

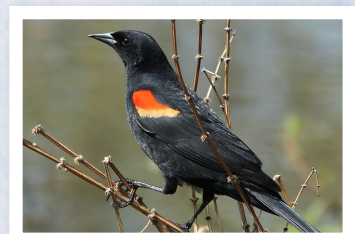
# YOSEMITE CREEK

## SPECIES: RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD



### ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- » McLaren Park, Martin Luther King Junior Pool, Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, Bay Trail



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

### RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD – *Agelaius phoeniceus*

Splish splash!

Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) like wet environments. They prefer both salt and freshwater wetlands and open grasslands, where the insects they eat – including dragonflies, damselflies, moths, and butterflies – are plentiful. They are not picky, however and will eat other wetland inhabitants including frogs, eggs, carrion, mollusks, fruits, and berries. Males ostentatiously perch atop tule reeds, straining forward, puffing out brilliant red and yellow wing ‘badges’, and then burst into a loud conk-la-ree! The streaky brown female skulks away searching for nest material among cattails, sedges, grasses, willows, and alders. It takes her about six days to construct an elaborate basket nest that she binds onto surrounding grass or branches.

#### RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Resident

#### KEY HABITAT FEATURES

Inhabits open grassy areas, generally preferring wetlands, and inhabits both freshwater and saltwater marshes, particularly if cattail is present. It is also found in dry upland areas, where it inhabits meadows, prairies, and old fields.

#### DIET

Prefers insects, such as dragonflies, damselflies, butterflies, moths, and flies, but also consumes snails, frogs, eggs, carrion, worms, spiders, mollusks, blueberries, blackberries, and other fruit.

#### ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

*Broadleaf Cattail* – *Typha latifolia* or *Southern Cattail* – *Typha domingensis*, *California Oatgrass* – *Danthonia californica*, *Bush Sunflower* – *Encelia californica*, *Arroyo Willow* – *Salix lasiolepis*

#### NESTING INFORMATION

Nests in loose colonies. The nest is built in cattails, rushes, grasses, sedge, or in alder or willow bushes; it is constructed entirely by the female over the course of three to six days. It is a basket of grasses, sedge, and mosses, lined with mud, and bound to surrounding grasses, or branches.