

# Birds

Of all the wild animals inhabiting California, birds are some of the most active and visible. Birds are found everywhere, from the top of Mount Whitney to the bottom of Death Valley, and from the middle of our most populated cities to the most remote wild places. Birds use every available habitat here, including the Pacific Ocean, lakes and rivers, forests and woodlands, grasslands, agricultural lands, and deserts.

California has higher bird diversity than any other state in the nation, with more than 660 native species known to occur in California at some point during their life cycle (CBRC 2020). California has two species found nowhere else in the world—Island Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma insularis*) and Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nuttalli*). Seven additional species are nearly confined to California—Ashy Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma homochroa*), Nuttall’s Woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttalli*), Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), Wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*), California Thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*), Lawrence’s Goldfinch (*Spinus lawrencei*), and Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*). Until its recent release near Arizona’s Grand Canyon and to Baja California, California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) was confined to this state.



California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)



California Thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*)

Additionally, there are numerous subspecies found only in California. California’s large size, varied topography, mild climate, and habitat diversity are responsible for the state’s uniquely rich bird life.

Birds are often categorized by whether they migrate or not. About one quarter of California’s native bird species are



Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*)

known as residents because they remain here all year and do not migrate. Between one third and one half of the state’s birds are regularly occurring migrants. These include species that migrate to California to breed in the summer, species that migrate to spend the winter in California, and species that only pass through during spring or fall migrations. Finally, about one third are known as vagrants because they do not occur here regularly—their migratory routes are normally outside of California.

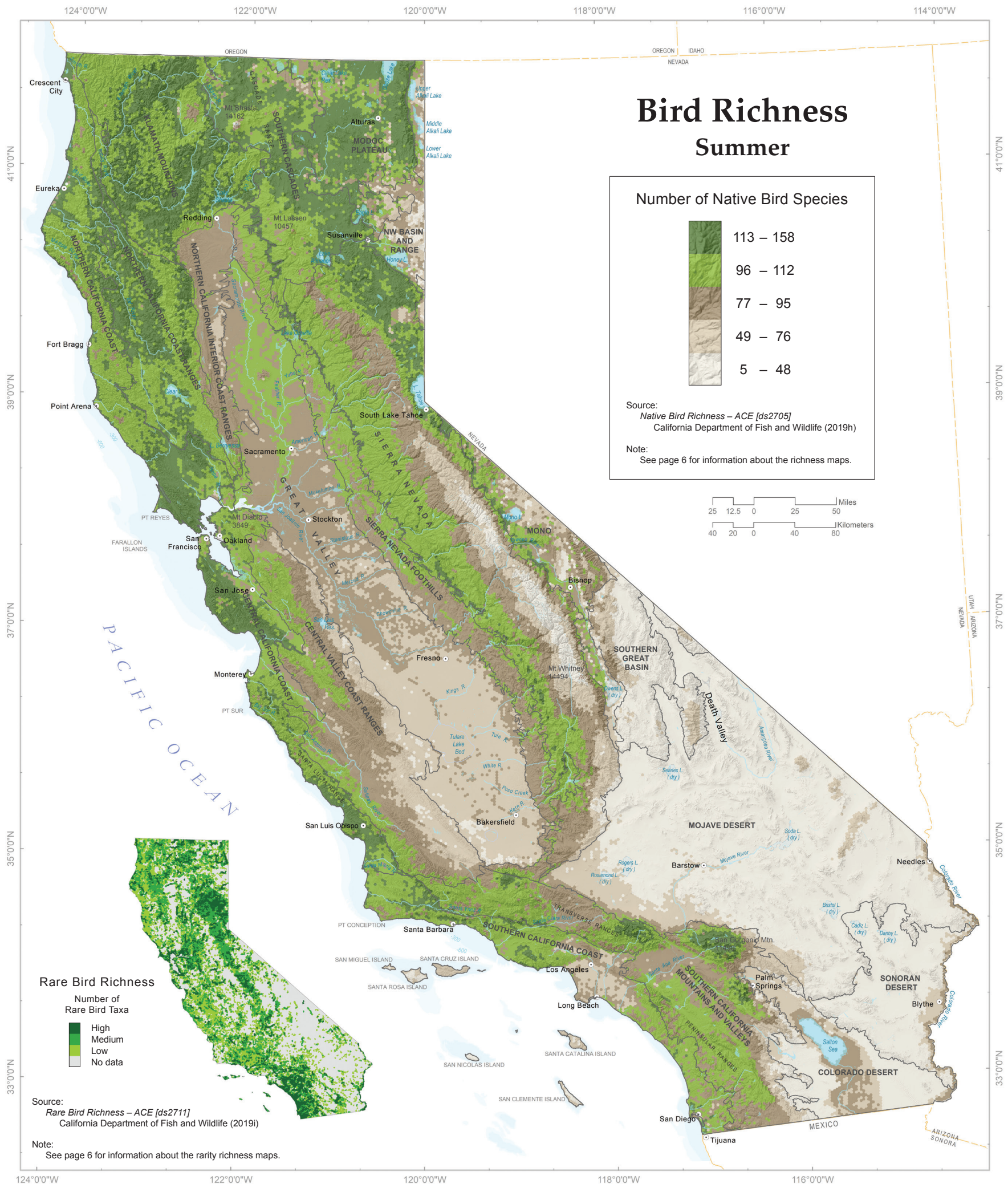
## Summer

Summer bird species richness includes residents and migrant breeders. The greatest number of breeding species occurs in the woodlands and forests of Northern California, the coastal regions, and the Sierra Nevada and other mountains. In areas richest in breeding species, a large proportion of species are migrants. Fewer species breed in the arid desert regions, high elevation mountain zones, and the Great Valley. However, these areas of low species richness are important because they support a high proportion of species with restricted ranges. In the desert regions, these include resident species like Gambel’s Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*), Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*), and Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*), and rare migrant breeders like Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*), Bendire’s Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*), and Lucy’s Warbler (*Leiothlypis luciae*).



Male Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) in a triticale grain field  
CDFW Photo: Matt Meshriy

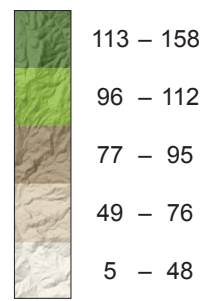




# Bird Richness

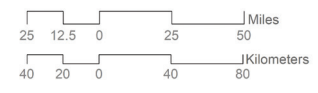
## Summer

Number of Native Bird Species



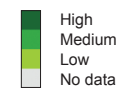
Source:  
Native Bird Richness – ACE [ds2705]  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (2019h)

Note:  
See page 6 for information about the richness maps.



### Rare Bird Richness

Number of Rare Bird Taxa



Source:  
Rare Bird Richness – ACE [ds2711]  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (2019i)

Note:  
See page 6 for information about the rarity richness maps.