

Salt Pond

Read: Welcome to the Salt Pond habitat. This is the only man-made habitat at the Refuge. These salt ponds were previously used for salt production! Do you like putting salt on your food? So do !! These are evaporation ponds, meaning that the water evaporates during warmer temperatures (think about the water cycle!) and then the salt is left behind. This is one way that people harvest salt. Now, the salt ponds on the Refuge are used as habitat for birds!

As you can see in this photo, there are islands in the middle of the pond. A variety of birds use these islands to rest and even nest on in Spring and Summer. The water in this pond comes from the bay, as well as lots of tiny, floating plankton, and even some small fish. This provides plenty of food for the birds! Unfortunately, these salt ponds replaced what was once salt marsh.

Do you remember all of the great benefits wetlands provide? Habitat for wildlife, space for nesting birds, water filtration, flood protection, carbon sequestration to help prevent climate change, and so much more! The Refuge is working with a variety of partners to actually restore some of these salt ponds back into salt marsh. It is the largest restoration project on the west coast and is called the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project! Now let's learn about the wildlife that use the salt pond!

Click on your mouse or spacebar to learn about the plants and wildlife that live in the salt pond habitat!

1. Why do Double-crested Cormorants have to dry their wings?
2. How do Double-crested Cormorants catch their food?
 - a. Catch it in their feet
 - b. Dive into the water
 - c. Poke their beak into the mud
3. The Caspian Tern is the _____ tern in the world.
 - a. Largest
 - b. Smallest
4. Click on the Caspian Tern range map, what season do they spend in the San Francisco Bay?
5. How many weeks does it take an American White Pelican to learn how to fly?
 - a. 1-2 weeks
 - b. 4-5 weeks
 - c. 9-10 weeks
6. Describe why American White Pelicans feeding technique is unique:
7. Are Ruddy Ducks a small or large duck?
8. Why do male Ruddy Ducks' beaks turn blue for the Spring and Summer?
9. Why is Plankton important for the food chain?
10. Why are Salt Ponds being restored back into Salt Marsh?