



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

Restoring, Enhancing and Sustaining Forests in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands

Sierra National Forest

Bird Watching Bass Lake Ranger District

Bird watching in the forest can be a delightful vacation experience for the beginner or seasoned bird watcher. You need only keen eyes, a good reference book a note pad, and, for some birds, patience.

The variety of area lakes, waterways and forest settings plus elevations from 900' to 13,000' at the Sierra Crest provides abundant environments for a wide variety of birds for your birding adventure. Many birds are home here, while others are just passing by on their way to Alaska or South America.

You can just watch and enjoy them, listing all the birds you have seen, or try to discover just how different species fit into the jigsaw of animal and plant life in and around the area.

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

Unlike their dinosaur descendants, birds survived because they adapted to changing food sources and environments, developing specialized physical "equipment." Learning these differences can help identify birds and where they might be found.

OBSERVING BIRDS

Feet: The type of feet a bird has can tell you much about where it lives and what it eats.

Talons: for grasping, tearing prey.

Webbed: for paddling in water.

Thin toed: for walking in shoreline and mud.

Sharp toed: for grasping on trees and limbs.

Beaks: Having no teeth, birds swallow their food whole, grinding it up in their stomachs. A bird's beak can give you an idea of what kind and where it finds food.

Meat Tearer: tears its food (Hawks, eagles, kites)

Water Strainer: strains tiny plants and animals (Ducks, geese)

Pouches: scoops up fish from water (Pelicans)

Long/curved: poking short or long distances in shorelines. (Godwits, curlews, alcovets)

Nectar Sipper: for sucking nectar from flowers (Hummingbirds)

Nutcracker: for cracking nuts/seeds or drilling (Woodpeckers, goldfinch)

BIRD LIST

To get you started on your list, here are some varieties that can be found in the forest:

Water Birds: great blue heron, California gull, sandpiper, golden eagle, osprey, American dipper, mallard, Canadian goose

Forest/Meadow Birds: Red-tailed hawk, woodpecker, chickadee, hummingbird, great horned owl, dark-eyed junco, American robin, mountain quail, blue jay, flicker, raven, blackbird

For further information please contact:

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