

## Site Guide

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### Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Plant

By Ed Pandolfino

**Habitats:** Ponds; occasionally mudflats; valley riparian; marsh and swamp; grassland; weedy fields and alfalfa fields.

**Key birds:** *Resident* – Wood Duck; White-tailed Kite; American Kestrel; Virginia Rail; Great Horned Owl; Acorn Woodpecker; Nuttall’s Woodpecker; Wrentit; Bewick’s Wren; Marsh Wren; Western Bluebird. *Spring/Summer Breeders* – Swainson’s Hawk; Black-necked Stilt; American Avocet; Western Kingbird; House Wren; Bullock’s Oriole. *Fall or Spring Migrants* – Semipalmated Plover; Whimbrel; Marbled Godwit; Western Sandpiper; Red-necked and Wilson’s phalaropes; Black Tern; montane-breeding warblers and flycatchers. *Winter* - Dabbling and diving ducks, including Canvasback and Lesser Scaup; Ferruginous Hawk; Peregrine and Prairie falcons; shorebirds including Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Wilson’s Snipe; Herring and Glaucous-winged gulls; Say’s Phoebe; Fox and Lincoln’s sparrows.

**Best birds:** Eurasian Wigeon; Blue-winged Teal; Redhead; Greater Scaup; Red-necked Grebe; Lesser Yellowlegs; Baird’s Sandpiper; Short-billed Dowitcher; Red Phalarope; Harris’s Sparrow.

**Best times to bird:** August through May.

**General Information:** This new facility replaced the old Lincoln wastewater plant in 2007. As a modern, “low odor” plant the Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Plant conducts oxidation and sludge-drying operations in covered structures. This reduces the smell, but also reduces the attractiveness to some birds. Still, this facility has quickly accumulated an impressive bird list (160 and growing as of fall 2008) and offers deep water habitat in short supply in this part of Placer County. When ponds are drawn down, excellent shorebird habitat is created and can attract an impressive variety of shorebirds. The complex of riparian, marsh and swampy habitats along the southern and western edges of the site offer excellent birding opportunities. The staff has been extremely cooperative and birder-friendly so please follow the guidelines described in the “How to bird the site” section below.

**How to get there:** The plant is located just southeast of Lincoln on Fiddyment Road, just south of Moore Road. The roads are changing rapidly

in this fast-growing part of Placer County so the following directions may not always be the best. However, as of fall 2008, the best way to get there coming from Interstate 80 is to take the Highway 65 exit from I-80 in Roseville. Take Hwy 65 to Sunset Blvd. Take Sunset Blvd. west to Foothills Blvd. Turn north (right) on Foothills Blvd. Take Foothills to Athens Avenue and turn west (left) on Athens. Take Athens to Fiddymment Road just past the Western Placer Waste Management Facility and turn north (right) on Fiddymment. The main plant entrance will be on your right in about 1.5 miles.

**How to bird the site:** The plant is open from 7:30AM to 3:30PM, Mon-Fri. Start by signing in at the main office (see map). Please do not forget to sign out so they know you didn't drive into a pond (PLEASE don't drive into a pond). There is a sheet here for recent observations, so you may want to check that first. There are five ponds you want to visit, three on the east side (Emergency Storage Basin and Tertiary Storage Basins 1 and 2) and two on the west.(Maturation Ponds 1 and 2). You can drive the berms around all these ponds. **PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY, YIELD TO STAFF VEHICLES, AND AVOID CREATING DUST.**

After signing in at the main office, the ponds on the east side can be reached by driving south on Fiddymment Road to the Southeast Gate (marked on the map) if it is open (ask at the office). Once you have entered the Southeast Gate, the tall berms around the Tertiary Storage Basin ponds will be visible in the distance to the east. You can drive around each of these ponds. The west side ponds are almost never drawn down, but the ponds on the east side are frequently drawn down to a point where good shorebird habitat is created. In winter these ponds can be full of ducks of more than a dozen species. If the water levels are right, shorebird variety can be excellent from August through September. Occasionally a Peregrine Falcon will zip by to try for quick meal. In winter, gulls often congregate in large numbers in Tertiary Storage Basin 2 in loafing in between trips to the nearby Waste Management Facility to the south. Among the California and Herring gulls, Thayer's and Glaucous-winged gulls have been found here.

To visit the west side, return to Fiddymment and drive north to the West Gate. You can drive the berms around both Maturation ponds. A Red-necked Grebe was here spring 2008 and Eurasian Wigeon were found several times in winter. These ponds tend to be deeper than the eastern ponds and hold more diving ducks such as nearly 150 Canvasback and a few Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneye. There is a road at the perimeter of the plant grounds that follows Orchard Creek along the southern and western edges of the site. This area includes extensive cattail and tule marsh, oak-dominated riparian areas and swampy areas where you can often find Wood Duck. The marshes have Virginia Rail and Sora. The marsh and shrubby understory both attract lots of sparrows in winter and Placer County's first Harris's Sparrow was here in 2002. A pair of Swainson's Hawks bred in the

riparian area in 2008 and White-tailed Kite and Cooper's Hawk have been seen in every season. The open fields in this part of the plant grounds are spray fields for treated water and are used to grow alfalfa in summer. In winter, Prairie Falcon and Ferruginous Hawk have been seen hunting these fields. You can drive the full perimeter and return along the north edge to the West Gate.



