

Bird Sounds, Fall, 2020, Part Two

Less Common Birds

Birds that are more likely to be found in rural parks and wildlands than in suburbs and city parks

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Most of the text about sounds was taken verbatim from Cornell's www.allaboutbirds.org. I've added some comments in [brackets]. The Audubon Climate Status info was adapted from Audubon's "Survival by Degrees" study: https://nas-national-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/briefs_ca_final.pdf. Songs are shown first unless calls are more common in the Bay Area.

Purple Finch

Haemorhous purpureus

Family: Fringillidae (Finches)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 402

Bay Area Status: Year-round resident

Audubon climate status: Moderately Vulnerable

Male/Female



Wendy Hogan, Macaulay Lib.



Scott Martin, Macaulay Lib.

Songs

Males sing three kinds of songs, all including the rich, slurred warbling characteristic of finch songs. There's the "warbling song," a fast, rising and falling string of 6-23 notes often sung while flocking. Males usually sing a "territory song" alone; it begins with a few notes on the same pitch before breaking into warbling and ending with a high, emphatic note. The third is an up-and-down cadence of 2-5 notes that sounds similar to a Red-eyed Vireo's whistled hear-me?-see-me?-here-i-am. Females sing their own songs, a long 1-2 minute warbling from the nest.

Calls

Typical call note is a short, low tek.

American Goldfinch

Spinus tristis

Family:

Fringillidae (Finches)

Pieplow Guide Page No.:

407

Bay Area Status:

Year-round resident

Male/Female



Adam Jackson, Macaulay Lib.



Matt Davis, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status:

Moderately Vulnerable

Songs

Males sing a long and variable series of twitters and warbles that can be several seconds long. The notes and phrases are variable and repeated in a seemingly random order. Birds continue to learn song patterns throughout life.

Calls

The American Goldfinch's most common call is its contact call, often given in flight. It sounds like the bird is quietly saying po-ta-to-chip with a very even cadence. Birds sometimes give harsh threat calls when in feeding flocks or at the nest. Males make a tee-yee courtship call upon landing near a female in spring or early summer, often followed by a burst of song. Females brooding nestlings make a rapid sequence of high notes when they hear their mate approaching with food. Birds at their nest make a loud, two-parted bay-bee call if they feel threatened.

Pine Siskin

Spinus pinus

Family:

Fringillidae (Finches)

Pieplow Guide Page No.:

406

Bay Area Status:

Coast: Year-round resident
Inland: Mainly winter

Male/Female



Douglas Faulder, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status:

Breeding Territory Moderately Vulnerable

Songs Males string together husky, whispering trills, slurs, and short ascending notes into songs lasting 3–13 seconds. Songs are generally more nasal or wheezy than those of other finches. Song phrases are sometimes punctuated by "watch-winding" or "churry" notes (see Calls Description). Adult males can continue to add songs to their repertoires.

Calls Pine Siskin flocks are constantly atwitter with wheezy contact calls while feeding or in flight. Their most recognizable call is a "watch-winding" note, a harsh, upsweeping zreeeeeet lasting most of a second, tossed in amidst shorter calls. They utter a distinctive flight call, an explosive zwee or psee that initiates startled flight. In flight, a tit-a-tit call often accompanies each flap-and-glide undulation. A single siskin can call back the flock with a solitary note. Females solicit copulation by uttering soft calls while bowing and fluttering tail and wing feathers. The female solicits feeding from the male with a low twittering call that carries well through the trees.

In Size Order, Largest to Smallest →

White-breasted Nuthatch



Red-breasted Nuthatch



Pygmy Nuthatch



Brown Creeper



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Sitta canadensis

Family: Sittidae (nuthatches)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 341

Bay Area Status: Resident but scarce in summer except in Oakland hills

Audubon climate status: Moderately Vulnerable

Adult Male



Scott Martin, Macaulay Lib.

Songs

Red-breasted Nuthatches sing a fast series of nasal, hornlike notes that sound like yank-yank. Songs can have 6 or more of these notes each, and the songs themselves can be repeated up to 16 times per minute. It's unmated males that sing this most frequently. Males and females sometimes sing a similar but slower and harsher version of this song when they are defending their territory.

