

# Birds of Bel-Air

By Jared Diamond

About the author: *Jared Diamond is an American scientist and author best known for his popular science books, The Third Chimpanzee (1991); Guns, Germs, and Steel (1997, awarded a Pulitzer Prize); Collapse (2005); and The World Until Yesterday (2012). Originally trained in physiology, Diamond is known for drawing from a variety of fields, including Anthropology, ecology, geography and evolutionary biology. He is a professor of geography at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 2005, Diamond was ranked ninth on a poll by Prospect and Foreign Policy of the world's top 100 public intellectuals.*



Red-shouldered Hawk and Eyas



Great Horned Owl and Owlets

Bel-Air is an avian paradise.

We notice the brightly colored hummingbirds and orioles at our flowers, pigeons roosting in our trees, and the Great Horned Owls hooting with their deep voices at night. But these are just a few of the 140 species known from Bel-Air. On an average morning, bird watchers can observe between 20 and 50 species, depending on the season.

Common here are some species that are virtually confined to California, and that bird-watchers from all over the world come to California in the hopes of seeing – such as Anna's Hummingbird, California Thrasher and Towhee, and Wrentit. Those species are resident and throughout the year. Other species, in Bel-Air only at certain seasons, are either summer visitors like our swallows and orioles, winter visitors like our Hermit Thrush and Cedar Waxwing, and spring and fall migrants like our Western Tanager.

Each species occurs in its own characteristic habitat. California Quail and Wrentit are widespread in chaparral (evergreen dry bushes and shrubs). Red-shouldered Hawks occupy tall trees, and two dozen species of ducks and grebes are to be found only on Stone Canyon reservoir. A few species, such as Turkey Vulture and swifts, just fly over Bel-Air and never alight here.

Popular field guides to birds that will help you identify them include The Sibley Guide to Birds, the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, and Roger Tory Peterson's, A Field Guide to Western Birds. To narrow down the options to those species actually recorded in Los Angeles, use the small paperback book by Kimball Garrett et al, Birds of the Los Angeles Region.



Anna's Hummingbird



Peregrine Falcon



Allen's Hummingbird

## Birds of Hotel Bel-Air and Stone Canyon



Wren tit



Red-shouldered Hawk



California Quail

If the Hotel Bel-Air's setting is symbolized by its birds. All guests become aware of the lovely swans that grace the pond in front. Many visitors also noticed the brightly colored hummingbirds and orioles at the flowers, the parrots and pigeons roosting in the trees, and the Great Horned Owls hooting with deep voices at night.

But these are only a few of the bird species that make the hotel their home, whether for just brief visits (like most of our human guests) or for their entire lives. Not only the hotel ground themselves, but also the adjacent stretches of Stone Canyon Road, are an avian paradise. Birds thrive in the hotel gardens, and in the native sycamore trees, oak trees, and chaparral of the canyon.

More than a hundred species have been recorded so far. On an average morning, birdwatcher guests can observe between 20 and 45 species, depending on the season. Common here are more species that are virtually confined to California, and that birdwatchers from all over the country come to California in the hopes of seeing – such as the Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, the California Thrasher and Towhee, Nuttall's Woodpecker and the Wren tit. Bird visitors to the hotel also include species that are widespread elsewhere in the US., but usually hard to find, such as the beautiful Wood Duck and the mighty Peregrine Falcon.

From the following list of species that have been recorded on the hotel grounds and adjacent Stone Canyon, how many can you observe during your stay? Popular field guides to birds that will help you identify them include The Sibley Guide to Birds, the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, and Roger Tory Peterson's, A Field Guide to Western Birds.

### Bird species observed in Bel-Air:

Abbreviations in this list are as follows:

R = Resident here throughout the year, and breeding here.

S = Present just during the summer, and also breeding here

W = Present just in the winter, without breeding.

M = Migrating through here in the spring and/or fall, without breeding.

