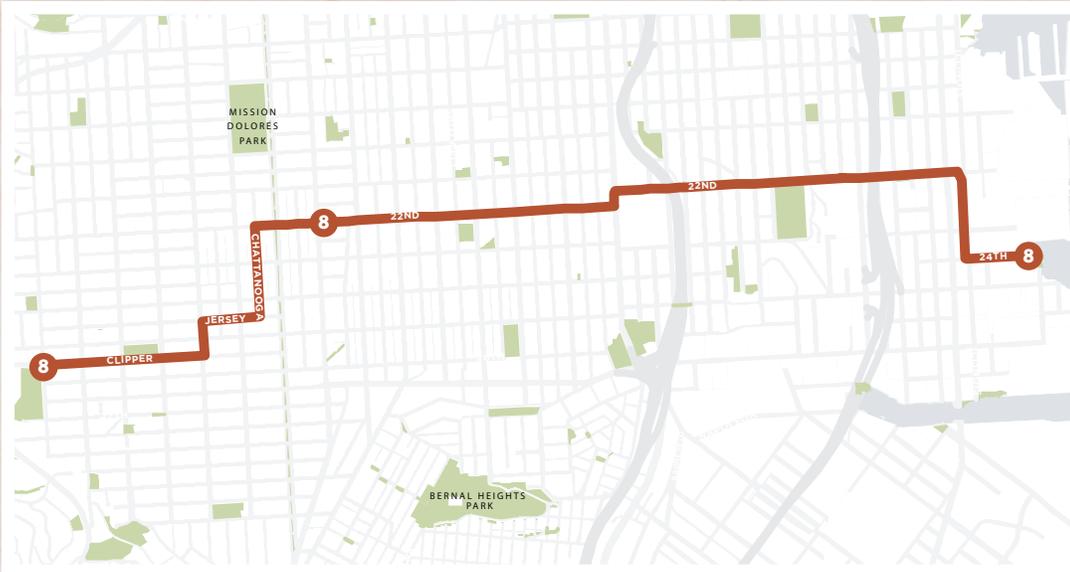


NOE VALLEY TO CENTRAL WATERFRONT

SPECIES: BUSHTIT



ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- » Diamond Heights, Douglas Playground, James Lick Middle School, Edison Elementary School, SF General Hospital, Potrero Hill Recreation Center, Warm Water Cove Park



Credit: Greg Gillson

BUSHTIT – *Psaltriparus minimus*

It's a party! (or Party animals!)

Bushtits (*Psaltriparus minimus*) are busy, social birds that travel in flocks of 6 to 60. They are often spotted together with other small songbirds, including Chestnut-backed Chickadees and Warblers. In flight, Bushtits make contact with other birds with a light 'spit' noise. They fly in a home range of about 100-square City blocks, from tree to shrub, leapfrogging each other to feed on insects, spiders, scale insects, grubs, and caterpillars. Their nests are teardrop-shaped, hanging from branches, and tended by the mated pair and other birds in the flock. Often, adult males tend to fledgling birds. Nests are made of moss, spider webs, grasses and soft foliage; and sometimes they are disguised by plant material collected from the plant in which the nest is constructed. Bushtits roost in tight flocks to stay warm overnight.

RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Resident

KEY HABITAT FEATURES

The Bushtit inhabits mixed open woodlands, often containing oaks and a scrubby chaparral understory; it also inhabits parks and gardens. It is a year-round resident of the western United States and highland parts of Mexico, ranging from Vancouver through the Great Basin and the lowlands and foothills of California to southern Mexico and Guatemala.

DIET

Bushtits eat mostly small insects and spiders, including the very tiny scale insects that adhere to leaves and twigs, as well as other plant-feeding bugs, beetles, caterpillars, wasps, and ants. They less frequently eat plant material, but have been seen eating olives and willow seeds.

ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

Coyote Bush – *Baccharis pilularis*, Coast Live Oak – *Quercus agrifolia*, Western Chokecherry – *Prunus virginiana* var. *demissa*, Red Elderberry – *Sambucus racemosa* var. *racemosa*

NESTING INFORMATION

Bushtits weave a very unusual hanging nest, shaped like a soft pouch or sock, from moss, spider webs, and grasses. built of a variety of materials including twigs, rootlets, lichens, moss, grass, blossoms of trees and shrubs, plant down, small dry leaves, spider cocoons, and thickly lined with feathers, fur, and down.

ADDITIONAL HABITAT PLANTS

Across their range, Bushtits live in open woods or scrubby areas, particularly pine-oak woodlands and chaparral, as well as suburbs and parks. They also live in scrub, sagebrush, streamside woods and thickets, and forests of pinyon pine, juniper, and other evergreens up to about 11,500 feet elevation.