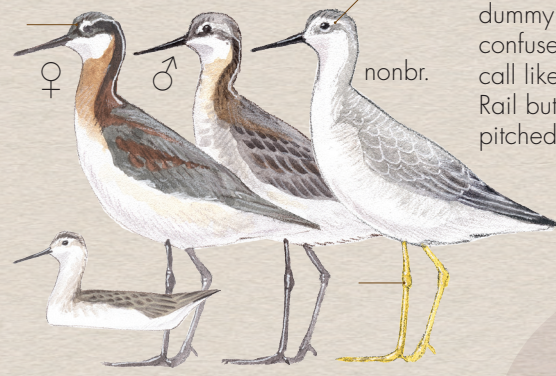


Shorebirds and Wading Birds

While some shorebirds are residents around the bay, others appear in the Winter after breeding further north. In addition, some birds are only seen briefly in the Spring and Fall as they migrate to and from the Arctic and South America. Fall migration begins in late June.

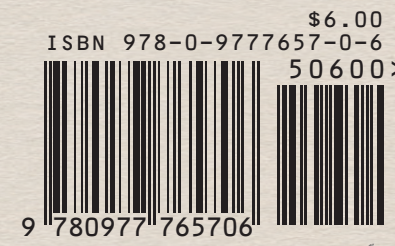
Wilson's Phalarope may spin in the water to bring up food, female brighter than male



Virginia Rail secretive, makes dummy nests to confuse predators call like a Ridgway's Rail but higher pitched



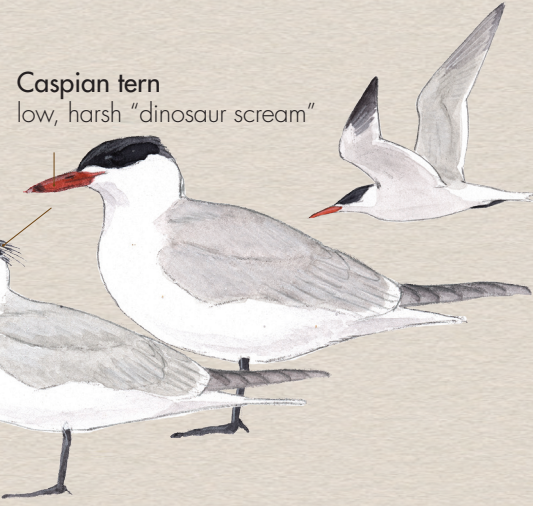
Sora secretive, call a high descending whinny



Elegant Tern high "Kee-arek!" call



Caspian tern low, harsh "dinosaur scream"



Least Tern high "squeaky toy" call



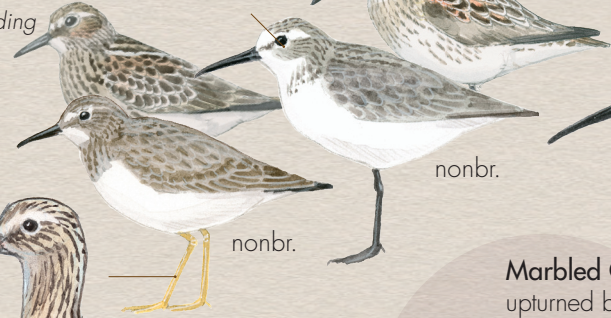
Forster's Tern Single syllable descending call



Western Sandpiper feeds in shallow water and mud



Least Sandpiper feeds in shallow water and mud



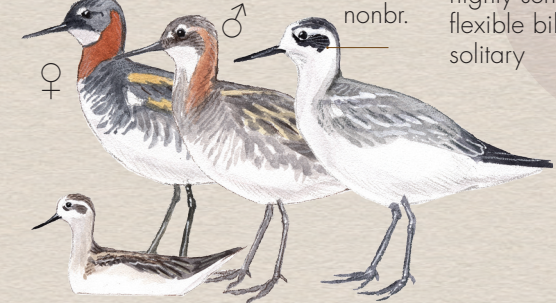
Dunlin feeds in shallow water



Spotted Sandpiper bobs tail



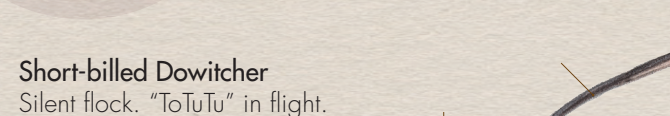
Red Necked Phalarope shallow, salty water



