

Birds at Idell's Garden 2010

In the winter, a large old almond tree is one of the favorite hang outs, and in the spring and summer, the thickets, shrubs and oak trees provide popular nesting and hiding spots. This vegetation plus open areas and garden plants provide food. Oak woodlands at base of garden extend into wild lands and a hill across the street provides extensive grasslands food and hunting grounds.

Key to column 3

Birds I See All the Time (A)

Birds I see Occasionally (O)

Birds Unusual for iw's garden (U)

Bird, nesting	Season, eggs	
Bushtit Nests at iw's (March-May) in long nests hanging from trees, bushes & vines 6-35 ft up	All year, see daily, & in winter, in large flocks 2 broods, incubate 5-7 eggs for 12 days	A
Chickadee, Chestnut-backed May nest at iw's (April-May) or nearby in forest, excavates or uses old cavity, usually less than 10 ft up	In habitat all year, see more in fall and winter 1 brood, 6-7 eggs for about 15 days	A
Crow, American Rarely saw before 2001	All year in habitat, daily	A
Dove, Morning May nest nearby in trees, bushes or on ground (generally March-August)	All year, see daily 2-3 nests, incubate 2 eggs for 14 days	A
Finch, House Nests near & at iw's (May into August) in a variety of places; near buildings, boxes, old nests, shrubs, vines	In habitat all year, see daily but less frequently in summer 2 broods, incubate 4-5 eggs for 12-14 days	A
Finch, Purple Nests on branch far from trunk in oak and mixed woodland in damper areas 5-60 ft up	In habitat all year 2 broods, incubated 4-5 eggs 13 days	O
Flicker, Northern (was Red Shafted Flicker) Nests in high snags, (not at iw's) may use nest box if correct size	In habitat all year; October-April most common 1 brood, 5-8 eggs, incubated 11-12 days	O
Flycatcher, Pacific Slope	In habitat February-October, likes moist woodlands	U
Goldfinch, American Prefers riparian areas and water, so does not nest at iw's	In habitat all year, see more in fall & winter but fewer than Lesser Goldfinch, see more some years than others	O
Goldfinch, Lesser Nests at iw's in spring & summer on outer part of limbs of trees or shrubs, 2-30 ft above ground, likes open sunny habitats	In habitat all year, see more in winter 2-3 broods, incubates 4-5 eggs for 12 days	A
Hawk, Cooper's Might nest in nearby dense woods on higher branches	Year round plus some migrate 4-5 eggs incubated for 30-36 days	O
Hawk, Red Shouldered Lot of perching on posts, poles by grassy hill across street May nest nearby, well above ground March-June	In habitat all year	O
Hawk, Red-tailed Hunts grassy hill, perches on nearby posts, power lines Nests high in trees near iw's garden March into May	All year in habitat 1 (?) brood, incubated 28-35 days, fly at 6 weeks	A
Hawk, Sharp Shin	Migrant, see in September-April	U
Heron, Great Blue	Cruised through, checking out frog ponds	U
Hummingbird, Allen's Nests at iw's (April-May) in tree branch or shrub 1-90 ft up, more common in moister Berkeley Hills than Anna's	February-July or August in habitat, see daily in season 2 broods of 2 eggs, incubated 15-22 days	A
Hummingbird, Anna's Nests at iw's, (January-July) tree, shrub, & vine, high and low, 1.5-30 ft up	All year, see daily 2-3 broods, incubate 2 eggs for 14-19 days	A
Hummingbird, Rufus	February-May most common, see migrating through (peak in March)	O