Calls

The yank note can also be given as a call by both sexes (though more often by the male) as a way of communicating between the pair. This note can be sped up until it sounds like a vibrating trill, typically given from near the nest just at the end of nest excavation or beginning of egg-laying. During confrontations, chases or copulation, nuthatches may make a phew call, and agitated birds sometimes make a wrenlike scolding call.

White-breasted Nuthatch

Sitta carolinensis

Family: Sittidae (nuthatches)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 342

Bay Area Status: Resident

Audubon climate status: Moderately Vulnerable

Adult Male



Ryan Schain, Macaulay Lib.

Calls

The White-breasted Nuthatch's most common call is a loud, nasal yank often repeated a few times in a row. Both sexes make this call, and it often has a more trembling, almost bleating quality, than either the bird's song or the Red-breasted Nuthatch's call. When looking for food, males and females exchange a soft yink.

Songs

Male White-breasted Nuthatches sing in late winter and spring, a rapid, nasal, fairly low-pitched wha-wha-wha that lasts 2-3 seconds. It's made up of a half-dozen to a dozen nearly identical notes. Males sing these songs at two rates, with the faster version packing in twice as many notes in the same amount of time. The fast version is thought to be the main one used for mate attraction.

Pygmy Nuthatch

Sitta pygmaea

Family:

Sittidae (nuthatches)

Pieplow Guide Page No.:

345

Bay Area Status:

Resident

Audubon climate status:

Highly Vulnerable

Adult



Gordon Karre, Macaulay Lib.

Calls

The most frequent call is a shrill, staccato piping, sounding a bit like Morse code or a rubber ducky being repeatedly squeezed. Pygmy Nuthatches also have other calls, including titters and high-pitched trills, which combine in a large flock to create a steady, conversation-like chattering.

Songs

As in other nuthatch species, there is no concrete division between songs and calls. The Pygmy Nuthatch's song is a continuous repetition of its "piping" call, lasting for more than 2 minutes.

Brown Creeper

Certhia americana

Family: Certhiidae (treecreepers)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 346

Bay Area Status: Resident

Audubon climate status: **Moderately Vulnerable**

Adult



David Turgeon, Macaulay Lib.

Songs

Only the male sings, and usually only on the breeding grounds, though sometimes during migration as well. His song is a jumble of high (8 KHz), thin notes that lasts up to 1.5 seconds. It's sometimes likened to singing the phrase trees, beautiful trees. Creepers may join single songs together two or three times in a row. Although the delicate song carries well through the woods the thin, high notes can be easily missed.

Calls

Males and females make high, wavering call notes that sound like a small chain being dropped into a heap; these notes are noticeably longer than the very short call notes of many other birds. Creepers give these calls all year long and especially while foraging. Their calls can be hard to distinguish from the calls of Golden-crowned Kinglets. They use other variations of calls during flight, courtship chases, courtship feeding rituals, and aggressive interactions.

Red-winged Blackbird

Agelaius phoeniceus

Family: Icteridae ("Troupials," blackbirds, orioles)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 470

Bay Area Status: Year-round but nomadic

Audubon climate status: Neutral

Male (bicolored)/Female



Steve Kelling, Macaulay Lib.



David Trescak, Macaulay Lib.

Songs

The male Red-winged Blackbird's conk-la-ree! is a classic sound of wetlands across the continent. The 1-second song starts with an abrupt note that turns into a musical trill. Males often sing from a high perch while leaning forward, drooping their wings, spreading their tail feathers, and fluffing their bright shoulder patches to show them off. Females give a very different song in response to a singing male, a series of three to five short chit or check notes.

Calls

The typical call of a Red-winged Blackbird is a distinctive, matter-of-fact check that's fairly easy to recognize. Males and females make these calls all year round, in flight and while feeding, when confronting rivals and to raise an alarm. They also give a more intense alarm call, a fast, scolding chak chak chak.

Brewer's Blackbird

Euphagus cyanocephalus

Family: Icteridae ("Troupials," blackbirds, orioles)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 477

Bay Area Status:

Year-round

Mark Ludwig, Macaulay Lib.

Shawn Billerman, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status:

Neutral

Male/Female



Songs

Both males and females sing two kinds of rather rudimentary songs. The first is a shrill, rising squee that lasts about 0.8 second, with a metallic sound. It's reminiscent of the ree part of the Red-winged Blackbird's conk-la-ree call. The second song is a nonmusical rushing gurgle, also lasting less than a second.