Wilson's Snipe highly sensitive and flexible bill, usually solitary



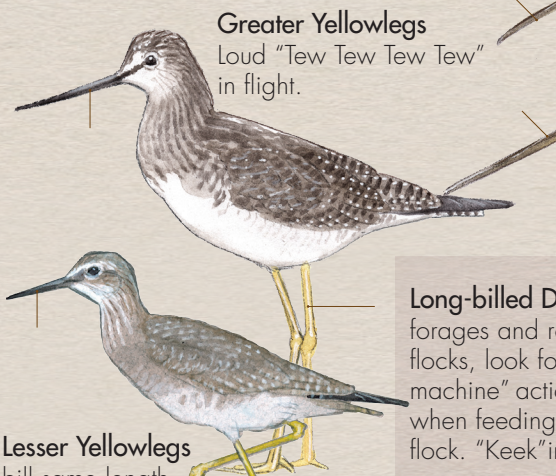
Ridgway's Rail "Kek Kek Kek Kek..."



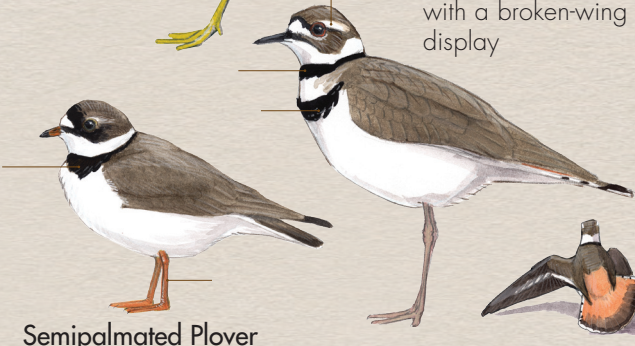
Short-billed Dowitcher Silent flock. "ToTuTu" in flight.



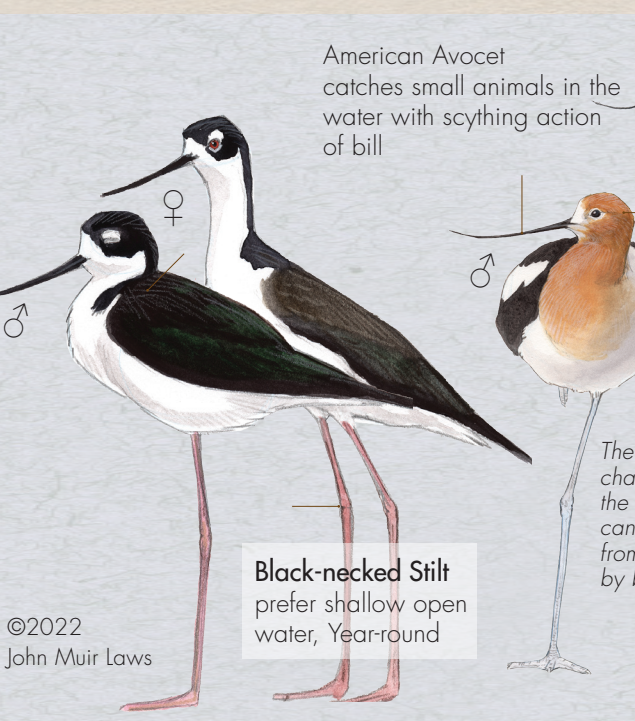
Greater Yellowlegs Loud "Tew Tew Tew Tew" in flight.



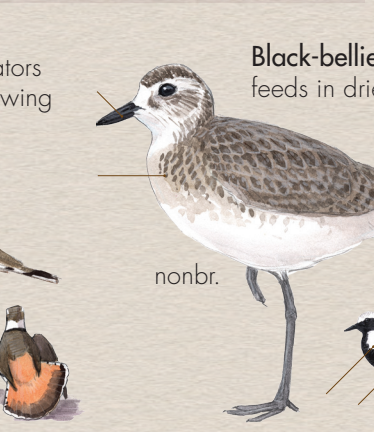
Lesser Yellowlegs bill same length as head. Quiet "tew-tew" in flight.



Semipalmated Plover



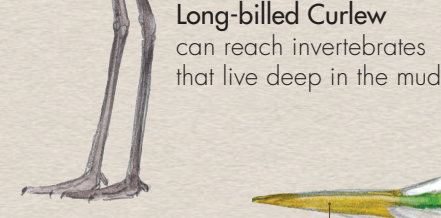
Long-billed Dowitcher forages and roosts in flocks, look for "sewing machine" action of bill when feeding. Chatterly flock. "Keek" in flight.



