The San Francisco and San Pablo Bay edges

14. Shollenberger Park
A wonderful example of a seasonal wetland that has been kept close to its purpose, this park is a set of ponds that has been valued by the citizens of Petaluma as wildlife habitat and a flood control overflow basin for the Petaluma River. Many species of waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, and marshland birds congregate at the ponds and associated wetlands. Blue-winged Teal and an occasional Long-tailed Duck have been seen at the park. Pacific Golden-Plover and Baird’s Sandpiper pause at the Park to “top up their tanks” during migration. Birding is good year-round.

Directions: From Hwy 101 in Petaluma, go east on Lakeville Hwy (116 East), one mile to South McDowell Blvd. Turn right (south) and go about .25 mi. to the park entrance on the right, opposite Cader Lane. Turn right to get to the paved parking lot.

15. Las Gallinas Sanitary District Wildlife Area
Waste water treatment plants often provide birders excellent opportunities to see marshland species from levee trails encircling ponds. The Las Gallinas Plant includes wildlife viewing as part of its mission. Numerous waterfowl, including Cackling Goose and Eurasian Wigeon, can be found. An amazing array of raptors have been sighted, including Osprey, Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, 4 species of falcon and Great Horned Owl. Clapper and Virginia Rails are present, and Black Rail may also be found. Harris’s Sparrow has been seen with the wintering sparrows. River Otters live in the area. The birding is best during migration and in winter.

Directions: From Hwy 101 north of the Marin Civic Center in San Rafael, take the Smith Ranch Rd. exit and drive east toward San Pablo Bay. As you approach the entrance to John McInnis Park, cross the railroad tracks and turn left before the entrance, continuing on Smith Ranch Rd. to its end at the Las Gallinas Wildlife Area parking lot.

16. China Camp State Park
This is one of two State Parks with waterfront on the San Francisco Estuary and the only one accessible by car. Located on the edge of San Pablo Bay in San Rafael, this park has a unique juxtaposition of oak woodlands, grasslands, and pickleweed saltmarsh. Many ducks and waterbirds work the shoreline and deeper waters, while landbirds inhabit the grasslands, forest edges and mixed oak habitat. The park has many trails, or one can bird from the roadway and parking areas. The birding is good year-round.

Directions: From Hwy 101 south of the Marin Civic Center in San Rafael, take San Pedro Rd. toward the Bay. The Park is at the Bay edge of San Pablo Bay in San Rafael, this park has a unique juxtaposition of oak woodlands, grasslands, and pickleweed saltmarsh. Many ducks and waterbirds work the shoreline and deeper waters, while landbirds inhabit the grasslands, forest edges and mixed oak habitat. The park has many trails, or one can bird from the roadway and parking areas. The birding is good year-round.

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats through science and educational activities. SFBBO provides information to governmental agencies, industry, and the public to support informed resource management decisions for the San Francisco Bay area. SFBBO directed the production of this publication.

The Bay Trail is a planned recreational corridor that, when complete, will encircle San Francisco and San Pablo Bays with a continuous 400-mile network of bicycling and hiking trails. It will connect the shoreline of all nine Bay Area counties, link 892 miles of lakes, and 16,000 acres of wetlands. Blue-winged Teal and an occasional Long-tailed Duck have been seen at the park. Pacific Golden-Plover and Baird’s Sandpiper pause at the Park to “top up their tanks” during migration. Birding is good year-round.

Directions: From Hwy 101 south of the Marin Civic Center in San Rafael, take San Pedro Rd. toward the Bay. The Park is at the Bay edge of San Pablo Bay in San Rafael, this park has a unique juxtaposition of oak woodlands, grasslands, and pickleweed saltmarsh. Many ducks and waterbirds work the shoreline and deeper waters, while landbirds inhabit the grasslands, forest edges and mixed oak habitat. The park has many trails, or one can bird from the roadway and parking areas. The birding is good year-round.
of Clapper Rail and wintering shorebirds, along with an impressive group of vagrants that has given the location the aura of a birding hotspot. A sampling of rarities seen here include: Sedge Wren, Prothonotary Warbler, Nelson's Sharp-tailed and Swamp sparrow. Birding is best in migration and winter.

Directions: On the east side of Hwy 101, north of the San Francisco Airport, take North Airport Blvd to Belle Air Road and turn east, toward the Bay. At the end of the road is a park area between the Water Quality Control Plant and Costico.

3. Coyote Point Park

This former site of an Ophione fishing village now has a marina and the Coyote Point Museum for Environmental Education. The forested area around the museum has many passerine species. The shoreline and breakwater are used by a wide variety of shorebirds; some are outer coast species not often seen further south in the Bay. Many ducks forage in the area. A variety of vagrant and interesting birds have been found here. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Harlequin Duck, Least Tern, and Elegant Tern are among these species. Black Oystercatchers and Black Turnstones are rarely seen. The best birding is during migration and in winter.