Calls

Brewer's Blackbirds often make a tchup or chuk similar to the calls of other blackbirds, and used in a manner scientists have called "conversational in nature." A more intense, slightly higher pitched version of this call is used as an alarm, to chase off intruders, and when carrying food for young. Males make a clear, descending whistle, about 0.5 second long, when they sight hawks or large birds. Quarreling females chatter at each other with a kit-tit-tit-tit call.

Western Meadowlark

Sturnella neglecta

Family: Icteridae (blackbirds, "troupials")

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 473

Bay Area Status: Mainly winter (summer breeders in eastern parts of counties)

Audubon climate status: **Low Risk**

Adult



Susan Disher, Macaulay Lib.

Songs Male Western Meadowlarks have a complex, two-phrase "primary" song that begins with 1–6 pure whistles and descends to a series of 1–5 gurgling warbles. Males develop a repertoire of up to a dozen songs, and may switch the songs they sing in response to an intruder. When chasing competing males or responsive females, male Western Meadowlarks give a hurried, excited "flight song" of short-spaced whistles and warbles. Although Western Meadowlarks seldom sing more than 10–12 songs, their eastern counterparts exhibit a much larger repertoire of 50–100 song variations.

Calls The Western Meadowlark's most common call is a low, bell-like pluk or chupp which they use when disturbed and during courtship and territorial displays. Female Western Meadowlarks also give a soft rattle during courtship and egg laying, as well as a low intensity tee-tee-tee when building the nest and laying eggs. For their first few weeks after leaving the nest, young birds give a simple, high-pitched location call, which is replaced by a weet note once the birds are independent. Adults use the weet note when migrating.

California Thrasher

Toxostoma redivivum

Family: Mimidae (thrashers, mockingbirds)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 382

Bay Area Status: Year-round

Audubon climate status: **Vulnerable**

Adult



Joan Tisdale, Macaulay Lib.

Songs

Males sing a series of twice-repeated phrases with 2–3 syllables each, usually with a sweet quality [Sweet? They always sound harsh and mechanical to me.], often including imitations of other bird species around them, including California Quail, Wrentit, California Scrub-Jay, Bewick's Wren, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Spotted Towhee, and Lesser Goldfinch. Females sometimes join males in song, and their songs are of similar type and volume.

Calls

Both sexes give a low chup call that is often heard, as well as a rising churreep and harsher chak.

Wrentit

Chamaea fasciata

Family: Silviidae (sylviid warblers)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 365

Bay Area Status: Year-round

Audubon climate status: **Vulnerable**

Adult



DigiBirdTrek, Macaulay Lib.

Songs

Wrentits sing a distinctive song reminiscent of a ball bouncing that lasts for about 4 seconds. In males this starts out as 3 to 5 pits followed by an accelerating trill; the ball bounces away. Females also sing but they catch the ball and sing only 3 to 14 pits without the accelerating trill. Both sexes sing at all hours of the day, all year long, although they are more vocal within the first hour after sunrise and early in the breeding season.

Calls

Wrentits give a churring call which sounds similar to someone rolling their r's. Wrentits give louder more emphatic calls when scolding a predator or intruder.

Western Bluebird

Sialia mexicana

Family: Turdidae (thrushes)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 368

Bay Area Status: Year-round resident

Audubon climate status: Moderately to Highly Vulnerable

Male/Female



Brooke Miller, Macaulay Lib.



Erica Rutherford, Macaulay Lib.

Songs

Western Bluebird songs tend to be a string of various call notes, particularly the kew note (sounds like a muffled sneeze) along with other stuttering or whistled notes. The result is a soft, hesitant song that can last 1-2 seconds.

Calls

The most common call is a soft, quavering kew that may be given from a perch or in flight and is often given several times in succession. They also make a harsher, double-noted che-check when changing position and a chattering call when disturbed.

Other Sounds

Western Bluebirds clap their bill mandibles together in aggressive situations, making a clicking sound.

Cedar Waxwing

Bombycilla cedrorum

Adult



Family: Bombycillidae (waxwings)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 390

Bay Area Status: Winter resident

Ian Davies, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status: Little Concern

Calls

Cedar Waxwings have two common calls: a high-pitched, trilled bzee and a sighing whistle, about a half-second long, often rising in pitch at the beginning. Cedar Waxwings call often, especially in flight.