Whimbrel feeds in soft soil



Long-billed Curlew can reach invertebrates that live deep in the mud



Marbled Godwit upturned bill



Willet high "Kee-arek!" call



Great Egret spears fish and small animals with a thrust of its muscular neck, nests in marshes and trees



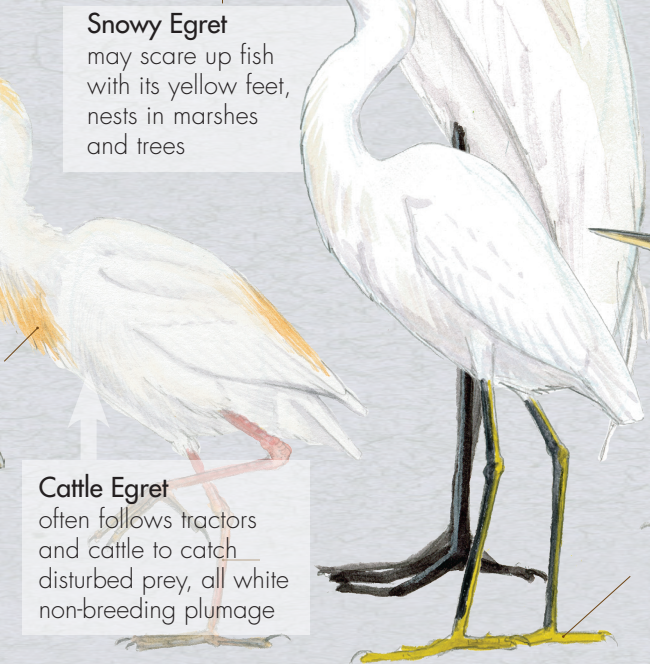
Egrets and herons retract their necks in flight.



Great Blue Heron nests in trees



Snowy Egret may scare up fish with its yellow feet, nests in marshes and trees



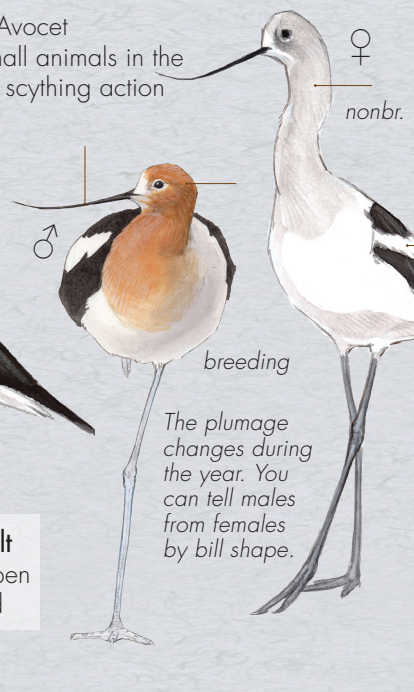
Cattle Egret often follows tractors and cattle to catch disturbed prey, all white non-breeding plumage



Black-crowned Night Heron roosts in trees during the day



Black-necked Stilt prefer shallow open water, Year-round



The Laws Pocket Guide to the BIRDS of

San Francisco Bay Wetlands

A pocket guide to the waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors of salt marshes and wildlife refuges of California's San Francisco Bay



by John Muir Laws and Friends of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge



The San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge at the northernmost end of the San Francisco Bay supports the largest wintering population of canvasbacks on the west coast. Together with the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge in the southernmost end of the estuary, there are 40,000 acres of birding habitats. These lands along with other local and State shoreline parks and reserves provide multiple birding hotspots.

Diving Ducks

Divers inhabit open water, swimming to the bottom to feed on fish, plants, or aquatic invertebrates. Because their feet are placed far to the rear, they must run on the surface to lift off. Prefer open water.

Common Goldeneye
Goldeneyes nest in tree cavities, usually in deep water ponds



Barrow's Goldeneye
may live as long as 18 years, rare and local with Common Goldeneye flocks



Bufflehead
many ducks pair with a new mate each year—not so the loyal little Bufflehead, found in deep and shallow water ponds



Greater Scaup
tend to forage in water less than 7 feet deep.



Lesser Scaup
may "play dead" if caught by a predator, primarily in deep water ponds, with Greater Scaup



Ring-necked Duck
males engage in push fights to establish dominance



Redhead
a nest parasite—female lays her eggs in other duck's nests



Canvasback
no other duck has the canvasback's sloping head and beak profile



Ruddy Duck
diving ducks hold their tails flat on the water when diving and up when resting




Dabbling Ducks

Dabblers tip their bodies in shallow water, feeding from the surface with their tails in the air. With feet placed in the middle of the body, they can lift off straight from the water with a jump. Some species breed in the Bay Area.