Bird, nesting	Season, eggs	
Jay, Steller's Saw first time at iw's in 2007.	In habitat all year, at iw's at suet in winter, more common in conifers in openings in heavily forested areas	O
Jay, Western Scrub Nests at iw's, (March into May) usually in low trees & bushes; 3-30 ft up. (I prefer to discourage this robber of other bird's nests and babies)	All year, see daily. 1 brood, incubates 3-6 eggs for 15-17 days.	A
Junco, Dark Eyed, Slate Colored variant	In winter at iw's	U
Junco, Dark-eyed , Oregon sub species Nests April-June, more in shady woods & some suburban shrub lands	Daily much of year but few in summer. 2 broods of 3-5 eggs incubated 12-13 days	A
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	In habitat October through April	A
Mockingbird, Northern Nests at iw's (late April into late June) low dense shrubs or trees, usually 3-10 ft up	All year, see daily 2+ broods, incubates 3-5 eggs for 12-13 days	A
Nuthatch, Red Breasted Does nest in Contra Costa County in redwoods & pines	Winter visitor for me.	A
Oriole, Bullock's Nests in area but not at iw's	In area around March-September	U
Oriole, Hooded Likes to nest in palms or deciduous trees so not at iw's (Give my palms 5 more years!)	In area late March to late August	U
Owl, Great Horned Nests on hill top across from iw's garden, Feb-May	All year, hear nightly mostly in winter/early spring; 1 brood, incubate 2-3 eggs for 28-35 days	A
Phoebe, Black May prefer areas with more water and thus more insects in breeding season.	All year (attracted to insects at iw's frog ponds) but few in nesting season	A
Robin, American Nests April into late June	All year in habitat. See mostly in winter (I have no lawn so they go elsewhere.)	O
Sapsucker, Red Breasted First saw here in 2008.	In habitat here in October to early April	U
Siskin, Pine	In habitat September-May but unpredictable--some times lots (2004) and other times few.	U
Sparrow, Fox, Sooty (Pacific)	October thru April See scratching under shrubs. Very few in 2010	A
Sparrow, Golden-crowned	In habitat Mid September-May See by thick shrubs, brushy areas	A
Sparrow, White-crowned	In my habitat September-April See in trees, shrubs, on ground (is seen all year closer to coast and nests there too)	A
Starling, European	All year in habitat, mostly perching on wires in drive	O
Swift, Vaux	Spring and fall migrant	U
Tanager, Western	At iw's only a few days during migration in late April to mid May	U
Thrush, Hermit	In habitat mostly October-April	U
Thrush, Varied Seen here only in 2006-2007.	October-March. Here in the winter of 2006-2007 in unusual numbers because of colder winter further north	U
Titmouse, Oak Nests at iw's (late March- May) in cavities, crevice & people-made structures to 32 ft up, common in more open, dryer woodlands	In habitat all year, see regularly 1, possibly 2 broods, incubates 6-8 eggs for 14-16 days, will nest within about 60 yards apart in nest boxes	A
Towhee, California (was Brown Towhee) Nests at iw's (late April into mid August) in dense bushes & low trees 2-12 ft up	All year, see daily, hear constant 'chips'; if separated from other of foraging pair, calls and they then rejoin 2-3 broods, 3-4 eggs, 11 days to incubate	A
Towhee, Spotted (was Rufous-Sided) Nests at iw's (late April into early July) in low bushes, brush pile to 5 ft up & on ground	Year round, see on ground & in tall, thick shrubs 2 broods, incubates 3-4 eggs for 12-13 days	A

Bird, nesting	Season, eggs	
Turkey, Wild Nests on ground often under log or bush in gully/woodland edges adjoining iw	Common now in Bay Area. First at iw's in fall of 2004 1 brood, incubate 10-12 eggs for 28 days	A
Vireo, Hutton's Probably nests at iw's or nearby (March into June) high in fork of oak or conifer, usually 7-25 ft up	In habitat all year 2 broods of 4 eggs, incubated 14-16 days	A
Vulture, Turkey	All year, flies through daily around mid-day and again late afternoon	A
Warbler, Orange-crowned (may be more around but are hard to ID)	Botanic Gardens data says Mar-July; other say all year but most in April-December	U
Warbler, Townsend's	In Bay Area in winter	U
Warbler, Wilson's	March-October	U
Warbler, Yellow	Migrant in spring and fall,	U
Warbler, Yellow Rumped (was Audubon's Warbler)	October-March, see in almond & eucalyptus trees, few in some years	O
Waxwing, Cedar Collect in large flocks eating berries in spring	In habitat mostly November through late winter but some sources say all year	U
Woodpecker, Downy Probably nests near iw's (May-June), excavates holes, nests in boxes, brush piles 3-50 ft up	In habitat all year, see most in winter 1 brood, incubated 4-5 eggs for 11-13 days	A
Woodpecker, Hairy	In habitat all year, found more in conifer & thick oak areas	U
Woodpecker, Nuttall's May nest at iw's or nearby (April-May) in new cavity, 2.5 ft-60 ft up	In habitat all year; see on large apple tree, likes oak woodlands (?) broods, , incubated 5 eggs for 14 days,	A
Wren, Bewick's Nests at iw's (April into late May) in any kind of cavity-natural or people made	All year, hear regularly, see in brush piles & shrubs 1-2 brood, incubate 5-7 eggs for 14 days	A
Wrentit Nests at iw's (April-July) in dense shrubbery about 18-24" up	All year in habitat, more common lately, is secretive so hard to see. 1-2 broods, incubate 4 eggs about 16 days	A
Yellowthroat, Common	In habitat all year in Bay Area riparian area bird so rare in iw's garden	U

Authors disagree on data so I took the middle ground. Some nesting dates were listed as earlier and later and there is some variation in number of eggs laid, time to incubate and number of broods.

Most frequently used reference:. (It is easier for me to lay out several books for comparisons than flip website screens.)
Birds of the U.C. Botanical Garden flyer from the U.C. Botanical Garden (habitat similar to mine but is a lot larger, has a riparian area, more trees and fog.)

