

## Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

The golden eagle inhabits open country from barren areas to open coniferous forests. They are primarily in hilly and mountainous regions, but also in rugged deserts, on the plains, and in tundra. The golden eagle prefers cliffs and large trees with large horizontal branches for roosting and perching.



Nesting habitat -The golden eagle nests on cliff ledges, preferably overlooking grasslands; 10 to 100 feet (3-30 m) above ground in dead or live trees; in artificial structures; or on the ground. Pairs may use the same nest year after year. In the Coast Ranges of California, the golden eagle nests almost exclusively in trees.

The golden eagle generally forages in open habitats where rabbits and small rodents are available. During the nesting season the golden eagle usually forages within 4.4 miles (7 km) of the nest. Trees, live or dead, are often used for perches if they are near open areas where prey can be easily seen.

Golden eagles are most efficient predators in open areas where winds and thermal updrafts aid flying. They are less efficient where shrub and/or tree cover increases. Abundant shrub cover provides hiding and escape cover for prey. Physical obstructions close to the ground make hunting difficult.

## Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Found in North America at large, Canada geese are the most widely distributed of the wild geese. While they are mainly spring and autumn migrants that travel in V-shaped flocks, often with a fair amount of honking, they winter southward to northern Mexico and are common year-round on Lake Berryessa.



With one brood a season, most nest in northern parts of the U.S. Their nests, usually on the ground at the water's edge, are constructed of twigs, grasses, reeds, and much down. An average of 4-8 white eggs hatch in 28 days, and the young become fledglings in two to three weeks. Like other geese, Canada geese spend more time on land than ducks do. They are strict vegetarians that feed in the water or on the ground on grasses, sedges, and roots of aquatic plants. They also favor grain left in farm fields.

## Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

The western grebe is approximately 22-29 inches (55-73 cm) long, the longest of the grebes. The crown and back of neck are black, the back is brownish-gray, the underparts are white, the inner web of wing quills is white. The neck is long and slender. The female is slightly smaller than the male. The bill is long, greenish-yellow with a dark ridge down the center. The toes are lobed with flattened claws adapted for strong swimming and diving. There is a negligible tail.



The western grebe is a water nesting bird, living in rushy lakes and sloughs. During the winter, bays and oceans are inhabited.

This species is found primarily from southeastern Alaska eastward through south-central British Columbia, south to southern California. This species winters along the Pacific coast from southern British Columbia, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and western and southern Texas south to southern Baja California, northern Guerrero, Puebla, and San Luis Potosi.

The western grebe is carnivorous, eating mostly insects and fish along with some mollusks and crustaceans. They spear fish with their dagger-shaped bills.

## Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Osprey occupy a wide range of habitats near water; primarily lakes, rivers, and coastal waters with adequate supplies of fish. Their nests are generally built within 6-7 miles (9.6-11.2 km) of large lakes or rivers with slow-moving water. Flattened portions of partially broken off snags, trees, rocks, dirt pinnacles, cacti, and numerous man-made structures such as utility poles and duck blinds are used for nests. The nests consist of a large interwoven pile of sticks lined with some soft material such as cedar bark or moss. The area around the nest is generally open, giving the birds clear access when landing. Ponderosa pine in the western United States, tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*) in the eastern United States, and mangroves (*Rhizophora spp.*) in the subtropics are all favored as nest trees for this reason.



Osprey typically nest at the extreme tip of a tree or snag with little or no overhead cover. They prefer tall snags that provide good visibility and security. Osprey also prefer to nest over water for protection against climbing predators. Islands free of mammalian predators allow safe nesting in low trees and even on the ground. Swamps also provide safe nesting.

The osprey diet consists almost entirely of fish, but they will occasionally eat frogs, snakes, ducks, crows, and small mammals. Osprey can penetrate only about 3 feet (1 m) below the water surface. Therefore, they generally catch only surface fish or those that frequent shallow flats and shorelines. Osprey are opportunists. If fish are abundant, accessible, and the right size they seldom go unconsumed. Osprey in western North America often eat suckers, carp, bullhead (*Ictalurus spp.*), and perch (*Perca flavescens*) when nesting near warm shallow lakes or reservoirs, and eat trout when nesting near deeper, colder waters.

## Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*)

The gray squirrel thrives in both urban and rural settings. Mast-bearing hardwood trees are the most important element of squirrel habitat. Mast is any hard fruit such as acorns, beechnuts, and hickory nuts. Other important tree and shrub species provide flowers, buds, fruit, cones and samaras (fruit of the maple tree) in season. Squirrel populations fluctuate with changing yields of mast. When mast is not available, other fruits and berries, flower parts, buds, bark, roots, mushrooms, and animal matter comprise the diet. Variety in tree species is essential for habitat stability. Den trees are essential to squirrels for winter shelter, escape cover, and rearing of young.



Natural den activities begin to appear in 40-50 year old trees. Although leaf nests are also used, the survival rate of young is 40% lower in leaf nests compared to cavities. Frequently squirrels will claim 2 or 3 dens at the same time. Moderate to dense ground cover near den trees is preferred for cover and concealment. On the average, about half of the den cavities identifiable from the ground are suitable for raising young. Optimal habitat has 2 to 3 suitable cavities per acre.

While gray squirrels frequently use open water when available, daily needs can be satisfied from other sources such as dew and succulent plant material. Lack of surface water is not a limiting factor in squirrel habitat. The home range of the gray squirrels varies from 1.5 to 8 acres and is usually smaller where populations are high.

Populations develop social hierarchies or "pecking orders" influenced by age and sex of the animals. Dominant animals usually have larger home ranges.

PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE SQUIRRELS as they become habituated, or become used to human food and then lose their ability to forage on their own. This causes a pest problem in park areas.

## Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)

Skunks are characterized by their black and white fur. They have small heads and eyes, pointed snouts, and short legs. Skunks are slow-moving nocturnal animals, poor climbers, and excellent diggers.



The specific species are characterized by their markings. There are four species in North America. There is the striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) marked by two wide white stripes on its back that meet at its head. There is also the spotted skunk (*M. macroura*), hooded skunk (*Spilogale putorius*), and hog nosed skunk (*Conepatus mesoleucus*).

In the wild, skunks live in semi-open country, bushlands, and in locations with a water supply within two miles. In urban areas they live beneath buildings, decks, dumps, and woodpiles.

Human Interaction Issues:

- Skunks get into the garbage
- They carry several diseases including:
  - Folease
  - Rabies
  - Tuberculosis
  - Canine and feline distemper

## Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

Of all the furbearers in California, the raccoon is probably the best known. The blackmasked face and ringed tail have been popularized in children's books and animated cartoons until even the youngest recognizes it.



A huskily built animal, the average raccoon weighs from 10-16 pounds. The color of its coarse, shaggy fur is generally gray with a light shading of brown on the flanks. The black guard hairs give it a blackish appearance on its back and the back of its head. Its tail is round and heavily furred; and it is pale brown with black rings.

Its feet are bare on their bottoms and the long, slender "fingers" on its front feet are used with great dexterity in searching for, and grasping small objects. Its hind feet have a large surface that allows the raccoon to balance easily on its hind feet while using both "hands" for feeling, or catching or holding food. A peculiar characteristic is the raccoon's habit of washing its food, if water is available.

The raccoon is a nocturnal animal, seldom moving around in daylight. Tracks in the mud and in the dust of dry trails reveal that it is quite common in areas where it is seldom seen.

The raccoon is normally associated near water, but in late summer and fall it may wander far in search of seasonal foods. It is a meat eater, yet has the most varied diet of any of the furbearers.



# RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

## Lake Berryessa offers a multitude of wildlife viewing opportunities for the general public.

The Lake Berryessa Wildlife Management Area, a 2,000 acre preserve along the eastside of the lake, is set aside to restore, enhance, and protect the fish and wildlife resources of the area. The area is managed cooperatively by Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Game. Besides protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife, the partnership provides wildlife viewing opportunities and environmental education for the public. These are just a few of the many wildlife species one may encounter in and around the Lake Berryessa recreation area.

