



SAN FRANCISCO
BAY AREA
WATER
TRAIL



Make the Bay Your Playground



This is the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail, a growing network of launching and landing sites, or “trailheads,” around the San Francisco Bay Area.

Each trailhead allows non-motorized small boat users to enjoy the historic, scenic, cultural, and environmental richness of San Francisco Bay. This unique network of sites will allow people to explore San Francisco Bay in different boat types and in a variety of settings through single- and multi-day trips.

The vision for the Water Trail began with Bay Access, a non-profit group working to ensure a future for the Bay with access for non-motorized small boat users. This vision became law in 2005 with the passage of the Water Trail Act

by the California Legislature. Multiple agencies and partners are working together to make the Water Trail a reality.

From each Water Trail “trailhead,” discover jaw-dropping views, amazing wildlife, and rich history — the possibilities are limitless.

Many of us have walked, jogged, or biked along the Bay, enjoying our shoreline for exercise, relaxation, wildlife watching, or for personal reflection. The Bay also offers a completely different type of experience — out on its waters. This great 450-square-mile estuary provides many opportunities for



recreation for those who venture out beyond land. Some Bay experiences are thrilling, and others are quiet and peaceful.

We invite you to explore, discover, learn, and enjoy!

So, you’d like to get out on the water. Where do you start? What do you do if you don’t own a boat? Where should you go? How do you learn to be safe around other vessels, and prepare for tides, currents, and weather?

Our website has resources to help you get started and become a safer and more experienced boater. The foundation of safe boating on the Bay is preparation — from there, fun and exploration will follow!

www.sfbaywatertrail.org

Imagine a trail with no beginning or end, a non-linear path that takes you to world-class destinations...



Photo Credits

Far left: Tom Mikkelsen

Left: Dan Sullivan/Save The Bay

Kiteboarder: Karl Nielsen

Above: Environmental Traveling Companions

Accessibility Notice

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SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WATER TRAIL



A linked network of launching and landing sites for non-motorized small boats around San Francisco Bay

There are more than 100 existing and planned launching and landing sites identified in the Water Trail Plan.

Sites join the growing Water Trail network through a designation process. Once sites become designated, information about the site, including a map and

a description of site features, is added to our website. We will be designating many more sites, so stay tuned.

The Water Trail will improve boat launch facilities, develop more opportunities for overnight getaways, promote safe boating practices, reduce impact to sensitive wildlife and habitat, and foster stewardship and appreciation for the Bay.

Visit our website to find out about launch and landing sites, grant opportunities,

A Growing Network

outfitters you can rent from, clubs you can join, and recreational programs that offer boating opportunities. Our website has ideas on what to see and do while on the Bay and information to plan your perfect day or overnight getaway.

www.sfbaywatertrail.org

Wildlife Stewardship

Pay Attention to Behavior

When an animal has been disturbed, it will stop its normal activity (sleeping, eating, etc.) and watch you. This behavior may escalate to "flushing" or suddenly moving away.

Paddle at a Constant Speed

Avoid paddling directly at animals, and when you pass by them maintain constant direction and speed, and avoid sudden stops or changes.

Plan Your Trip to Avoid Sensitive Habitat

Avoid areas where you know there are sensitive species and only land in designated areas. Respect seasonal closures and wildlife buffer distances.

Want to learn more about the wildlife and habitat you see? Our website has information on the different species and how boaters can avoid disturbing them.

www.sfbaywatertrail.org

San Francisco Bay has so much for us to learn and discover. One of the rewards of using the Water Trail is seeing an amazing diversity of wildlife.

Sensitive Species

Some of these species and habitats are sensitive to humans. There are ways to boat that minimize disturbance to wildlife, rewarding the boater with observations of natural behavior.