Birds of Northern California by Fix and Bezner from Lone Pine, a Field Guide, 2000

Birds of San Francisco and Bay Area by Fisher & Morlan, from Lone Pine Press, 1996

Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County, by Glover, from Mt Diablo Audubon Society, 2009

Western Birds' Nests by Harrison, a Peterson Field Guide, 1979

(Note: see the 2007BBN tour page for my garden for extensive details on bird behavior, habitat and identification)

FOOD FOR BIRDS

(Much of the material on food is copied nearly verbatim from several sources.)

Carrion only

Vulture, Turkey

Omnivorous diet

Jay, Steller's -- ground & vegetation for insects, vertebrates, nuts, berries, bird's eggs; take suet and grain from feeders

Jay, Western Scrub -- ground & vegetation for insects, spiders, lizards, nuts, berries, baby birds, birds eggs; take suet and grains from feeders

Turkey, Wild -- seeds, fruits, leaves, nuts, roots, insects, snails, reptiles

Mostly meat

Hawk, Coopers -- take prey in flight and on ground, small mammals
Hawk, Red Shouldered -- takes birds, small mammals, and reptiles (especially snakes)
Hawk, Red Tail -- dives after birds, stalks small mammals and reptiles on ground
Hawk Sharp Shin -- mostly birds in flight, a few mammals, hunts mostly from a perch
Owl, Great Horned -- hunts mammals, insects, reptiles & birds by night and in winter, some by day

Nectar mostly

Hummingbird, Anna's -- hovers for nectar and some insects, takes sugar water
Hummingbird, Rufous -- hovers for nectar, some insects and some sap, takes sugar water
Hummingbird, Allan's -- hovers for nectar, some insects, takes sugar water

Mostly berries and fruit

Waxwings, Cedar -- gleans vegetation, eats flowers, buds, flycatches extensively in summer and fall, and during fall and winter, eats berries, fruit

Fruit and insects

Oriole, Bullock's -- gleans canopy for insects and other invertebrates, eats fruit and nectar, some at feeders.
Oriole, Hooded -- insects, berries, small fruit, flower nectar plus sugar water at feeders

Mostly seeds, weeds

Goldfinch, American -- gleans vegetation for thistle, and other seeds, insects and berries, visits feeder with Niger or sunflower seeds.
Goldfinch, Lesser -- gleans low-growing annuals for seeds and takes insects from tree and shrubs, like mineral licks, visits feeders with Niger seeds.
Dove, Morning -- eats seeds, weeds, and vegetation

From air or branches, mostly insects, some seeds and berries

Bushtit -- search vegetation for insects, small seeds, and are in large roving flocks except at nesting time
Chickadee, Chestnut-backed -- gleans in trees and ground for insects, spiders and seed, goes to suet and seed feeders
Flycatcher, Pacific-slope -- flycatches insects and returns to same limb area
Kinglet, Ruby Crowned -- gleans and flycatches insects and spiders, eats a few berries and seeds
Mockingbird, Northern -- gleans vegetation and on ground for insects, also eats berries and visits feeders for suet.
Nuthatch, Red breasted -- insects in bark, also seeds of conifers, eats suet and seeds at feeders in winter
Phoebe, Black -- flycatches aerial insects near plants and by water. Returns from low perch to a different post after flycatching insects, takes some insects from the ground
Titmouse, Oak -- in trees and shrubs after insects, seeds and nuts plus some berries, uses suet feeders
Verio, Hutton's -- collects insects inside trees or shrubs. Also eats spiders, caterpillars and berries
Warbler, Yellow-rumped -- gleans and hovers for insects and sometimes eats berries and fruit tree blooms
Woodpecker, Downy -- insects from trees and shrubs, nuts, seeds plus suet in feeders
Woodpecker, Hairy -- same as other woodpeckers
Woodpecker, Nuttall's -- mostly insects from trees and shrubs, some fruit, nuts, seeds, berries, takes suet
Wren, Bewick's -- gleans vegetation for insects and spiders
Wrentit -- forages in low branches, and on twigs, mostly insects in spring and summer, berries important in fall and winter

On ground mostly for seeds, insects and some berries

Finch, House -- works ground and low vegetation for seeds and eats fruit and berries and fruit tree petals; one of most common birds at feeders.
Finch, Purple -- gleans ground and vegetation for seeds, berries, insects and flower buds; visits feeders
Flicker, Northern -- on ground for ants and insects, and in bark, also eats berries, fruits, nuts; goes to seed and suet feeders
Junco, Dark-eyed -- scratches ground for invertebrates, eats berries and seeds; and visits suet and other birdfeeders
Robin, American -- on ground and vegetation for worms, insects, invertebrates and berries, may forage in large flocks.
Sparrow, Fox -- scratches ground for seeds, berries and invertebrates; will visit feeder in winter
Sparrow, Golden-crowned -- gleans ground for invertebrates, buds, seeds and some fruit; visits feeders
Sparrow, White-crowned -- scratches ground for insects and seeds, also eats berries, and buds; uses feeders
Towhee, California -- scratches on litter or ground, eats mostly seeds and insects, some berries
Towhee, Spotted -- seeds and insects on ground