Songs

None.

House Wren

Troglodytes aedon

Family:

Troglodytidae (wrens)

Pieplow Guide Page No.:

349

Bay Area Status:

Mainly summer; a few
overwinter

Adult



Andy Witchger, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status:

Moderately Vulnerable

Songs

Both males and females sing. Males often sing 9-11 times per minute during breeding season. Songs are a long, jumbled bubbling introduced by abrupt churrs and scolds and made up of 12-16 recognizable syllables. Females sing mainly in answer to their mates shortly after pairing up; their songs can include high-pitched squeals unlike any sounds males make.

Calls

House Wrens make a variety of harsh sounds: churrs, chatters, rattles, and scolds, often in response to large animals that might be predators. For this reason, they can often be coaxed into view with squeaks or pishing sounds. [IMO, the most obvious call is what Pieplow terms "Beert." It sounds like someone blowing a "raspberry."]

Other Sounds

Adults may snap beaks softly while harassing predators near the nest.

Pacific Wren

Troglodytes pacificus

Adult

Family: Troglodytidae (wrens)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 348



Bay Area Status: Year round
Cameron Eckert, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status: Low Vulnerability

Songs

Their song is a sweet series of tumbling, trilling notes with a staccato quality. Pacific Wrens have a large catalog of complex songs. Males sing for 5 to 10 seconds, stringing together as many as 50 different phrases. They sing regularly during the breeding season from mid-April to August but irregularly during the nonbreeding season.

Calls

Male and female Pacific Wrens give one sharp check call similar to the call of a Wilson's Warbler [which may be found in the same habitat].

Orange-crowned Warbler

Leiothlypis celata

Family:

Parulidae (New World warblers)

Pieplow Guide Page No.:

492

Bay Area Status:

Year-round (but relatively few in winter)

Adult



Blair Dudeck, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status:

Vulnerable on breeding grounds

Calls

The Orange-crowned Warbler call is a simple, sharp, high-pitched chip, distinctive from that of other warblers. Males and females give the call when foraging, and females call when flushed from the nest or when the nest is threatened.

Songs

Male Orange-crowned Warblers sing a trilling song of sweet, clear notes. The song can remain on a single pitch or it can rise slightly in the middle and end on a distinctive rising or falling note—chee chee chee chew chew. The song pattern varies enough that individual males can be told apart by the version they sing. [Typically doesn't sing in winter. Begins singing in late February.]

Hermit Thrush

Catharus guttatus

Adult

Family:

Turdidae (thrushes)

Pieplow Guide Page No.:

373



Bay Area Status:

Winter resident

Yves Gauthier, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status:

Highly Vulnerable (breeding habitat)

Calls The Hermit Thrush's most frequently heard call is a low-pitched tchup or quoit to signal attack or escape and a Cedar Waxwing-like eeee when in danger. Adults may tell their young to stay still with a two-syllable chuck and lisp.

Songs The Hermit Thrush's beautiful, haunting song begins with a sustained whistle and ends with softer, echo-like tones, described as oh, holy holy, ah, purity purity eeh, sweetly sweetly. It pauses between each phrase, and the song is about 1.5 seconds long. Hermit Thrushes also deliver an extremely faint "whisper song" in spring.

Other Sounds During territorial displays Hermit Thrushes may snap their bills loudly or make a whistling sound with their wings while in flight. Their feet can produce rattlesnake-like sounds as they scratch in vegetation for food.

Fox Sparrow

Passerella iliaca

Family: Passerellidae (sparrows)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 455

Bay Area Status: Winter resident



Audubon climate status: **Highly Vulnerable (breeding habitat)**

Calls

When fighting over territory or when a human approaches the nest, Fox Sparrows give smack calls (which vary from population to population). Their other calls include chu-chu calls and sip calls.

Songs

Male Fox Sparrows sing a sequence of about a dozen rich, whistled notes lasting 2–3 seconds in all, usually from a concealed perch a few feet from the top of a spruce or fir tree. During summer they sing vigorously at any time from before dawn until long after dark, in fair weather or foul. Northern and eastern populations of Fox Sparrows sing one or two song types each, while western populations sing three or four. Western songs tend to be less rich and more burry than eastern songs. The female occasionally sings a softer, briefer version of the male's song.