I = Appearing at irregular intervals.

fo = Flies over Bel-Air without alighting.

r = on Stone Canyon reservoir

Pied-billed Grebe - r, R

Eared Grebe - r, W

Horned Grebe - r, W

Western Grebe - r, W

Pacific or Red-throated Loon - r, I

Brown Pelican - fo, I

White Pelican - fo, I

Double-crested Cormorant - I, fo, r

Great Egret - I, fo, r

Snowy Egret - I, fo, r

Black-crowned Night Heron - R, fo, r

Great Blue Heron - R, fo, r

Canadian Goose - M, fo

Snow Goose - I, fo

Wood Duck - M

Mallard - r, R

Pintail - r, W

American Wigeon - r, W, fo

Cinnamon Teal - r, W

Ring-necked Duck - r, W

Lesser Scaup - r, W

Bufflehead - r, W

Ruddy Duck - r, W

Hooded Merganser - r, W

Common or Red-breasted Merganser - r, W

Cooper's Hawk - R

Sharp-shinned Hawk - W

Red-tailed Hawk - R

Red-shouldered Hawk - R

Peregrine Falcon - I

Kestrel - W

Turkey Vulture - M, fo

Osprey - I, fo

California Quail - R

American Coot - r, R

Killdeer - I

California Gull - W, fo, r

Western Gull - fo, r, R

Bonaparte's Gull - fo, r, R

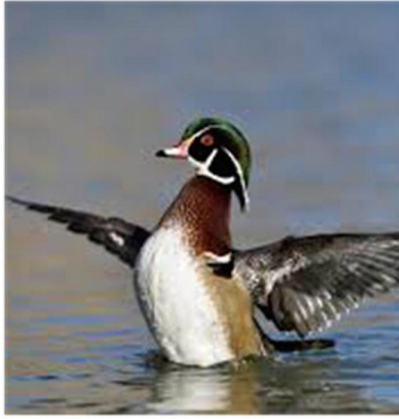
Band-tailed Pigeon - R

Mourning Dove - R

Rock Dove - I



Nuttall's Woodpecker



Wood Duck



Towhee

Collared Dove - I  
Spotted Dove - R  
Yellow-chevrons Parakeet - I  
Great Horned Owl - R  
Screech Owl - R  
Poorwill - R  
Vaux Swift - M, fo  
White-throated Swift - M, fo  
Black-chinned Hummingbird - S  
Anna's Hummingbird - R  
Allen's Hummingbird - R  
Rufous Hummingbird - M  
Belted Kingfisher - I, r  
Acorn Woodpecker - R  
Lewis's Woodpecker - I  
Red-breasted Sapsucker - W  
Red-naped Sapsucker - W  
Downy Woodpecker - W  
Nuttall's Woodpecker - R  
Northern Flicker - W  
Olive-sided Flycatcher - S  
Western Wood Pewee - S  
Pacific Slope Flycatcher - S  
Black Phoebe - R  
Ash-throated Flycatcher - S  
Western Kingbird - M  
Cassin's Kingbird - M  
Warbling Vireo - M  
Hutton's Vireo - R  
Cassin's Vireo - I  
Western Scrub-Jay - R  
Common Raven - R  
American Crow - R  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow - S  
Violet-green Swallow - M  
Cliff Swallow - S  
Barn Swallow - S  
Oak Titmouse - R  
Mountain Chickadee - I  
Bushtit - R  
White-breasted Nuthatch - I  
Red-breasted Nuthatch - I  
Bewick's Wren - R

House Wren - S  
Winter Wren - I  
Wrentit - R  
Golden-crowned Kinglet - I  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet - W  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - I  
Western Bluebird - R  
American Robin - R  
Varied Thrush - W  
Swainson's Thrush - M  
Hermit Thrush - W  
Northern Mockingbird - R  
California Thrasher - R  
European Starling - R  
Phainopepla - S  
Cedar Waxwing - W  
Black and White Warbler - I  
Orange-crowned Warbler - R  
Tennessee Warbler - I  
Nashville Warbler - M  
Yellow Warbler - M  
Yellow-rumped Warbler - W  
Black-throated Gray Warbler - M  
Townsend's Warbler - W  
Hermit Warbler - M  
American Redstart - I  
MacGillivray's Warbler - M  
Common Yellowthroat - M, W  
Wilson's Warbler - M  
Western Tanager - M  
Lazuli Bunting - M  
Black-headed Grosbeak - S  
Spotted Towhee - R  
California Towhee - R  
Rufous-crowned Sparrow - R  
Golden-crowned Sparrow - W  
White-crowned Sparrow - W  
Fox Sparrow - W  
Song Sparrow - R  
Lincoln's Sparrow - W  
Chipping Sparrow - I  
Dark-eyed Junco - W  
Slate-colored Junco - W

Brown-headed Cowbird - S  
Red-winged Blackbird - S, r  
Brewer's Blackbird - I  
Great-tailed Grackle - I  
Bullock's Oriole - S  
Hooded Oriole - S  
Purple Finch - R  
House Finch - R  
Pine Siskin - I  
Lawrence's Goldfinch - I  
Lesser Goldfinch - R  
American Goldfinch - W  
House Sparrow - R