- Tire levers
- Portable air pump or CO2 inflator
- Bike multi-tool

Leave No Trace – Tips When Biking

- Pack out what you pack in.
- Never create new trails.
- Don't cut switchbacks
- Muddy trails are susceptible to damage. Consider another route if trail is soft.
- Never disturb wildlife, domestic animals or cattle. Stay alert and give animals room and time to adjust to you.

THE 7 PRINCIPLES of Leave No Trace

1. Plan Ahead & Prepare
2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors





Sunol Wilderness

REGIONAL PRESERVE

Haiku Nature Poetry

One of the oldest written forms of poetry, Haiku, is traditionally rooted in natural history. As we observe wildlife and watch seasonal changes transform our park, it allows us to make connections with nature before we even put pen to paper.

Winter Haiku

*Oak trees whispering
Creatures burrowed for slumber
Cold air filters in*



Make your Own Haiku!

Think of an observation you've had in nature. Use present tense and words that appeal to the senses to create imagery.

A haiku is traditionally three lines with 17 syllables total:

- 1st line five syllables
- 2nd line seven syllables
- 3rd line five syllables

Submit your haiku to us at visit @ebparks.org by December 12 to be featured on our Facebook page!

Nature-Inspired Yoga

Make your yoga session a bit more 'wild' by trying some of these wildlife and nature-inspired poses! Take a few minutes to enjoy some relaxation with these movements. Be sure to warm up and stretch properly when getting started.



Heron Pose



Frog Pose



Oak Tree Pose



Butterfly Pose



Dusky-footed Woodrats

The full moon of November has been referred to as the Beaver Moon, a time to set your traps before the ponds freeze over. Here in the Tilden Nature Area, the ponds dry up in summer, the climate is mild, and we have no beavers. We do, however, have another slightly less legendary rodent resident: The dusky-footed woodrat. While woodrats do not have the beaver's ability to fell trees, build dams, or create ponds, they do create large, obvious stick-pile homes throughout our woodlands. These large nests (some can be as tall as five feet and as wide as eight feet) provide shelter and a moist microclimate for a variety of other animals too. Snakes, salamanders, frogs, mice, and a host of invertebrate species may share the woodrat's house. One morning, a grey fox was witnessed sleeping on top of a woodrat's home high in a tree. Nothing like inviting one of your predators to a sleepover!

One of the best areas to view woodrat homes is along the boardwalk beside the Wildcat Creek Trail. In spring and summer, the homes are hidden in the dogwood thicket. But in fall, the dogwoods drop their leaves, revealing a great number of woodrat homes, both on the ground and in the trees. Learn more about this hike in the *Winter Walks* section of this page. How many woodrat nests can you count? For more fun woodrat facts, check out this video: [YouTube.com/watch?v=PFM2YBF5hRU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFM2YBF5hRU)



Photo: Lloyd Kahn.com

Chocolate Woodrat Nests

Makes 10 nests

Celebrate our native woodrats with an easy and tasty treat to make at home!

Ingredients

- 2 cups pretzel sticks, broken in half
- 2 tablespoons smooth peanut butter
- 1 ½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup shredded coconut

Steps

1. In a double boiler, melt chocolate chips and peanut butter together. Stir to combine.
2. Add broken pretzels and coconut to the melted chocolate mixture and mix well. Keep the mixture in the double boiler to avoid cooling and thickening.
3. Using two spoons, scoop large dollops of the mixture and form tall "stacks" on parchment paper.
4. Let them cool and enjoy! Store any leftover nests in the fridge.



Winter Walks

Tired of the same old walk? Here are a few ideas for something different to explore while getting out in the parks. These walks are particularly good in the fall and winter with little to no mud!

- **Jewel Lake exploration** – Tilden Nature Area – Enjoy a walk to the lake via the boardwalk, looking for woodrat nests and fall colors along the way. Return on Wildcat Creek Trail (the fire road).
- **South Park Drive** – Tilden Regional Park – South Park Drive closes every year to protect migrating newts, which makes it a great time to get out and explore. You can park at the top along Grizzly Peak Road or the bottom along Wildcat Canyon Road for a walk along the paved road.
- **Point Pinole Regional Shoreline** – This park has it all, from explosive history to expansive Bay views. Check out a map and explore.



Volunteer PROGRAM

East Bay 
Regional Park District

Healthy Parks Healthy People

2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605-0381
ebparks.org

Building Backyard Bird Habitats

Have you ever thought of making your backyard more bird friendly? Backyards, like parks, can provide food, shelter, and habitats for local birds like doves, hummingbirds, finches, jays, and songbirds. Migratory birds like the golden-crowned sparrow, dark-eyed junco and yellow-rumped warbler — and butterflies, damselflies, bees and spiders — also depend on backyards for habitats. Here are some tips from the Golden Gate Audubon Society to make your yard bird friendly:

Photo: Jerry Ting



Chestnut-backed chickadee, Coyote Hills Regional Park

Water: Birds and other wild creatures need water for drinking and bathing. Provide a constant, reliable source of shallow water such as a birdbath, pond or even a dish. Circulating water is best if possible, otherwise change it regularly. Think about keeping birds away from predators — high and open water sources are best.

Food: Use an array of native and non-invasive plants that produce nectar, berries, fruit and seeds throughout the year. Many plants attract beautiful and fascinating butterflies, bees and other insects as well!

Cover: Create cover for birds and wildlife with plant diversity. Keeping a “wild corner” where perennial plants are left alone to grow provides birds shelter and nesting materials. Your wild corner could also contain a brush pile, rocks, dead tree, or hollow log for the same purpose. Though we are tempted to “clean up” our yards, remember that wild lands are not neat and tidy but often tangled with vegetation. Consider allowing a bit of wildness in your yard.

Getting Started:

Spend time in your yard and make observations! Are there already wild creatures using your yard as a habitat? See which shrubs and trees they like. This will help you design a better habitat and connect you to the wildlife we share with our city.

Photo: Jerry Ting



Yellow-rumped warbler, Dry Creek Gardens,
Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Park

Safe Places: Besides the natural shelters mentioned, birdhouses for nesting birds, like wrens, chickadees, and swallows can provide sanctuaries from predators. Birdhouses should be placed away from clear windows to keep birds safe from collisions. Also, consider keeping domestic cats indoors. It is safer for the cats as well as the birds!

Sustainable Garden Practices: The way you garden impacts wildlife in your yard. Native trees and plants typically require less water, pesticides, and fertilizer. Consider removing invasive plants and try to use organic fertilizers and natural pesticides. You can also produce rich soil by composting, and mulching. Remember, chemicals used in your yard end up in the Bay and throughout the food chain!

Now sit back and enjoy the wildlife! As you watch your new feathered neighbors, join a bird count to add to community science data and use one of our handy guides to start identifying birds!

Learn More with the Following Resources:

- Christmas Bird Count: audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count
- February Great Backyard Bird Count: gbbc.birdcount.org/
- Park brochures can be found on the Park District's web page (especially *Common Shorebirds* and *Common Songbirds*) at ebparks.org/activities/naturalists/interpretive_brochures_panels.htm. If you need a printed copy call Volunteer Services at (510) 544-2229 or email Volunteers@EBParks.org