Male/Female

Belted Kingfisher

Megaceryle alcyon

Family:

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

Pieplow Guide Page No.:

232

Bay Area Status:

Year-round

S. K. Jones, Macaulay Lib.

Ilya Povalyaev, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status:

Neutral

Calls

Male and female Belted Kingfishers give strident, mechanical rattles [that sound somewhat like Nuttall's Woodpecker] in response to the slightest disturbance. When threatened they may give screams, which males sometimes combine with harsh calls.

Songs

None.



Male/Female

Common Yellowthroat

Geothlypis trichas

Family: Parulidae (new world warblers)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 498

Bay Area Status: Year-round



David Turgeon, Macaulay Lib.



Ryan Schain, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status: Neutral

Songs

The male sings a distinctive witchety-witchety-witchety song, about 2 seconds long, to defend the territory and attract females. They give these songs very frequently during summer, averaging as high as 125 songs per hour and sometimes reaching 300 songs per hour. [In spite of this common description of Yellowthroat song, the song is a musical whistle and does NOT sound mechanical or "ratchety."]

Calls

Both males and females give a strong chuck when potential predators approach. Males give an aggressive chatter call when other males are singing, and females give a fast series of chipping notes when they're ready to mate.

Marsh Wren

Cistothorus palustris

Family: Troglodytidae (wrens)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 354

Bay Area Status: Year-round

Adult



Tony Varela, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status: **Low Vulnerability**

Songs

Males sing a rapid series of gurgling and buzzy trills. Though each note may only last for 1–2 seconds, they can carry on for up to 20 minutes, hardly ever repeating the same note. Males in the eastern United States sing a more liquid and less harsh song than males in the West. Eastern males begin each song with a nasal buzz, whereas western males begin with a sharp chuck. Western males also have a more complex set of vocalizations. [Occasionally sings in winter. Singing increases late Jan. – Feb.]

Calls

Males and females call to alert each other of danger and to indicate their location. The call is a grating, somewhat buzzy chit. In flight, males and females give a longer series of nasal calls.

Savannah Sparrow

Passerculus sandwichensis

Family: Passerellidae (New World sparrows)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 461

Bay Area Status: Year-round

Adult



Kirk Swenson, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status: **Highly Vulnerable on Breeding Grounds**

Calls

Like many grassland sparrows, this species uses short chip notes when alarmed, warding off intruders, or approaching its nest. A typical chip note is a soft, hissing tss.

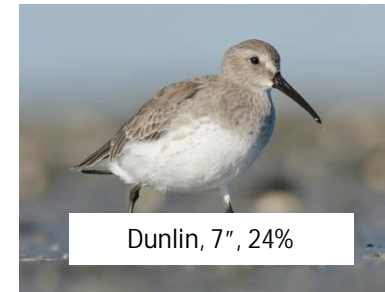
Songs

During breeding season, the male sings a three-part song that lasts 2 to 3 seconds: opening with a few quick notes; then a high, thin, insect-like buzzy middle; and ending with a quick lower trill. [Singing begins in spring.]

Chip Notes of Birds in this Class

Species	Winter Habitat	Chip
<u>Warblers</u>		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Anywhere, especially in eucalyptus	Sharp, medium-pitched (5 KHz), clean
Orange-crowned Warbler	Mixed shrubs and woodland	Quick, higher-pitched than Yellow-rump (8 KHz)
Common Yellowthroat	Reeds or other vegetation near water	Lower pitched (4 KHz), harsh, raspy
<u>Other Species</u>		
Hermit Thrush	Almost anywhere (parks, yards)	"Chup, chup-chup" given frequently
Fox Sparrow	Prefers shady, thick plant covering	Somewhat like Yellowthroat; harsh "smack"
Pacific Wren	Moist, shady	Quick, medium-pitched (4-5 KHz), somewhat harsh
Song Sparrow	Anywhere with shrubs (parks, yards)	"Chimp" sounds like tiny dog bark
Savannah Sparrow	Grasslands or salt marshes	High-pitched (9 KHz), quick, clean "tick"

Eleven Species Constitute 98% of the SF Bay Shorebird Population
Birds Shown in Order by Length (Bill to Tail)
Percentages are percent of total SF Bay shorebird population



Source of population percentages: Abundance and Distribution of Wintering Shorebirds in San Francisco Bay, 1990-2008: Population Change and Informing Future Monitoring; PRBO, Oct. 13, 2010

Black-necked Stilt

Himantopus mexicanus

Family: Recurvirostridae (stilts, avocets)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 127

Bay Area Status: Year-round

Adult Male (female slightly duller)



Dorian Anderson, Macaulay Lib.