Mallard
common, males turn brown in Summer



Northern Shoveler
large bill has baleen-like projections to filter food from the water



American Wigeon
scan large flocks for a rare cinnamon headed Eurasian Wigeon



Cinnamon Teal
Teal are distinctively smaller than other ducks




Green-winged Teal
keep an eye out for the Eurasian Teal that has a white stripe along its back



Blue-winged Teal
watch for head-bobbing and other courtship displays




Surf Scoter
Diving duck, found offshore in salt water



Northern Pintail
long neck helps this bird reach deeper food than other dabblers




Gadwall
may steal food from diving ducks




Duck-like and Long-necked Water Birds

Coots and grebes do not have webbed feet like ducks but instead have lobed toes that help them swim. Grebes are fish eaters and dive to catch their food. Like diving ducks they must run across open water to lift off.


Eared Grebe
fluffs up feathers and orients rump to the sun in cold weather




Pied-billed Grebe
jump-dives or may sink straight down




American Coot
watch for aggressive head-down threats



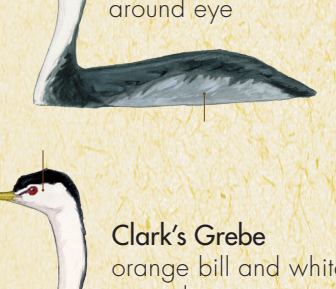
Common Gallinule




Horned Grebe
winter birds have "clean face"




Western Grebe
green bill and black around eye




Clark's Grebe
orange bill and white around eye




Double-crested Cormorant
spreads wings to dry after feeding in the water, nests in trees



Brown Pelican
Summer, Fall, Winter
In spring these birds breed on the Channel Islands and Mexico



American White Pelican
herd fish in a cooperative flock, may be seen soaring far overhead, may hunt in groups, dipping heads at the same time



Geese and Swans

These large waterfowl tip up to reach plants and invertebrates.

Snow Goose
compare the bill shape with Ross's



Ross's Goose
look for the very rare dark "blue" form of Ross and Snow Geese



Canada Goose
found year-round



Great White-fronted Goose
immatures lack white on forehead



Cackling Goose
note small size and small triangular bill



Mute Swan
Introduced from Europe



Tundra Swan
nest in Northern Alaska and Canada, they mate for life, winter visitor



Forest Hawks

These raptors catch songbirds in flight, and can be found in open country.

Cooper's Hawk
a sudden burst of alarm calls may alert you to the presence of this predator



Sharp-shinned Hawk
catches small birds in flight, smaller than Cooper's



Owls

May be found roosting in sheltered spots during the day.

Barn Owl
roosts in tree holes and buildings



Great-horned Owl
roosts in dense trees — may use old Red-tailed Hawk nests



Short-eared Owl
often hunts during the day




Burrowing Owl
small owl, nests in ground squirrel holes




Hawks and Eagles

The abundance of prey species around the bay supports a large population of resident and migratory raptors.


White-tailed Kite
hovers over open fields



American Kestrel
small and fast, may hover




Peregrine Falcon
fast dives to catch birds



Merlin
small & dark




Northern Harrier
flies low over ground on V set wings, immatures have orange-brown underparts



Swainson's Hawk
open fields, wings set in V angle, Spring–Summer, rare in Winter



Red-tailed Hawk
our most common bird of prey




Red-shouldered Hawk
smaller than Red-tailed Hawk often near forested streams



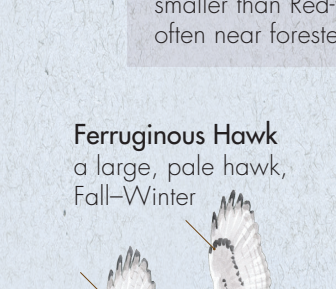
Ferruginous Hawk
a large, pale hawk, Fall–Winter



Osprey
a fish-eating hawk found near open water, nests locally




Rough-legged Hawk
a confusing species with variability within age, sex, and color morph, Fall–Winter




Golden Eagle
juveniles have crisp white spots



Turkey Vulture
feeds on carrion, wings held at V angle



Bald Eagle
juveniles have unkept, blotchy undersides




Sharp-shinned Hawk
catches small birds in flight, smaller than Cooper's



Cooper's Hawk
a sudden burst of alarm calls may alert you to the presence of this predator




Red-shouldered Hawk
smaller than Red-tailed Hawk often near forested streams



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