

# Smithsonian Associates Presents: Birding the California Coast

Matt Felperin

## 1. Complete guide to binoculars for birding

<https://www.audubon.org/gear/binocular-guide>

This is an incredible resource for finding a pair of binoculars that best fit your needs and budget. The best bang for your buck in my opinion are the Vortex Diamondback 8x42 magnification.

## 2. Best budget superzoom cameras for birding

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-superzoom-camera/amp/>  
(Cameras)

These articles will help you select the best quality superzoom camera you can get on a budget. Note that the cameras are not cheap, but by having a built in zoom lens, you won't need to shell out more money for a telephoto lens. My personal combination is not a superzoom all-in-one, I use the Canon R5 with Canon 600 f/4 and 100-400mm f/4-5.6 lenses for birds.

## 3. Birding Central California's Coast

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/birding-californias-central-coast/>

Brian Sullivan, co-project leader of Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird, does a brief write up of birding and observing other wildlife in various areas along the central California coast. A great read-along to follow up the presentation.

## 4. Pelagic Birding in the San Francisco Bay Area

<https://bwdmagazine.com/travel/regions/pelagic-birding-northern-california/>

An excellent write up from BWD Magazine (formerly Bird Watcher's Digest) highlighting the world of pelagic birding along the California coast. This includes details on notable species, ports of call, best times of year, how to avoid seasickness, and how to improve your chance of success.

## 5. All about California Condors

<https://www.nps.gov/pinn/learn/nature/condor.htm>

This page on the National Park Service website has information on the California Condors that make Pinnacles National Park and Big Sur State Park home, and includes several useful links such as a multimedia page, a condor blog, threats facing California Condors, how to help, and more.

## 6. Intro to using field marks to ID birds

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/building-skills-the-4-keys-to-bird-identification/>

This article is an excellent place to start when it comes to learning how to identify birds using field marks: physical characteristics of the bird's anatomy (plumage, bill shape, leg color, etc.). This skill is especially useful when dealing with birds that look very similar to other species.

## 7. Reminder of apps to download:

eBird (free)

Merlin (free)

iNaturalist (free)

Sibley Guide

The Warbler Guide

Audubon