Christian Fernandez, Macaulay Lib.

Audubon climate status: Neutral

Calls

Very vocal [unlike American Avocet]. Most calls are sharp [harsh-sounding] and rather high-pitched, yap, keek, or similar, sometimes doubled and often given in series when alarmed. Quieter versions of the call, heard between adults and young, serve as contact calls.

Songs

None.

In flight, its long pink legs stick out far beyond the tail. Note black wings and a white V on the back (not visible in these photos).

American Avocet

Recurvirostra americana

Family: *Recurvirostridae* (stilts, avocets)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 128

Bay Area Status: Year-round

Audubon climate status: **Neutral**

Calls
The call of male and female American Avocets is a repeated, high-pitched kleet. They are generally silent, calling only when disturbed.

Breeding/Non-breeding or Imm.



Joel Strong, Macaulay Lib.



Paul Fenwick, Macaulay Lib.



Darren Clark, Macaulay Lib.

Note distinctive black & white pattern in flight.

Greater Yellowlegs

Tringa melanoleuca

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 152

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: **Neutral**

Calls

[Very vocal.] The typical call of the Greater Yellowlegs is a clear, ringing tew tew tew, given in sequences of three or more (sometimes described as if the bird is saying its name: "yel-low-legs"). During the male's elaborate courting display, he gives an insistent tuu-whee tuu-whee yodel that is rarely heard away from the breeding grounds.

Songs

Song a repeated, rolling kee-lee-wee.

Breeding/Non-breeding



Jay McGowan, Macaulay Lib.



William L. Newton, Macaulay Lib.



Frank King, Macaulay Lib.

Tall, slender bird.
In flight note white rump,
plain wings.

Willet

Tringa semipalmata

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 152

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident (shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: Neutral

Breeding/Non-breeding



Dorian Anderson, Macaulay Lib.



Allee Forsberg, Macaulay Lib.

Calls

Willetts make a kyah-yah call when crossing another's territory or as a way to maintain contact during migratory flights and when shuttling between foraging and breeding areas [note that this is the most commonly heard call in winter]. When approached, Willetts may react with high-pitched, agitated kip-kip-kip, wick, and kreeliii alarm calls.

Songs

In springtime, the Willet's signature pill-will-willet call rings out over its breeding territory in the morning and evening, with competing males calling throughout the day. Eastern Willetts give a slightly higher-pitched, more rapidly repeated version of the song than Western birds.



Brian L. Sullivan, Macaulay Lib.

Large, plain gray bird with striking black & white wing pattern. White rump with dark tail.

Marbled Godwit

Limosa fedoa

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 139

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: **Neutral**

Calls

On the breeding grounds, males give a ger-whit often during display flights, but also from the ground. Males and females also give a rad-i-ca call on the breeding grounds, especially during courtship. On the nonbreeding grounds, males and females give a nasal call that sounds a bit like they are laughing.

Breeding/Non-breeding



Jeff Timmons, Macaulay Lib.



Frank Lehman, Macaulay Lib.



Dorian Anderson, Macaulay Lib.

Large bird with broad wings.
Cinnamon pattern on upper primaries
and underwings.

Long-billed Curlew

Numenius americanus

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 136

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: **Vulnerable on breeding grounds**

Calls

The alarm and contact call of male and female Long-billed Curlews is a harsh whistled cur-lee [i.e. cur-lew], rising on second note; given year-round. They also give a rapid whistled tremolo with a slight stuttering quality to it.

Song [breeding season only]

Song starts with a low whistled prreee and builds into a louder prprprprpr prrreeep prrreeep prrreeerr.

Adult



Ian Davies, Macaulay Lib.



Chris McReedy, Macaulay Lib.



Large bird with enormous bill.
In flight, wings broad and rounded.
Rusty patches on upper flight feathers.
Underwing cinnamon-colored.

