

Developing an Accessible Birding Inventory for the Central Valley: How All Birders Can Help

Paul Miller, CVBC Outreach Committee Accessibility Co-Chair.

paul@pjmiller.com

The Central Valley Bird Club's Board of Directors recently formed an Outreach Committee, under the guidance of Lily Douglas and me, to develop protocols to strengthen inclusive birding practices within the club. Part of this effort focuses on identifying and documenting birding locations that are accessible to those with mobility challenges. A webpage will soon be developed on the club's website to provide information on these accessible birding locations throughout the Central Valley, along with other material related to mobility-challenged birding.

A considerable amount of work and time is required to identify and document accessible birding locations within the vast Central Valley area. We ask members who are interested to volunteer. I will be leading this effort. To date I have identified ten birding sites that have accessible trails, handicapped parking, and accessible restrooms. These locations are listed on the Sacramento Audubon webpage entitled Accessible Birding (<https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/accessible-birding>). Protocols developed by the newly created non-profit organization Birdability (<https://www.birdability.org/>) were used for this work.

The mission of Birdability is to assist organizations to become more inclusive. In association with Audubon, it has developed a GIS-based mapping tool to identify accessible birding locations. The Birdability Survey (Figure 1) is designed as a crowd-sourcing tool to identify the various accessibility features of a birding location including: trail surface type, grades, and the availability of handicap ramps, handicap parking spaces, accessible restrooms, and other accessibility features.

The process of collecting these data may take many forms. Members who notice accessible features while they are birding can simply take photos and submit them. Completing a more detailed survey may take advanced planning. The easiest approach is to print out the survey form (<https://www.birdability.org/contribute-to-the-birdability-map>) prior to your trip and budget an extra 20 minutes to complete the form.

Completed forms can be scanned or photographed for submission. Completed survey forms will be reviewed, and the data will be entered into

the Birdability Map (<https://gis.audubon.org/birdability/>). A short description of the accessible features will be created and added to our webpage. We hope that club members will gather this valuable information from sites throughout the Central Valley and help make birding more accessible and inclusive for all.

Please submit comments, photos, completed forms, or questions to me, at paul@pjmilller.com.

Birdability Site Review Checklist

Thank you for completing a Birdability Site Review to submit to the Birdability Map. Documenting the physical accessibility of birding locations helps ensure that birding truly is for everybody and every body! **Once complete, please visit [birdability.org/map](https://gis.audubon.org/birdability-map) to submit.**

Question numbers on this checklist correspond to the question numbers in the online Birdability Site Review; not all questions in Part 1 are included on this printable checklist.

Part 1: General Information		Part 2: Birding Location Accessibility Criteria
1. a) Trail/bird blind name:		<div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 2px;">1. Parking</div> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 0.8em;"> </div> <input type="checkbox"/> No parking area <input type="checkbox"/> Pull-off areas (for car birding) <input type="checkbox"/> Signed accessible parking spaces. Number: <input type="checkbox"/> Van accessible parking spaces. Parking space is 132 in. (3.3m) wide, with extra 60 in. (1.5m) wide aisle/side space for a ramp. Number: <input type="checkbox"/> Curb cuts present from parking lot to sidewalk/trail <input type="checkbox"/> Surface is paved <input type="checkbox"/> Surface is gravel <input type="checkbox"/> Surface has many potholes/bumps <input type="checkbox"/> Parking on unmanageable slope Comments:
1. b) Location name (park or area):		
4) Good car birding site? Describe if so:		
6) Length of trail:		
7) Type of trail:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Loop <input type="checkbox"/> Out-and-back <input type="checkbox"/> Lollipop (out-and-back with a loop attached)		
8. a) Entrance fee?		<div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 2px;">2. Services available at this location</div> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 0.8em;"> </div> <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor center <input type="checkbox"/> Staff or volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive programs <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible tram or motorized tour <input type="checkbox"/> Gated areas (for example, drive-up bird blinds) accessible if arranged ahead of time <input type="checkbox"/> Meals available <input type="checkbox"/> Water fountains outside buildings <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible water fountains, no higher than 36 in. (91 cm) from the ground, outside buildings Comments, including visitor center hours:
8. b) Parking fee?		
9) Nearby public transit information, including route numbers, stop names:		
10) Walking or biking access from residential areas:		

Figure 1. First page of the five page Birdability Survey. For full survey see (<https://www.birdability.org/contribute-to-the-birdability-map>).