



Bring your binoculars!

One of the special qualities of Greenhorn Park is the wonderful diversity of plants and animals represented here, which create many opportunities for observing wildlife up close. Four major plant communities are present in the Greenhorn Creek watershed: oak woodland, mixed conifer pine forest, chaparral shrub and riparian habitat. Each of these habitats provides an abundance of food, water and shelter for many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and insects. Please be mindful not to chase or harass the animals that share our park.



The park is well known for its geese and ducks, but there are many other birds and animals to be seen here.



WHO LIVES HERE?

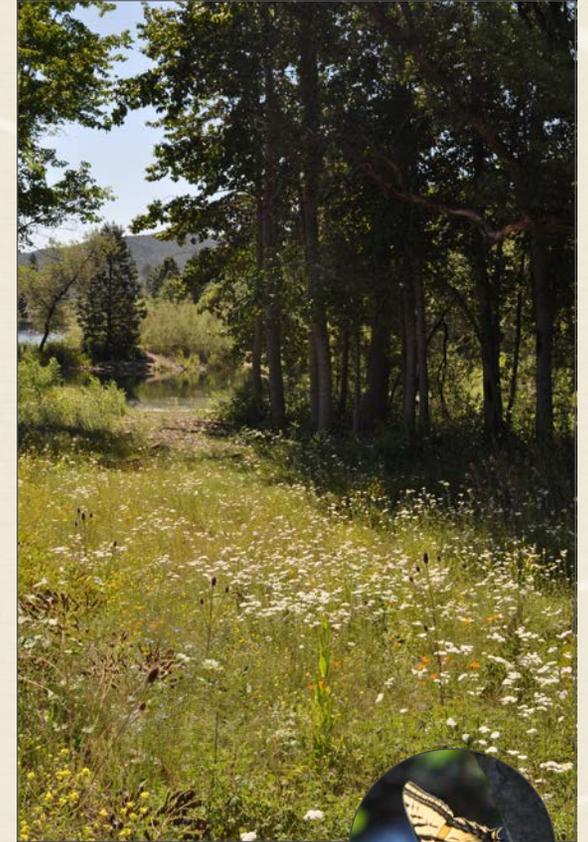
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Who Lives Here?



Meet The Wildlife Of Greenhorn Park



A Plethora of Birds

Greenhorn Park is a great place to see many species of migratory songbirds, woodpeckers, waterfowl and raptors. With the changing of the seasons, different species can be observed.

It's not uncommon to see osprey, white pelicans and double-crested cormorants hunting for fish on the reservoir alongside many species of waterfowl, such as Canada geese, which nest on the islands.

In the spring, search the lush riparian habitat for migratory birds including yellow warbler, song sparrow and Bullock's oriole.

Blue-gray gnatcatchers, California quail and spotted towhees can occasionally be seen and heard in the dense chaparral surrounding the park. Oak woodlands are abundant with white-breasted nuthatches, oak titmice, and the very interesting acorn woodpeckers—which create “granaries” in tree trunks where they cache acorns as a food source for the winter months.

The surrounding pine forest is home to golden eagles, black-headed grosbeaks, mountain quail and sharp-shinned hawks.

Walk quietly through the forested trails to see these species.



Above, a migratory California gull soars over the reservoir. Left, a pileated woodpecker feeds its chicks from a nest made in the conifer forest.



FAVORITE ANIMALS OF THE PARK

The western pond turtle is an uncommon animal in common sight in Greenhorn Park, living in both aquatic and terrestrial environments. The shell of the turtle is not an exoskeleton, but is part of this animal's vertebrate structure. They are not able to come out of their shell; the shell grows throughout the turtle's life, which can be up to 30 years.

The Western Pond Turtle is found from Mexico to British Columbia but is considered rare throughout its range. In California it is listed as a Species of Special Concern. Greenhorn Park is special because of its large population of pond turtles.

From a distance they appear dark green in color but up close they have a creamy yellow pattern along the neck and limbs. The male is distinguished by a lighter throat patch and a concave underside to its shell. At Greenhorn the pond turtle can be seen basking in the sun on logs and islands. When startled, it escapes for cover underwater. These reptiles eat aquatic vegetation, crawfish, amphibians, fish and even carrion.

Females begin reproducing after 10 years of age. She will dig a nest in soil along streambanks. Eggs hatch and young emerge in the spring. During the winter turtles hibernate in adjacent hillsides and travel back to the water when the temperature warms. If you see a turtle on its land journey, it is important to leave it alone and not pick it up or harass it.



Beavers are busy doing their part to improve life in Greenhorn Park. With strong teeth and clever engineering skills, they gnaw small trees and build riparian log structures that are very important habitat for fish, songbirds and turtles. Beaver dams also allow for the storage of water and help to prevent winter flooding.

Beavers are among the largest rodents in North America. They are herbivores and prefer to eat leaves, bark, twigs, roots and aquatic plants. These big mammals waddle when they are on land, but are graceful in the water where they use their large, webbed rear feet like swim fins and their paddle-shaped tail as a rudder. These attributes allow beavers to swim at speeds of up to 5 MPH.

They can remain underwater for 15 minutes without surfacing and have a set of transparent eyelids that function much like goggles. The beaver's fur is naturally oily and waterproof, which made beaver fur very popular for weather-resistant clothing in the late 1800s. Because of this beavers were nearly trapped out of existence in Siskiyou County, but they have made a slow recovery, including in Greenhorn and Yreka creeks. Be on the lookout for this secretive and interesting animal!