Black-bellied Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

Family: Charadriidae (plovers and lapwings)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 135

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: **Neutral**

Calls

The most commonly heard call is the mellow, mournful-sounding flight call, a far-carrying pleooooee, falling and then rising in tone. Males give a piping trill when landing after the aerial display, and males in conflict utter a harsh kleeerr. Adults disturbed at the nest give a variety of threat and alarm calls.

Songs [breeding only]

Males sing a burry but musical kooodleooo while displaying, similar to songs of golden-plovers.

Breeding



Dorian Anderson, Macaulay Lib.

Nonbreeding



Roy Netherton, Macaulay Lib.



Davey Walters, Macaulay Lib.

In flight, all ages show distinctive black armpits. Note mostly white tail.

Short-billed Dowitcher

Limnodromus griseus

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 148

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: **Vulnerable**

Breeding/Non-breeding



Joshua Haas, Macaulay Lib.



Tom Edell, Macaulay Lib.

Calls

The most commonly heard call from all three subspecies is a distinctive, soft tu-tu-tu, very unlike the high keek of Long-billed Dowitcher and more similar to the more strident call of Greater Yellowlegs. [Short-billed Dowitchers are generally silent on the ground, i.e., when feeding, unlike Long-billed, which are vocal while feeding. Short-bills are vocal when they fly.]

Songs

[Generally does not sing outside of breeding season.] The three subspecies have somewhat similar trilling or grating songs, a series of rising and falling phrases that repeat themselves with varying length and emphasis.

Long-billed Dowitcher

Limnodromus scolopaceus

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 148

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: **Vulnerable**

Breeding/Non-breeding



Tyler Ficker, Macaulay Lib.



Caroline Lambert, Macaulay Lib.

White "rump" extends halfway up back on both Dowitcher species

Calls

Diagnostic call is a quick, high-pitched keek, sometimes given several times in succession. A feeding flock often calls incessantly but softly (Short-billed flocks do not), sounding almost like an excited group of woodland birds. Less often heard is a quiet tu, which can also be given in series and superficially resembles call of Short-billed.

Songs

[Sings only during breeding season.] Males sing a complex series of piping phrases such as peet-peet; pee-ter-wee-too, lasting about 1.5 seconds.

Western Sandpiper

Calidris mauri

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 147

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: Neutral (winter)

Calls

A harsh jeet is the most commonly heard call, usually from flying or feeding birds. They make various distress, alarm, and contact calls mostly on the breeding grounds.

Songs [breeding season only]

Displaying males sing a brief song that begins with a high, thin, rising te-e-e-e tweer-tweer-tweer and closes with a falling, buzzy trill.

Breeding/Non-breeding



Thomas Barbin, Macaulay Lib.



Patrick Maurice, Macaulay Lib.



Logan Lalonde, Macaulay Lib.

Small bird. Short, dark wings.
White line extends toward outer wing. Western and Least difficult to distinguish in flight.

Least Sandpiper

Calidris minutilla

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 146

Bay Area Status: "Winter" resident
(shorebirds begin arriving in July)

Audubon climate status: Neutral (winter)

Calls
Outside of the breeding season, Least Sandpipers give a high-pitched creep call. They also give loud trills as part of predator distraction displays, as well as thin seeet alarm calls.

Songs
On the breeding grounds, Least Sandpipers make a songlike sequence of rich trills and high notes, sung by males (and sometimes females).

Breeding/Non-breeding



Evan Lipton, Macaulay Lib.



Ian Davies, Macaulay Lib.



Brooke Miller, Macaulay Lib.

Small bird. Short, dark wings.
White line extends toward outer wing. Western and Least difficult to distinguish in flight.

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Family: Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)

Pieplow Guide Page No.: 143

Bay Area Status: Late-arriving (Oct.) "Winter" resident

Audubon climate status: Neutral (winter)

Calls

The most commonly heard call is a high-pitched, scratchy krree, given by birds in flight or in conflict.

Songs

The song, heard mostly from males on the breeding grounds, often during display flights, is a remarkable series of highly modulated (burry) trills, beginning with a short set of lower notes that each rises in pitch, then finishing with a descending trill that recalls a movie sound-effect for a spaceship landing. The song can last 3.5 seconds.

Breeding/Non-breeding



Andrew Spencer, Macaulay Lib.



Alix d'Entremont, Macaulay Lib.



Justyn Stahl, Macaulay Lib.

In flight, note darker line of feathers down the center of the tail and white outer tail feathers.