### Watchable Wildlife at Lake Berryessa



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid-Pacific Region

### Black-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*)

The black-tailed deer is found only along the coastal mountain region (from Queen Charlottes in British Columbia south to California). These deer prefer grassy fields at forest edges, recently burned or logged-over areas (where the bracken fern grows quickly). They are mammals that belong to the Order Artiodactyla which is characterized by a 4-chambered stomach, molars, and toes that form hooves. Most of these are herbivores that have cartilage front upper teeth.



Columbia black-tails are considered by many experts to be a sub-species of mule deer. They share many similarities but are much smaller than a mule deer and their ears are smaller too. The ranges of the two sub-species overlap in a few places.

They are called black-tailed deer because the bottom two thirds of the tail is black. Up higher, where the tail is attached, the fur is brown and under the tail is whitish. The general body color is reddish to greying-brown (with black hairs interspersed in winter) and the underside of belly, chin, neck patch are white.

The brownish color camouflages the deer in the forest and field edges where it lives.

### Mountain Lion (*Felis concolor*)

About half of California is prime mountain lion country. This fact is a surprise to many residents and visitors. These large, powerful predators have always lived here, preying on deer and other wildlife, and playing an important role in the ecosystem.



Mountain lion habitat is essentially the same as that of their primary prey. Within this habitat, mountain lions tend to prefer rocky cliffs, ledges, vegetated ridgetops, or other areas that provide cover for undetected surveillance of prey. Stream courses and ridgetops are frequently used as travel corridors and hunting routes. Riparian vegetation along streams provides cover for mountain lions traveling in open areas. In rough terrain, mountain lion dens are usually located in a shallow nook on the face of a cliff or rock outcrop. In less mountainous areas, dens are located in dense thickets or under fallen logs. Little bedding is used in dens. Females may use the same den for several years.

The home range consists of a first-order home area, used primarily for resting, and a much larger area used for hunting. Home ranges are maintained by resident mountain lions but not transient mountain lions. Mountain lions are capable of covering large distances in short periods of time.

The best stalking cover for mountain lions is thick enough to remain hidden, and sparse enough for them to see their prey. Mountain lions commonly use terrain such as steep canyons, rock outcroppings, boulders, or vegetation such as dense brush to remain hidden while stalking.

### Western Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*)

Western rattlesnakes are an average of 40-60 inches in length, and have a triangular head and a brownish-green or tan body with dark brown bands. It is not uncommon to encounter snakes while in the outdoors. What is uncommon is for people to react calmly to the presence of a snake. Most people fear snakes because they do not understand them or their importance in the natural world. While a few species are potentially dangerous to humans, all are creatures that form vital links in their ecosystems as highly efficient predators of rodents. Common sense is the best protection against dangerous species when afield: watch where you place your hands, where you place your feet, and where you sit. Snakes are most common in rocky areas and are most likely to be found underneath the rocks, and along ledges maintaining their body temperature cooling during the day and warming at night.



If you find a snake LEAVE IT ALONE! Purchase a field guide for identification of the various species. Enjoy the outdoors by learning more about these fascinating animals.

### Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

The great blue heron is long-legged and has a very sharp beak which helps it to catch aquatic animals. It's a very large bird with a wingspan of over 5 feet. The great blue heron has a blue body, a reddish-brown neck, and sometimes white or blue splotches near its eyes. It also has black feathers that start at its forehead extend past head.



Great blue herons live near lakes, ponds and marshes. There are said to be 13 different species in North America.

The great blue heron is very clever when it comes to getting food. It stands in the shallows of a lake, stream, or pond, and waits motionless until its prey comes close enough to snatch with its beak. Its food supply consists of fish, frogs, and small mammals.

During the breeding season the great blue heron is at its most elegant, with long feathers on its back and short feathers on its neck that ruffle in the breeze. Lake Berryessa supports a breeding rookery of great blue herons.

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