California Clapper Rail
Tom Grey

Roosting Brown Pelicans
Lyrida Snyderman

California Clapper Rail
Size: Medium-size, chicken-like bird
Habitat: Salty and brackish marshes
Season: Year-round resident
Breeds: February – August



Western Burrowing Owl
Tom Grey

Harbor Seal Haul-out
Lyrida Snyderman

California Brown Pelican
Size: Large, with extendable throat pouch
Roosting Habitat: Pilings, docks, seawalls
Season: Summer – Fall

Western Burrowing Owl
Size: Small owl
Nesting Habitat: Grasslands near Bay shore
Season: Year-round resident



Nesting Snowy Egret
Tom Grey

Western Snowy Plover
Tom Grey

Pacific Harbor Seal
Pupping and Resting Habitat: Terrestrial sites near Bay shore
Season: Year-round resident
Breeds: March – July

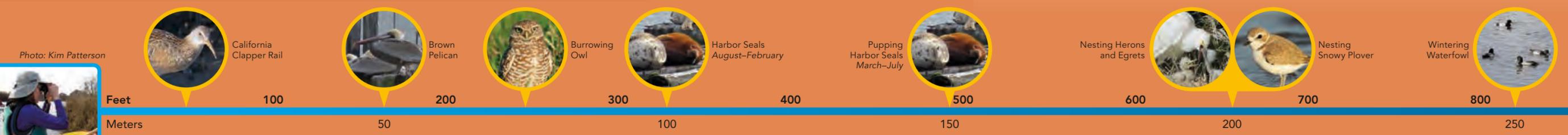
Nesting Herons and Egrets
Foraging Habitat: Wetlands and marshes
Nesting Habitat: Groves of trees near Bay shore
Season: Year-round resident



Flock of Wintering Ducks
Galli Basson

Western Snowy Plover
Size: Small shorebird
Nesting Habitat: Dry salt ponds or levees
Breeding Season: Early Spring to Mid-fall

Wintering Waterfowl
Foraging Habitat: Widespread in Bay
Season: October – April



Enjoy from a Distance

To help you visualize what these distances mean, 100 feet is approximately the length of six sea kayaks end-to-end.

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Leave No Trace

Know Before You Go

- Plan your trip based on weather, tides, current, wind, and your own capability
- Be prepared for an emergency
- Use proper gear
- Inform others of your trip plan

Bag Your Trash

- Carry out all your trash

Be Careful With Fire

- Follow regulations for your campsite or BBQ structure

Keep Wildlife Wild

- Give wide berth to wildlife and do not harass, feed, or rescue wildlife
- Respect seasonal closures and wildlife buffer distances

Leave It As You Find It

- Leave plants and other natural objects where you find them
- Don't disturb cultural resources
- Leave only wakes

Land and Launch on Durable Surfaces

- Launch and land only where you can avoid trampling sensitive habitat, disturbing wildlife, or trespassing on private property

Yield to Others

- Know the Rules of the Road for boats
- Know where the shipping and ferry routes are and give ships the right of way
- Take responsibility for your safety

This copyrighted information was developed in conjunction with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. For more information on Leave No Trace visit www.LNT.org or call 1-800-332-4100.

Be Safe

San Francisco Bay is one of the busiest ports in the world, influenced by tides, currents, and weather. Be aware of Bay conditions, know how to boat responsibly near other vessels, and be prepared for emergencies.

Wear a wetsuit and/or other insulating gear, a USCG-approved personal flotation device (and keep it snug), and carry emergency equipment such as radios, flares, whistles, and repair kits. Visit our website for more safety tips and links to real-time weather and tide information.

www.sfbaywatertrail.org



Photo Credits

Bottom: Daniel Mannisto

Top, center & cover: Lyrinda Snyderman



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The Water Trail is a regional, nine-county program implemented under the leadership of the Coastal Conservancy in close collaboration with the Association of Bay Area Governments, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and the California Department of Boating and Waterways. For more information visit www.sfbaywatertrail.org.

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Coastal
Conservancy