Directions: Approaching on southbound Hwy 101 in Burlingame, take the Poplar Ave. exit, turn right onto Humboldt St., then right again onto Peninsula Ave. Go over the Hwy 101 overpass, turn left onto Bayshore Blvd., go under the 1st Street exit, turn right onto Northcott Pkwy, then left on Disk Dr. The road merges with Grand Blvd. and passes Speckled Ave. on the left. As this road, now Los Esteros Rd., curves right, the entrance to the Alviso Center is straight ahead. Enroute to the Center, the road crosses New Chicago Marsh.

6. Alviso Environmental Education Center

This part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge sits at the south edge of the Bay next to old salt production ponds. Along with the adjacent New Chicago Marsh, these are great places to look for a wide variety of raptors, shorebirds, and gulls. Barn Owls regularly use a nest box on the visitor center; Burrowing Owls have nests in the Marsh and the Alviso Ranch area. Birding is best in migration and winter.

Directions: Take Hwy 237 at the south end of the San Francisco Bay, between Hwys 101 and 880. Go north at the 1st Street exit, turn right onto Northcott Pkwy, then left on Disk Dr. The road merges with Grand Blvd. and passes Speckled Ave. on the left. As this road, now Los Esteros Rd., curves right, the entrance to the Alviso Center is straight ahead. Enroute to the Center, the road crosses New Chicago Marsh.

7. Coyote Hills Regional Park

This wonderful mix of vernal pond and marsh habitat provides important respite for migrants, as well as a home for breeding and wintering birds. It’s a rare location that can have Marsh Wren, Bickwill’s, and Rock wrens within a short distance. It’s a winner haven for ducks, a potent foraging and breeding area for raptors, and the bayside portion accommodates many shorebirds. Birding is good year-round.

Directions: From Hwy 84, east of the Dumbarton Bridge toll booths, go north on Thornton Ave. Passado Peddy Pkwy to Patterson Ranch Rd. Turn left onto Patterson Ranch Rd. and go to the entry booth.

8. Hayward Regional Shoreline

Retired salt production ponds and tidal marsh provide unique birding experiences along the Bay edge heavily modified by human activity. The ponds in the southern portion provide great wintering sites for ducks, shorebirds, and gulls. The second nesting event of Black Skimmer in the Bay occurred here. A hybrid Arctic/Foster’s Terst also nested in this area. In the middle section, Mt. Trashmore, a popular name given to a capped landfill, is a great place to find vagrant lapwings along with American Pipit in the fall. Cogswell Marsh is one of the few locations around the Bay edge where one can find wintering Red Knots among the numerous shorebirds. Low tide exposed mudflats. Best birding is from fall through spring.

Directions: To get to the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District’s interpretive center at the south end, take the Clavodor Rd. exit from Hwy 92 east of the San Mateo Bridge toll plaza. Go to the north side of Hwy 92, and head east on the frontage road. Breakwater Ave. The center is on Breakwater Ave. To get to the central portion of this area, from Hwy 880 in Hayward, go west on Winton Ave. to the parking lot at the end. To get to the northern section, take Grant Ave. west from Hesperian Blvd. just south of Hwy 880. Go to the parking lot at the end of the road. Access to the Bay edge is a trail to the north, then west along San Lorenzo Creek.

9. Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline

This wetland is a wonderful gem sandwiched between a marina, the Oakland Airport, and a business park. Arrowhead Marsh, the focal point of this East Bay Regional Park, provides California Clapper Rail with a place to begin nesting. Along the Bay edge recent surveys found that more than 5% of the world’s population reside here. The tidal mudflats provide wintering sites for ducks, shorebirds, and gulls, as well as breeding grounds for American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt and Northern Pintail. A variety of wildlife, including the Long-tailed and Harlequin ducks, and White-winged and Long-tailed and Harlequin ducks, and White-winged and White-winged

10. Lake Merritt

Originality a salt marsh named “Laguna Peralta,” Lake Merritt became the first National Wildlife Refuge in North America in 1899. This lake, located in Oakland, is a popular breeding and wintering site for waterfowl, possibly attracted by the resident species. Barrow’s Goldeneyes regularly winter in nearby waterways. One or two Tufted Ducks often winter here. Several open edges, wet areas and edges nest on the islands. Birding is good all year.

Directions: From Hwy 580 in Oakland, take the Grand Ave. exit, go west, and toward the Bay. mt. 6 onto Bellevue Ave. and turn left into Lakeside Park and park by the Rotary Nature Center.

11. Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline

The park provides unique views of this inland waterway. The annual grasslands slope down to the water with pockets of oak woodland and coastal scrub dotting the hillsides, offering lots of edge habitat for birds. Raptors benefit from the updrafts along the overpasses while in search of prey. Western Meadowlark and Western Bluebirds are at home in and over the grasses. The park’s elevation above the water provides an excellent vantage point to see for waterfowl. This is one of the wider areas to bird in this region. The birding potential is good all year.

Directions: There are two non-contiguous sections to this park. To get to the western section from Hwy 4 west of Martinez, exit at Cummings Skyway, turn right on Crowell Blvd. Turn right again on Pomona Street in Crockett. Pomona Street becomes Carquinez Drive. Continue to the staging area, on the left. Driving another mile or so will bring you to another small staging area, also on the left. From I-80 in Crockett, take Pomona or Pomona Street, depending on your direction of travel (San Pablo Avenue become Pomona Street east of I-80). Go east on Pomona into Crockett and follow directions above.

12. White Slough

White Slough is an example of the inexorable force of Nature. After several years with levee breaches from the Napa River to the west, this former impounded area, slated for future development, was declared to be a natural part of the Bay and moved into the jurisdiction of the Napa-Sonoma Conservancy. A natural tidal action returned to these mudflats that now host hundreds of waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, and gulls. Black Rail are known to breed here and it is suspected that the California Clapper Rail does so, as well. The Saltmarsh Common Yellowthroat also breeds here, as does the Red-winged Blackbird. A rare location that can have Marsh Wren, Bickwill’s, and Rock wrens within a short distance. It’s a winner haven for ducks, a potent foraging and breeding area for raptors, and the bayside portion accommodates many shorebirds. Birding is good year-round.

Directions: From Hwy 84, east of the Dumbarton Bridge toll booths, go north on Thornton Ave. Passado Peddy Pkwy to Patterson Ranch Rd. Turn left onto Patterson Ranch Rd. and go to the entry booth.

13. John F. Kennedy Park

This park is one of the few sites along the Bay Trail that is located some distance from the Bay it maintains a connection with to Bay via the Napa River. This is a well-developed park maintained by the City of Richmond. Much of the habitat along the river provides many birding opportunities, and a boat ramp allows for access to the water to bird from kayaks, canoes, and other water craft. Kayaks and canoes can be rented at the 4th St. City Dock in Napa. The riparian habitat has many mammals as well as birds. On the right as you approach the park, there is a pond that can have waterfowl and other birds. All season long, good birding potential, winter is best for seeing waterfowl and raptors.

Directions: The park is accessed from Hwy 121, the Napa Valley Hwy, south of Hwy 80 at the end of the Napa River, Napa Valley College. Take Streblow Dr. off Hwy 121 and go west to the parking lot near the boat ramp.

4. Foster City/San Mateo Bridge

This part of the Bay hosts a wide variety of birds in winter and in migration that are not often seen elsewhere in the Bay. The shore bar north of Tamarin St. is a great shorebird root at low tide, and the mudflats provide excellent foraging during low tide. Among the birds you can find here are Marbled Godwit, Willow, Red Knot, Black and Ruddy turnstones, and the billed Dowitchers. The waters near the bridge attract many ducks, often including rarities like Long-tailed and Harlequin ducks, and White-winged and Black scoters. Viewing is easy from the paved Bay Trail levee. The birding is good in winter and during migration.

Directions: From Hwy 101 south of the Hwy 92 interchange, take Hilldale Blvd. east to the Bay edge. The road becomes Beach Park Blvd. as it turns southeast to parallel the Bay edge. Park between Eriget St. and Tamarin St. and walk up to the levee along the Bay.

5. Palo Alto Baylands

Long a haven for the Bay Area’s Clapper Rails, these wetlands, protected by the City of Palo Alto, provide an opportunity to see many breeding, migrating, and wintering marshland birds. Black and Yellow rails, Nelson’s Sharp-tailed and Swamp sparrows are among the rarities that have appeared here. More expected species include Greater and Lesser Scaup, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Long-tailed and Sharp-tailed sparrows, Bonaparte’s and Thayer’s Gulls, and mallards. Just to the south is another birding location, the Mountain View Shoreline. Composed of Charleston Slough, several former salt ponds, and Shoreline Park and Lake Magie, it is an excellent year-round birding location.

Directions: From Hwy 880, take the Terman Pkwy exit, turn right on Darlington Dr., then right again on Swyn Way. Turn left, immediately, across the parking entrance to get to Arrowhead Marsh.