



Clapper Rail, Joe DiDonato



Ecotourism has been the fastest growing segment of the global travel industry. The good news is that you may enjoy ecotourism without traveling to Costa Rica, Antarctica or Tanzania.

It is conveniently available and affordable right here in Richmond along the San Francisco Bay Trail in the form of bird watching, which has become the fastest growing recreational activity in the nation. Government estimates show that an estimated 50 million Americans take part in birding every year. The Richmond Convention & Visitors Bureau is capitalizing on this trend by featuring birding along the Bay Trail on its web site at <http://rcvb-ca.com/birding.htm>.

Winter is the best time of year to see birds due to the abundance of migratory species in residence. You may download Audubon's new brochure listing 146 species of birds (Sorry, no penguins!) To be found along the Bay Trail between Marina Bay and Point Isabel Regional Shoreline by visiting <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/calendar.htm>. This web page also features bird watching outings when scheduled.

The West County Landfill Bay Trail along Wildcat Creek Marsh is another great place to view waterfowl and shore birds. As shown on the Richmond Bay Trail map at <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/map.htm>, the staging area for this 3-mile out-and-back trail may be reached by driving west on Parr Blvd. off of the Richmond Parkway. You may download the landfill trailhead map from <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/NorthernShoreline/LandfillTrail.jpg>.

For help in identifying the more common diving waterfowl, please see <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/signage/8DivingBirds.gif>.

## Ecotourism on the Bay Trail in Richmond!

San Francisco Bay is an important stopover for migrating birds and is used by more migrating shorebirds than all other California estuaries combined. For example, about 90% of all American Avocets on the U.S. mainland West Coast spend at least part of the year on the tidal wetlands surrounding our Bay. To view common shorebirds and learn the importance of San Francisco Bay wetlands for their survival, see <http://rcvb-ca.com/wetlands.htm>.

From a broader perspective, more than 300 species of wildlife depend on San Francisco Bay-Delta for food and nesting sites, including nearly 90% of commercial fish species that spawn and feed in the Bay and Delta as described at <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/signage/WildcatMarsh.jpg>.

Snowy Egret, Ellen Gailing



Great Blue Herons, Ellen Gailing

