

Do you have Red-winged Blackbirds and/or Orioles here?

Red-winged blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) can be found all across North America from Alaska and Canada south as far as Mexico. There are many red-winged blackbirds living by Boronda Lake in Foothills Park, near both ponds in the Arastradero Preserve and in the marsh areas at the Baylands. Red-winged blackbirds like to nest in large densely covered fields and in other places with heavy concealment (like among cattails around our lake and in fennel stands at Baylands). The male red-winged blackbird has a red patch on its wing with a thin yellow stripe just below it. The red patch and its very loud metallic call are the easiest ways to identify this bird. In coastal and central/southern California you may also see a blackbird with a red wing patch with a white stripe just beneath it; this is the tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*).

There are two species of orioles that may be found in this area: Bullock's oriole (*Icterus bullockii*) and the hooded oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*). The family of orioles are characterized by bright orange and yellow bodies and contrasting black wings. You will probably need a bird book and binoculars to successfully identify an oriole. Be certain to look carefully at the wing patterns and other dark markings on the bird's body. There are bullock's orioles nesting around the ranger station in the Palo Alto Baylands.