


THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

Each spring, as some birds head back to Canada and Alaska to breed, others return from the south to nest in California. These birds can't land just anywhere. They need safe places to stop over and "refuel" from the long flight.

Unfortunately, within the last 200 years more than 90 percent of California's wetlands and riparian areas have been destroyed, and much of this remaining "stopover" habitat is dwindling. Too many birds crowded into smaller and smaller areas results in disease and starvation.

State parks play a vital role in protecting these migratory birds and the habitats they use in their travels.

Just a few of the hundreds of species that travel the Pacific Flyway:

 Greater Yellowlegs Breeds in Alaska and Canada. Winters in California and Latin America.	 Black-chinned Hummingbird Breeds in the west and winters in Mexico.
 Snow Goose Breeds in Alaska and Canada. Winters in California's Central Valley.	 Forster's Tern Breeds in North America (mainly U.S.). Winters southward to Brazil.
 Northern Harrier Breeds in temperate areas including California. Winters from California through the tropics.	 American White Pelican Breeds in Canada and northern midwest U.S. Winters in southern California and south to Panama.
 Bullock's Oriole Breeds in western North America. Winters in Mexico.	 Barn Swallow Breeds in Alaska, California, and most of North America. Winters from Mexico to South America.
 Long-billed Curlew Breeds in North America up to Canada. Winters in California, southern U.S. and Mexico.	 Northern Pintail Breeds in Alaska and western and central Canada. One million or more migrate into California's Central Valley for the winter. Another 500,000 continue south as far as Central America.

You can't see the Pacific Flyway, but every year as seasons change, millions of ducks, geese, songbirds and other migrating birds follow this invisible path through California skies.

Birds from Alaska and Canada fly south each fall to avoid frigid northern winters; they fly north again in spring to nest, mate and raise their young. Others raise their young in California and fly south to the tropics for the winter.

California's wetlands, marshes, shallow lakes and fields invite migrating birds to stop over along the way.



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